

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Campaign Asks NS Government to Provide an Independent Voice for Children and Youth**

**KJIPUKTUK (HALIFAX, NS)** – Nova Scotia’s vulnerable children and youth continue to fall through the cracks in our province. They need their voices heard.

The Nova Scotia College of Social Workers (NSCSW) is advocating for the creation of a **Child and Youth Advocate** office to protect and promote the rights of Nova Scotia children and youth with their campaign launched today called **Child Youth Advocate NS**.

The NSCSW is asking Nova Scotians to join them as they call on the NS government to put the resources in place to create a Child and Youth Advocate office in Nova Scotia.

An open letter on their campaign website, [www.childyouthadvocateNS.org](http://www.childyouthadvocateNS.org), asks Premier Stephen McNeil to pass the legislation that would create a Child and Youth Advocate office. The legislation, **An Act Respecting an Advocate for Children and Youth**, was introduced by the NDP Tuesday, September 11, 2018.

“Nova Scotia remains one of the only provinces in Canada without a Child and Youth Advocate office. This leaves vulnerable voices out of political decision making and impacts the province’s ability to deliver timely, accessible and adequate services for at risk children and youth,” explains Alec Stratford, NSCSW Executive Director/Registrar.

Other organizations in the province support the NSCSW’s campaign and see the crucial need to create a strong child and youth voice and ensure that children and youth rights are respected and valued.

“The best policies and programs will come when those with lived experience have a voice. The impact, even from someone very small, can be bigger than we imagine,” says Miia Suokonautio, Executive Director of the YWCA Halifax.

Murdock Moore, chair of the Cape Breton Victoria Child Advocacy Society, agrees.

“Children and youth have limited voice in decision making and limited access to complaint mechanisms. They are a unique and vulnerable population. It’s time for our government to join most provinces in Canada in implementing and understanding the importance of a child advocate,” he says.

Nova Scotians can join the NSCSW in advocating for a Child and Youth Advocate office.

Here's how:

- Visit & share the campaign website [www.childyouthadvocateNS.org](http://www.childyouthadvocateNS.org)
- Join the conversation on Twitter and Facebook by using the hashtag **#childyouthadvocatens**
- Write a letter to Premier Stephen McNeil advocating for a Child and Youth Advocate office at: Office of the Premier, P.O. Box 726, Halifax, NS B3J 2T3

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***About us:** The Nova Scotia College of Social Workers (NSCSW) serves and protects Nova Scotians by effectively regulating the profession of social work. We work in solidarity with Nova Scotians to advocate for policies that improve social conditions, challenge injustice and value diversity.*

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