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February 22, 2017

The Honourable Patricia Hajdu
Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Hajdu,

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) is proposing territorial budget cuts that will serve to dismantle the Aurora College Social Work Program – the only social work program serving the families and communities of the Northwest Territories.

In my capacity as President of the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW), I am writing to support the Association of Social Workers in Northern Canada (ASWNC) in their call for the Government of Canada (GOC) and the GNWT to reconsider this proposal. If enacted, the cuts will severely and negatively impact social service provision in Northern Canada, directly countering the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC).

In this regard, the TRC recommends that the federal government provide adequate funding to end the backlog of Indigenous Canadians seeking a post-secondary education. There is an ongoing need for northern programs to educate social workers while upholding the cultural context to support the surrounding communities.

As understood, the GNWT has proposed a decrease in funding to Aurora College by \$1.9 million, which would result in the elimination of the 2-year Social Work Program. CASW understands that this budgetary decision falls to the GNWT. However, CASW is appealing to the GOC to leverage federal transfers to ensure the social work program is not lost to residents of the NWT.

As you are aware, the Canada Social Transfer (CST) is the primary source of federal funding that supports provincial and territorial post-secondary education, from which the territorial government allocates funds. According to Aurora College, contributions from the territorial government constitute approximately 66% of the college's revenue.