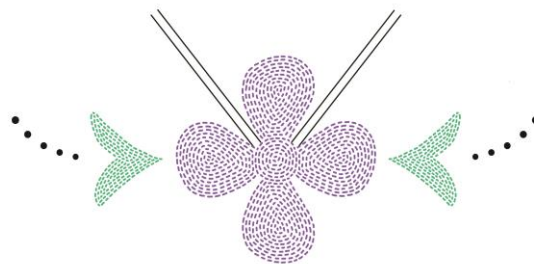


National Inquiry into  
Missing and Murdered  
Indigenous Women and Girls



Enquête nationale  
sur les femmes et les filles  
autochtones disparues et assassinées

**National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered  
Indigenous Women and Girls  
Truth-Gathering Process  
Part 1 Public Hearings  
Sheraton Vancouver Airport Hotel  
Britannia Ballroom  
Metro Vancouver, British Columbia**



**PUBLIC**

**Friday April 6, 2018  
Public Volume 96  
Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon, Shae-Lynn Noskye,  
Fialka Jack & Erin Pavan**

**Heard by Commissioner Qajaq Robinson  
Commission Counsel: Shelby Thomas**

**INTERNATIONAL REPORTING INC.**  
41-5450 Canotek Road, Ottawa, Ontario, K1J 9G2  
E-mail: info@irri.net – Phone: 613-748-6043 – Fax: 613-748-8246

## II

### APPEARANCES

|  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Assembly of First Nations                                      | No Appearance                  |
| Government of British Columbia                                 | Leah Greathead (Legal counsel) |
| Government of Canada   | Donna Keats (Legal counsel)    |
| Heiltsuk First Nation  | No Appearance                  |
| Northwest Indigenous Council<br>Society                        | No Appearance                  |
| Our Place - Ray Cam Co-<br>operative Centre                    | No Appearance                  |
| Pauktuutit Inuit Women of<br>Canada                            | Beth Symes                     |
| Vancouver Sex Workers' Rights<br>Collective                    | No Appearance                  |
| Les Femmes Michif<br>Otipemisiwak/Women of the<br>Métis Nation | No Appearance                  |

III

TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Public Volume 96**

**April 6, 2018**

**Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon, Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka  
Jack and Erin Pavan**

Commissioner: Qajaq Robinson

Commission Counsel: Shelby Thomas

Grandmothers, Elders, Knowledge-keepers: Kathy Louis, Penny  
Kerrigan, Florence Catcheway, CeeJai Julian, Audrey Siegl,  
Bernie Poitras Williams, Merle Williams, Deni Paquette, Donna  
Dickison, Ruth Alfred, Harriet Prince, Gladys Radek, Louise  
Haulli, Laureen "Blu" Waters- Gaudio, Reta Blind, Elaine  
Bissonnette, Eunice McMillan, Candace Ruth, Janice Brown,  
Theresa Russ, Deanna Lewis, Jennifer Thomas, Margerat George,  
Juanita Desjarlais

Clerk and Registrar: Bryan Zandberg

**PAGE**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Testimony of <b>Cheylene Moon, et al.</b> . . . . . | 1  |
| Reporter's certification . . . . .                  | 77 |

IV

LIST OF EXHIBITS

| NO.  | DESCRIPTION  | PAGE |
|--|--|------|
| <b>Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon, Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka<br/>Jack and Erin Pavan<br/>Exhibits (code: P01P15P0302)</b> |  |      |
| 1  | Text by Shae-Lynn Noskye dated 2018-04-06 (eight<br>double-sided pages). | 76   |

Hearing - Public  
Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan

1

Metro Vancouver, British Columbia

2 --- Upon commencing On Friday, April 6, 2018 at 13:31

3 **MS. SHELBY THOMAS:** Good afternoon,  
4 Commissioner Robinson. This afternoon we'll be hearing  
5 from Cheylene Moon, Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin  
6 Pavan, who will be talking about youth experiences of  
7 transitioning out of care in B.C.

8 Mr. Registrar, the four of them would like  
9 to affirm on an eagle feather.

10 **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** Good afternoon,  
11 everybody. Where did the eagle feather go? There's the  
12 eagle feather. So, we'll do a promise, and we'll start  
13 with Fialka.

14 Good afternoon, Fialka. Do you solemnly  
15 affirm that the evidence you will give will be the truth,  
16 the whole truth and nothing but the truth? Thank you. And  
17 we'll pass the feather to the next.

18 **MS. SHELBY THOMAS:** Let's start. If the  
19 four of you could just introduce yourselves and tell the  
20 Commissioner a little bit about your connection with youth  
21 transitioning from foster care.

22 **MS. ERIN PAVAN:** I can start. My name is  
23 Erin Pavan, and I'm the manager of the STRIVE Youth in Care  
24 Transition Program. It's operated by the YWCA Metro  
25 Vancouver; we're funded by the B.C. Ministry of Children

**Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan**

1 and Family Development and the Ministry of Advanced  
2 Education and Skills Training. I've been working with  
3 STRIVE for about four years, and it's a life skills program  
4 for youth ages 17 to 24, in, or from/out of home care.  
5 I'll pass it on to you.

6 **MS. SHAE-LYNN NOSKYE:** My name is Shae-Lynn  
7 Noskye. I'm 22 and I aged out of foster care in 2014.

8 **MS. CHEYLENE MOON:** My name is Cheylene.  
9 I'm also 22 and I was in foster care for seven years.

10 **MS. FIALKA JACK:** I'm Fialka. I'm 24 and I  
11 aged out of care in 2012.

12 **MS. SHELBY THOMAS:** Can you guys just share  
13 a little bit about where you're from?

14 **MS. ERIN PAVAN:** I was born and raised in  
15 Vancouver. And actually how I came to this work is my  
16 stepfather, who raised me from a young age as Anishinabe  
17 and he's a survivor of residential school and the Sixties  
18 Scoop. And I have two stepbrothers, who are also  
19 Anishinabe and both spent time in care. And one of them,  
20 who spent the most time in care, died very young, at age  
21 21. And that is why I ended up working with Indigenous  
22 youth in care.

23 **MS. SHAE-LYNN NOSKYE:** My family is  
24 originally from Grand Prairie, Alberta, and my mother moved  
25 to Vancouver when she was pregnant with me. Yeah.

1                   **MS. CHEYLENE MOON:** I was born and raised in  
2 Vancouver, but I'm Scottish from my mom's side and  
3 Quilchena from Upper Nicola on my dad's side.

4                   **MS. FIALKA JACK:** I was born in Nanaimo.  
5 I'm from the Mowachaht tribe from Qu-Yuquot.

6                   **MS. SHELBY THOMAS:** If you guys could take a  
7 little time to share, with whatever details you feel  
8 comfortable, your experience in the foster care system.

9                   **MS. FIALKA JACK:** I grew up going in and out  
10 of care from only a couple of weeks old till I aged out at  
11 19. I grew up thinking that a lot of Aboriginal children  
12 were in care and that it was normal to hop from home to  
13 home. You settle down once or twice and you get excited to  
14 have a home, but yet, it never lasts and you learn fast,  
15 that you're just another child or another income in their  
16 care.

17                   I wish I could say I had a great experience,  
18 but I had so much ripped from me, it is hard to see it like  
19 that. How many more of my brothers and sisters have to be  
20 ripped away from their culture? How many more will grow up  
21 in a colonized world that they will never get the chance to  
22 actually learn from the land or their language, and our  
23 ancestors? How many more will cry themselves to sleep at  
24 night, thinking that there is no Creator out there for  
25 them?

1                   **MS. CHEYLENE MOON:** I was in care briefly a  
2 couple times as a kid, and then I went in and stayed in,  
3 like a month or two before I turned 12. And I've been in  
4 two foster homes, one group home and on independent living  
5 twice within the seven years that I was in care.

6                   **MS. SHAE-LYNN NOSKYE:** Turning 19 when  
7 you're parented by the government is no cake walk. It's  
8 more like jogging in front of your coach's car, knowing  
9 full well that they'd run you over if you stopped moving.  
10 And even 25 is hard, because the resources that you had to  
11 cling to after losing your old ones for the first time, are  
12 now unavailable to you. It's important to acknowledge that  
13 everyone faces hardship, no matter their age, especially if  
14 one has this experience in Ministry care. Trauma ages the  
15 soul and stunts any potential growth during recovery.

16                   **MS. SHELBY THOMAS:** Can you share your  
17 experience of aging-out of the foster care system?

18                   **MS. FIALKA JACK:** I can't say that my social  
19 workers didn't try to help me, but to be honest, I was  
20 super stubborn. To this day, I feel like they didn't want  
21 me to live on my own and that they had me out of my group  
22 home on my 19<sup>th</sup> birthday before noon. They told me that  
23 they were going to call the cops and they threw me a whole  
24 garbage bagful, like a whole box full of garbage bags and  
25 so I filled all my stuff in the six bags of garbage and



1 into a laundry hamper and they drove me out to New  
2 Westminster to PLEA.

3 And PLEA is a program that is supposed to  
4 help, I guess, people with addictions, I'm not quite  
5 certain. At the time, I had been only a year sober, so I  
6 was kind of confused at why I was put into this type of  
7 housing. And so, I had never, ever been into New  
8 Westminster in my life. So, to be put into a city that you  
9 had never been into, you're completely isolated from all  
10 your friends and all your family. And so I was isolated  
11 from my world and it was rough not knowing where you were.

12 A month after aging-out of care, my social  
13 worker moved me to the Downtown core of Vancouver into an  
14 SRO. And until that day, I didn't know what the word SRO  
15 stands for. And it was horrifying to see, so fresh into my  
16 adulthood, to see that this is where people were living.  
17 Like, I couldn't imagine how people could live happily in  
18 those types of places, and it was horrifying and it, to be  
19 honest -- I did some things that I promised I would never  
20 do, and I regret it.

21 But like, from there, I've grown and to be  
22 honest, I don't think social workers should be putting  
23 their children into SROs. I think, like, looking for  
24 housing and teaching us how to look for housing, should be  
25 an important piece. Because you shouldn't have to worry

**Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan**

1 about homelessness every second of your life after aging-  
2 out of care. And that is something that at almost 25, I  
3 still fear, every day.

4 And I live in a house, I live in South Van,  
5 I live with a lot of people, people that love me. But I  
6 have been homeless twice since aging-out of care. I was  
7 homeless for a year; I lived in downtown Vancouver, I lived  
8 in Stanley Park. Like, I slept in Stanley Park. That's  
9 how bad it was, aging-out of care.

10 And like it was a Gong Show trying to get  
11 supports and to be able to create trust with people,  
12 because you don't know if they're ever going to leave you.  
13 And because, you know, at 19, you lose everybody; you lose  
14 every single person that was in your life growing up. And  
15 it's because they are paid by the government to take care  
16 of you and to be your friend.

17 So, it was something that took me a long  
18 time to learn, that I am my only friend. The person that  
19 stares back at me in the mirror is the only person that  
20 will ever have my back. And that's hard to come to that  
21 conclusion. And it's not a feeling, I think, that any  
22 foster children should ever, ever, ever ever ever have to  
23 feel. Because it is a gut-wrenching feeling and it kills  
24 me. And it hurts me to know that there are lots of other  
25 youth that I see that are just aging-out and they're living

1 on the streets.

2 I used to hang out at Directions Youth  
3 Centre and they'd have a lot of street youth that come from  
4 across Canada, from as far as New Brunswick and as small  
5 towns like, small little towns in Ontario. And they come  
6 all the way here, just for hope. Hope that they can find  
7 housing, hope that they can find work; but yet, they don't  
8 find it. They end up homeless on Granville for months and  
9 months and it becomes a shit show, it really does.

10 Like, it's scary to know that a lot of us  
11 will end up homeless at any given time after aging-out of  
12 care. And it's -- I don't think any child should ever have  
13 to deal with that. I don't know any parent that would ever  
14 kick their child out at 19, on their birthday, saying  
15 "You'd better leave or else I'm calling the cops on you,"  
16 that's not a good feeling. And it leaves you with no hope  
17 for your life and for your future. And it's -- yeah.

18 **MS. CHEYLENE MOON:** Well for me, as a  
19 teenager, I couldn't wait to age-out and like, be on my  
20 own. Because like, I mean I used to run away from my  
21 foster homes all the time. And so I thought that I could  
22 make it on my own. But when I aged-out, then I realized  
23 there is like so many things I needed help with and that I  
24 should have like, taken advantage of the services that I  
25 could have gotten while I was still in care.

1                   But luckily, when I aged-out, my old foster  
2                   dad offered me to rent out a suite at the back of his  
3                   house. And like, while I was on independent living before  
4                   I aged-out, my brother and sister moved back to Vancouver  
5                   from Merritt. And they moved into his foster home, so it  
6                   was my first time living in the same house as my younger  
7                   siblings in like four years. But after a year, when my  
8                   younger brother aged-out, I lived with him. Because like,  
9                   he's been through way worse trauma than I have, so he can't  
10                  really like talk to people and navigate through, like,  
11                  being an adult.

12                  So I had to do all the work search myself  
13                  and stuff. We moved five times in the first year of him  
14                  aging-out, and the last time was into a storage locker and  
15                  we were homeless for four months. And I'm just glad that I  
16                  had a bunch of friends and family that would let me stay at  
17                  their houses, so I was going back and forth between six  
18                  different people's houses while I was in school full time  
19                  and working part time, and doing volunteer work in my free  
20                  time. And it's pretty hard to look for housing while  
21                  you're that busy, too. And then, luckily I moved into BYRC  
22                  but, like, I have one more year there and I'm like worried  
23                  about finding housing once that lease is up.

24                  **MS. SHAE-LYNN NOSKYE:** At 19, you don't just  
25                  age-out of care and lose financial support. You also age-

**Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan**

1 out of every service you've previously been receiving  
2 support from. Certain safe-houses or shelters are off  
3 limits, and if you had a counsellor or mental health  
4 clinician, you're no longer able to work with them.

5 If you had a psychiatrist, you have to get  
6 yourself onto a waiting list, because the adult resources,  
7 the adult services, lack resources. When I tried to get  
8 into DBT, which is a type of group therapy, I was told it  
9 was at least a year wait. But the number of people put on  
10 the waiting list grew so large that the agency began a  
11 wait-list group that I was invited into. Unless you're  
12 seeking immediate intervention, there is a really high  
13 barrier to accessing the services needed by youth who have  
14 been previously in care, but have aged-out. It leads to  
15 self-medication with substances that become addictive and  
16 further escalating the downward spiral.

17 From September 2005 to November 2012, data  
18 was collected from the At-Risk Youth Study in Vancouver,  
19 which was for 14 to 26-year-olds who had used drugs other  
20 than cannabis within the past 30 days and had street  
21 involvement. Out of the 937 participants, 49 percent had  
22 been in care at some point in their life.

23 The experience of being in care was  
24 especially common on youth who are of Indigenous heritage,  
25 victims of abuse, had not completed high school, had

1 parents who had abused substances themselves and had first  
2 experimented with drugs at an early age.

3 **MS. ERIN PAVAN:** Can I make some general  
4 comments here about aging-out of care? Great. So, I'm  
5 gonna talk a little bit about the adverse outcomes that  
6 affect youth aging-out of care, compared to the general  
7 population. And I just want to acknowledge that sometimes  
8 when I'm asked to talk about this, I feel like I'm almost  
9 pathologizing being in care. And I just want to say that,  
10 yes, there are really adverse outcomes, and also that  
11 there's a lot of resilience. And that like these three  
12 young women here, are really amazing, resilient and strong  
13 women. So I just want to put that out there before I list  
14 some adverse outcomes.

15 So, aging-out of care is really like a  
16 euphemism for the abrupt termination of all MCFD services.  
17 Like, this "aging-out," I don't even like this term, I  
18 think it's too gentle for what the experience is; it's like  
19 being pushed off a cliff, right?

20 So when you turn 19, it means that your  
21 social worker can't have contact with you anymore,  
22 technically, and they have these huge caseloads. I also  
23 know a lot of social workers who are still in touch with  
24 tons of kids on their caseload after they turn 19, even  
25 though they're already overworked. And this is mostly

1 women, right, it's like pink collar -- it's not like you're  
2 making good money, or there's no glory in it or anything,  
3 it's really hard work. They don't get a lot of respect or  
4 support.

5 And some of these women are working all  
6 hours, trying to keep track of all the kids after they turn  
7 19, because they're worried about them and they've made  
8 that connection with them. But then they're just supposed  
9 to say "Bye!" You know, "I can't speak to you anymore,  
10 I've got to work with the younger kids on my caseload now,"  
11 and we shouldn't be putting those social workers in that  
12 position, we shouldn't be putting those young people in  
13 that position either. Because it's so artificial, right?

14 You don't kick people out of your life on  
15 their birthday; it's a really bizarre system that we've got  
16 going. And the outcomes are not surprisingly, for youth  
17 who age-out of care, really terrible. Like, shameful,  
18 compared to the general population. They're not graduating  
19 high school; I think that by age 19, like 32 percent of  
20 youth aging-out of care will have a high school diploma,  
21 compared to 84 percent for the general population. And, so  
22 they're not finishing school.

23 They're also less likely to have a job.  
24 They're going to make less money. A lot of them are  
25 relying on income assistance right off the bat, 40 percent

1 will go right onto income assistance.

2 The income assistance rate just finally got  
3 raised in B.C., but for Vancouver it is not even near  
4 enough money to live off of. You can't even pay rent with  
5 it, never mind buy food. So they're going into extreme  
6 poverty right off the bat, with no high school diploma, not  
7 enough supportive people in their lives. Obviously, by  
8 definition, anyone who's been through care, is going to  
9 have trauma. So they've got trauma; they're more likely to  
10 have issues with their mental health, with substance use,  
11 more likely to be involved with the criminal justice  
12 system, become young parents. They're more likely to die  
13 young. Of the 1,000 youth who age-out of care in B.C.  
14 every year, three to four will be dead before they turn 25.

15 So I think you can really see the  
16 connection, right, between the missing and murdered young  
17 women and the care system. We also know that the majority  
18 of youth in care in B.C. are Indigenous, and that that's  
19 true across the country, right? And we know the reason for  
20 that, too. We know that it's about the intergenerational  
21 effects of residential school, from the Sixties Scoop and  
22 the continued marginalization and oppression of Indigenous  
23 peoples in Canada.

24 So at the same time, in B.C. -- and this is  
25 true across the country -- most 20- to 24-year-olds are



1 actually living at home. So we're seeing demographically  
2 that people don't move out at 19. Because you can't get a  
3 job right out of high school that you can support yourself  
4 on anymore, right? That's not how the economy works, and  
5 we know that. So kids who have stable, loving, supportive  
6 homes, they're still at home at 24, getting support from  
7 their parents, financially and emotionally. Kids who have  
8 trauma, not enough support; we're expecting them to be able  
9 to move out and be independent at 19, when their peers who  
10 have all the support that they need aren't doing that at  
11 19? You know, it just doesn't make any sense. It doesn't  
12 make sense, right?

13 All right, I think that's it for me for now.

14 **MS. SHELBY THOMAS:** Fialka, can you talk a  
15 little bit about the symbolism behind garbage bags?

16 **MS. FIALKA JACK:** When you're aging-out of  
17 care, they don't really give you the preparation to  
18 actually move. You're not even told what's going to even  
19 happen on your 19<sup>th</sup> birthday, to be honest. Half the time,  
20 your social worker will just show up and be like, "This is  
21 the plan." I remember waking up on my 19<sup>th</sup> birthday, I got  
22 abruptly woken up at like 7:00 o'clock in the morning. And  
23 I was told to literally pack everything that was in my  
24 room. And I had six garbage bags; there was only six  
25 garbage bags, and I had a laundry hamper. And I was told

Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan

1 if none of it fit, then the rest was all gonna get thrown  
2 out. And if I wasn't out by noon, that the police were  
3 going to get called, because there was already somebody on  
4 their way to my group home to take over my room.

5 So it's, in a way, I feel like it was like  
6 throwing away garbage. It wasn't like, when you're going  
7 on a trip, you don't put your clothes into a garbage bag  
8 when you're going to Mexico, right? You don't throw your  
9 clothes into a garbage bag when you're moving; you box them  
10 up. You put them into a suitcase, you know? You take good  
11 care of your things and like, I took good care of my things  
12 throughout my foster care time, and to have it all put into  
13 a garbage bag -- it literally felt like it was garbage day.

14 Like, that is literally the best way I can  
15 describe it, it literally felt like it was Friday and it  
16 was a garbage day. So, I felt like I was just getting  
17 thrown out and like I was just garbage to the Ministry.  
18 So, I don't know.

19 **MS. SHELBY THOMAS:** Thank you. Cheylene,  
20 you mentioned that you couldn't wait, kind of, to get out  
21 of the foster system. But then going through that, you  
22 realized the lack of supports you had. Can you explain  
23 that a little more?

24 **MS. CHEYLENE MOON:** Well, the first foster  
25 home I went into, right before I turned 12, was like

**Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan**

1           probably the worst foster home I've ever been in. And  
2           because of that experience, like, I just got used to  
3           running away from my foster homes for like, a few days to  
4           like a week at a time. But then I'd usually get brought  
5           back by the police. And like, not having anyone ask me why  
6           I didn't want to be there.

7                               And so, I just got used to being on my own  
8           and going off and doing whatever I wanted, without really  
9           listening to my foster parents or social workers that much.  
10          And so, like I thought I could handle being on my own. But  
11          right around the time I aged-out, my depression and anxiety  
12          made me lose my full time job. And then I went on income  
13          assistance, and was like living off of \$215 a month, plus  
14          the 375 for rent, for the first two years of aging-out.  
15          And like, the only way I could survive off that money was  
16          to go to different programs and stuff, where they'd give me  
17          food and sometimes gift cards for attending.

18                              It was also weird, because when you move  
19          out, you don't realize some of the things you need to live  
20          a normal life, until you get to the house, and you're like,  
21          oh, there's no shower curtain. I have to go figure out  
22          where to buy shower curtains, and like the hangers and  
23          stuff. And when you're cooking, you don't realize the kind  
24          of things you need until you're trying to cook something,  
25          and you're like, oh, I don't have this, so I have to go buy

1           it.

2                           And just, you learn the things you need as  
3           you go on, but it's like the first two years were pretty  
4           hard. But I mean, luckily I had support from the community  
5           and like different programs I could go to and stuff to like  
6           help me get by; barely getting by.

7                           **MS. SHELBY THOMAS:** Shae-Lynn, you mentioned  
8           how the over-representation of Indigenous youth in care.  
9           Can you explain a bit about how being in care impacts  
10          Indigenous youth differently?

11                          **MS. SHAE-LYNN NOSKYE:** For sure. I guess it  
12          just really all goes back to the intergenerational trauma,  
13          and the Sixties Scoop and residential schooling. I guess  
14          that trauma just sort of follows your family. The other  
15          pain follows you until someone's ready to feel it.

16                          There's a lot of things at work when it  
17          comes to over-representation. A lot of it starts with  
18          poverty, not being able to afford to even buy your kids  
19          school supplies sometimes. Sometimes kids are apprehended  
20          because their parents can't afford to raise them; other  
21          times it's because of substance abuse problems; self-  
22          medication, it kind of all really goes back to that.

23                          **MS. SHELBY THOMAS:** Shae-Lynn would like to  
24          submit to the Commission something she wrote. And it has  
25          different reports attached to it.

Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan

1                   Now, it's been mentioned that there are  
2                   different programs available for youth transitioning. Can  
3                   you guys talk a little bit about the different programs  
4                   that you've been a part of, or any of the programs that you  
5                   might have not been a part of, but that you know about?

6                   **MS. SHAE-LYNN NOSKYE:** I can definitely say  
7                   that I wouldn't be where I am today without Aunt Leah's  
8                   Place. They work at both ends of the foster care system.  
9                   They help youth get ready to transition out of care; and  
10                  their support program, they help you after you age-out,  
11                  with no age cap, so you can go back any time you need  
12                  support. And they also help mothers that are at risk of  
13                  losing their children to the foster care system by putting  
14                  them in supportive living, where they learn the life skills  
15                  and parenting skills that they need for success.

16                  Through Aunt Leah's I've also done their  
17                  Bootstraps Work Training Program, and they connected me to  
18                  different programs and jobs. Like, the McCreary Centre  
19                  Society, they have a Youth Research Academy, and that's how  
20                  I got a hold of STRIVE, actually.

21                  **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** I just wanted  
22                  to ask a quick question, what's the name of the program  
23                  again?

24                  **MS. SHAE-LYNN NOSKYE:** Auntie Leah's Place.

25                  **MS. FIALKA JACK:** My social worker had

**Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan**

1 connected me to ICY, which is the acronym for Inner City  
2 Youth. They are on Granville Street in the downtown of  
3 Vancouver. They do mental health counselling and they have  
4 psychiatrists; I personally didn't have a good experience  
5 with them. I've heard a lot of other youth who have had  
6 also not so good experiences, but with me personally, it  
7 was like, just where I was at, it wasn't what I needed, I  
8 guess.

9 And I've also accessed Directions, since  
10 just before I aged-out of care, and to be honest, like I  
11 aged-out on income assistance. I'm on disability now and  
12 that barely makes me be able to get by, with my food and my  
13 rent. But when I first aged-out, I was on income  
14 assistance and I couldn't even have a cent to myself to be  
15 able to feed myself. And if it wasn't for Directions, I'd  
16 probably, honestly wouldn't be here right now. They fed me  
17 and they gave me that hope that there was a community out  
18 there. And that even though we all have our screw-ups or  
19 we're all having a really bad day, that like, we can all  
20 come together and be able to sit down and have a good meal  
21 together. And just watch TV and enjoy ourselves.

22 And it gave me that hope, that even though  
23 we're all hurting, that there are people out there that  
24 care. And that they could care less about their paycheque  
25 and that, like, they'll sit there and talk to you for hours

**Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan**

1 and hours. So, yeah.

2 **MS. CHEYLENE MOON:** Well I've been in a  
3 bunch of different programs. I was part of the STRIVE  
4 program, which Erin's now the manager of, which she can  
5 talk more about. And all of us are actually part of  
6 Collective Impact Trust, and the three of us are on the  
7 collective young leaders for that initiative. As well as  
8 we've all been part of the Youth Research Academy at  
9 McCreary. And for the last three years I've been part of  
10 the Aboriginal Youth Mentorship Program with LUMA, where  
11 it's for youth aging-out of care, to give us the skills we  
12 need to live on our own.

13 For the last seven years, I've also been on  
14 the Youth Advisory Committee with VACFSS to help improve  
15 their services for their youth in care. And we do a lot of  
16 public speaking and travelling to different cities and  
17 countries, sometimes, to talk about issues regarding youth  
18 in care. I've also been part of the Mentor-Me Program with  
19 Pacific Association of First Nations Women, helping out  
20 their Urban Butterflies Program for youth and for  
21 Indigenous girls in care.

22 And I'm on the Youth Advisory Committee with  
23 the Network of Inner City Children Services Society, I  
24 think it's called, to help with their social capital  
25 lending system that they've just implemented and just

**Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan**

1 started like a month ago. And also with UNYA, I was part  
2 of their Connections, mentorship program, which is where I  
3 first met Erin when I was like 16 and had just graduated  
4 high school. And Erin has actually been the biggest  
5 support for me in my life, like she's always been the one  
6 to be persistent and consistent. And not everyone tries to  
7 push me to talk to them, and check up on me, but Erin has  
8 always been there.

9 **MS. ERIN PAVAN:** STRIVE is a life skills  
10 program, it is a pre-employment program. So we take youth  
11 who are still in care or who have already aged-out, and  
12 we're lucky that with our funding, we're able to pay them  
13 to come and do workshops. And it's, we try to be as  
14 holistic as possible. So it's not just like how to write a  
15 resume, but how are you going to make a good life for  
16 yourself and take care of yourself. So we can cover mental  
17 health and substance use, and nutrition, and we can cook  
18 together, and you know, dance and go to the gym. We do all  
19 kinds of wacky stuff, laughter-yoga and break dancing. I  
20 like to joke about how break dancing is a life skill at our  
21 program.

22 We also try to make it fun, and we try to  
23 not really recreate the experience of high school, which  
24 was negative for most of the youth that we're working with.  
25 It's very participatory and it's late in the day; you know,



**Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan**

1           it's not at 9:00 in the morning anymore. And then we also  
2           can set up youth with paid job placements, where we go out  
3           and find them an employer and we pay the full wage and get  
4           them to that interview and find a job that they want to do.

5                         Mainly we just try to help them with  
6           whatever it is they need help with, really. It's just  
7           about being a supportive adult in their life and trying to  
8           figure out what it is that they want from their life, and  
9           just do everything you can to make that happen. And, just  
10          like with Aunt Leah's, like Shae-Lynn mentioned, we don't  
11          have an end-date. So for us, we're just always there, as  
12          long as we're funded. They know that we're open, that you  
13          can come by; and that we have food and a friendly face, and  
14          that whatever you're going through, we're going to try and  
15          help you. That's pretty much it with STRIVE.

16                        And then, I would like to plug the UNYA  
17          connections program as well. Because I was going to speak  
18          about this later, but maybe I can talk about it now. That  
19          I was a volunteer for the Urban Native Youth Association,  
20          they have a mentorship program for young people who are  
21          aging-out of care. And it's called Kinnections, with a 'K-  
22          I-N', the idea being that you're creating, like, a family  
23          relationship.

24                        And so Cheylene, I was very lucky to have  
25          Cheylene as my mentee, because we really got along well.

**Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan**

1           And I think that this is something that everyone can and  
2           should be doing. And that communities, you know, just  
3           ordinary citizens, anybody, can step up and do something  
4           about this issue of young, Indigenous women in care, any  
5           youth in care, not having enough caring connections.

6                           And when you ask the youth, they really want  
7           people who are not being paid. That's very important, that  
8           other people don't have to have paid supports in their  
9           lives, right? They have people doing it for free. So,  
10          doing it as a volunteer is really meaningful, because it  
11          shows that you're doing it because you actually want to be  
12          there. Although it's not like my job at STRIVE is  
13          something I'm doing just for a paycheque. I don't think a  
14          lot of people in social services see it that way, but  
15          probably some of them do.

16                          But even if you are not there for the  
17          paycheque, it still makes the relationship feel different  
18          for the young people. So, just becoming, like an Auntie,  
19          like a big sister, or like a grandma for a young person is  
20          something that I think everyone can do. And you really can  
21          create a family relationship from nothing. Like I think it  
22          feels real to us and it was not like a 'civic duty' for me,  
23          it wasn't like a chore being with Cheylene. Because  
24          Cheylene is an amazing young woman and I know I've gotten  
25          just as much out of the relationship as she has. Just like

**Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan**

1 with any relationship, I've learned a lot from her and  
2 we've had a lot of fun together. And it's been really an  
3 honour to be a supportive adult in her life. And I think  
4 that's something that anyone can benefit from. So I always  
5 like to tell people about that UNYA Program, and that we  
6 should fund more programs like this as well.

7 **MS. SHELBY THOMAS:** Can you guys share a  
8 little bit about how the programs helped, or your  
9 experience with the programs?

10 **MS. CHEYLENE MOON:** Well, like I said  
11 earlier, without these programs, I don't think I could have  
12 survived aging-out of care. Because at every one of these  
13 programs, we always eat food first. And like, for the  
14 Youth Advisory Committees, I get paid for my time, like,  
15 usually with cash. And then some of the other programs, I  
16 get like, like the Aboriginal Youth Mentorship Program, I  
17 get gift cards every week, for like Super-Store or No  
18 Frills if I've been to both days out of the week. And it  
19 just really helped me eat and get by.

20 **MS. SHAE-LYNN NOSKYE:** So I started out in  
21 the Support Link Program at Aunt Leah's Place. Basically,  
22 it's supported, independent living. You have a self-  
23 contained suite, but instead of a landlord you have an  
24 overseer. So, they act completely like a landlord and they  
25 confer with your youth worker just to make sure that you

**Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan**

1 don't have people in your suite past the time you're  
2 allowed, and you're not throwing any parties.

3           Along with the suite, you get, I think it's  
4 five or six hours a week with your worker. And so it's  
5 usually split up into two days, and then one of them's  
6 usually, like you're learning life skills. And then the  
7 other time, they'll take you grocery shopping and stuff.  
8 They also have their essential skills workshops on  
9 Wednesday afternoons, and those are for not only the youth  
10 that are in the Support Link, but Link as well, if they so  
11 choose.

12           And so, after I aged-out, I took some time  
13 away from Aunt Leah's and when I went back, they had  
14 started a Youth Advisory Committee. So, I've gotten  
15 involved with that. I started as the Administrator and  
16 then I worked my way up to the Presidency; I prefer Co-  
17 Chair, though, actually, because it's definitely not a one-  
18 person show. It's a lot of people coming together in order  
19 to try and influence change.

20           So from Support Link you go into Link, which  
21 doesn't have an age-cap. They help you with things like  
22 finding housing or employment; connecting you with various  
23 services, taking you to appointments. They have a SEFY  
24 Program, so Supported Education for Fostered Youth, and  
25 they can help you out with various pieces, like paying for

Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan

1 transcripts and helping you to apply for college as well.

2 Yeah, there's just so many incredible  
3 programs that go through those doors, and it's just really  
4 incredible to see the growth with the social enterprises as  
5 well. They run a tree lot every Christmas; they have youth  
6 from the programs volunteer, you get volunteer hours  
7 through that, and sell people Christmas trees in a couple  
8 different lots in metro Vancouver.

9 And they also have Urban Thrift, which is on  
10 Main and Broadway; it's a thrift store, that all of the  
11 proceeds go directly into funding the programs. And so,  
12 when I was in the Bootstraps Training Program that they  
13 ran, they had us working in the warehouse as well as Urban  
14 Thrift, just learning basic work etiquette and such.

15 **MS. FIALKA JACK:** I'd like to reiterate that  
16 if I hadn't been able to access Directions, I wouldn't be  
17 here and to be honest, I'd probably be heavier into my  
18 addiction than I was when I showed up. I probably would,  
19 -- who knows where I would be, like they literally gave me  
20 the chance to be able to have a second chance at my life.  
21 Even though my dad and everybody around me growing up told  
22 me that I was going to end up a drug addict. And that I  
23 was going to end up dead before I was 30.

24 So, I wanted to prove every single one of  
25 them wrong, and Directions helped me with that and they

**Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan**

1           gave me hope for the fact that, even though I was in  
2           addiction, that I could work one day and be able to hold a  
3           full time job. And that there were people around me that  
4           cared, and it just -- it took me a long time to be able to  
5           get past that.

6                           And to be able to look in the mirror and  
7           actually realize that the addict in the mirror was really  
8           just crying out for help. And it was, it was a matter of  
9           time of, when could I connect to people and, like, being a  
10          foster child? Connecting isn't easy. Connecting is  
11          something that isn't second nature to me. As much as I  
12          love to connect to people and I love people, connecting is  
13          hard. Learning to trust people is the hardest thing.

14                          And Directions gave me the ability to trust  
15          people again and that people that are working with you are  
16          there just because they're a paycheque and that you're just  
17          someone they have to help that day. They really like you  
18          and they want to be there. And it created those caring  
19          connections that I actually did meet; even though they were  
20          paid, I didn't care. It was that they were there day in,  
21          day out, and they just gave me hope and I -- yeah, I've  
22          been sober for like three years. And they've promised me a  
23          job there. So, that really, actually was a huge part of  
24          why it helped me to be able to get sober, was knowing that  
25          I was going to be able to help my street brothers and

Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan

1 sisters be able to get to where my peers had helped me to  
2 get to where I am today. So, that's what I hope to do.

3 **MS. CHEYLENE MOON:** And I just remembered  
4 about a couple other programs that I've been part of. Like  
5 the Agreement With Young Adults Program, for like youth  
6 that go to post-secondary. And they've also expanded it,  
7 you do life skills programs, so you can still get funding  
8 over the summer when you're not in school.

9 And the YEAF Program, which is -- Youth  
10 Education Action Fund -- yeah, which is supposed to pay for  
11 your tuition and books. Because I would not have become  
12 financially stable if I didn't go into post-secondary  
13 school. Like, because it's so hard to live off of income  
14 assistance, and then it was hard for me to find a job  
15 because of my anxiety and depression. But like, I loved  
16 school growing up, because it was like my safe place away  
17 from my foster homes. And like math and science are my  
18 best subjects, so like I just enjoyed school.

19 And going into college, it was like my first  
20 time being financially stable, because they pay for your  
21 rent and they give you like a portion for food and living  
22 expenses. And then, so while I was homeless during my  
23 second semester of school, I just saved up that money that  
24 I was supposed to be paying for rent so that I would have  
25 money for when I got out of school. And I had enough money

Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan

1 to sustain myself for one month after school, in case I  
2 couldn't get a job or anything. So, that has really helped  
3 me get out of poverty. Yeah, not as many youth in care  
4 know about it, and like more people need to know that you  
5 can get paid to go to school. It's actually really  
6 helpful.

7 **MS. SHELBY THOMAS:** Erin, can you share your  
8 observations of the youth who use the STRIVE Program?  
9 Like, just demographically or just their experiences, or  
10 how the STRIVE Program helps the youth who use it.

11 **MS. ERIN PAVAN:** Yeah, I can say that more  
12 than half of them have been Indigenous, which basically  
13 exactly reflects the proportion that are in care. And more  
14 than half of them identify as having a disability, which is  
15 also reflective of the population. And most have not  
16 completed high school when they come to us.

17 I can also say that in -- so Agreements With  
18 Young Adults that Cheylene was just talking about, is a  
19 Ministry of Children and Family Development program, and  
20 all the provinces have something similar. And it's  
21 basically that, after you age-out, if you're going to  
22 school they'll pay for your living expenses and help you to  
23 go to school. And prior to October of 2016, you could get  
24 this support if you were in school or doing a vocational  
25 program or in rehab, some kind of rehabilitative, addiction



**Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan**

1 treatment. And in 2016 they expanded it so you could also  
2 get the support while attending a life skills program.

3 So we do see since then a lot more youth  
4 coming to STRIVE so that they can get that support. Which  
5 is great, because when we have youth come into the Program  
6 who are homeless, it's really hard when you don't have --  
7 you know, there is a hierarchy of needs, and when someone's  
8 not housed, there's not -- you can kind of help them  
9 survive, but there's not that much you can do. And the  
10 housing market in Vancouver is just ridiculous, like it's  
11 so unaffordable.

12 And the youth are facing also  
13 discrimination, too, right? If you're on income  
14 assistance you've got to bring this paper from the Ministry  
15 showing that you're on welfare, and people just slam the  
16 door in your face. And same with, no one wants to rent to  
17 young people either, right? And also people of colour  
18 experience discrimination when they're renting. So,  
19 they've got a lot stacked against them trying to rent here,  
20 and having that money coming in for their rent from  
21 Agreements With Young Adults while they're attending STRIVE  
22 helps us to actually be able to say, "Okay, now you've got  
23 your housing. What do you actually want to do?" You know,  
24 like, "What are you passionate about, or what do you want  
25 to do with your life? Or, what other help do you need,

**Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan**

1       like maybe you need mental health supports or whatever it  
2       is. Do you want to go back to school?" And that's been  
3       really helpful.

4                   And this might be veering off topic a little  
5       bit, but the thing about Agreements With Young Adults is,  
6       it was just expanded again, so that you can access it in  
7       B.C. up to age 27, for a max of four years. It used to be,  
8       you could only do it for two years, so you couldn't do a  
9       full Bachelor's degree, so people would get -- I know  
10      people who would go two years into their BA, and then  
11      leave, because they only have funding for two years, so how  
12      am I supposed to do this four-year degree, exactly?

13                   So now you can do a four-year degree, and  
14      it's up to age 27. So there's more support, but if you  
15      drop out, that money stops coming in. So you can imagine,  
16      for example, let's say you're going to college. You've  
17      somehow made it through high school and gotten to school,  
18      even though, statistically, not a lot of youth from care  
19      graduate from high school and are able to access this.

20                   So it's like, they don't know about it and  
21      they're not able to get there. And you start having  
22      anxiety and you stop going to class; and then, the more you  
23      don't go, the more anxious you are. And you don't have a  
24      parent to talk to about it. And you're afraid to tell your  
25      social worker that you're not going to school, because you

**Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan**

1 know that if you tell them you're not going, they're going  
2 to cut your money off because they have to, that's the  
3 policy.

4 And then the next thing you know, you're  
5 dropped out of school and you don't have rent for next  
6 month, because your agreement has been cut off, because  
7 you're not attending a program like you're supposed to be.

8 So, the thing is, if we're trying to catch  
9 the most vulnerable youth, the youth who are like 'slipping  
10 through the cracks' or whatever term you want to use, the  
11 young women who are ending up missing or murdered -- these  
12 are often the youth who are not actually able to attend  
13 school, or get themselves to a program; like, the really  
14 vulnerable youth. They might not be able to stay on that  
15 Agreement With Young Adults.

16 I don't think that that is actually the  
17 solution, and I think that's why this program's been around  
18 for a long time, and it hasn't stopped these adverse  
19 outcomes that we see. And I think that's the reason, is  
20 that the youth who are able to access it are already kind  
21 of doing okay. And then there's nothing for the youth who  
22 are really struggling.

23 And we still, at STRIVE, we'll have youth  
24 who are in the Program and they're on that agreement while  
25 they're in it, and they miss one day, and call, like having

1 a panic attack. "Oh my God, I'm not there, is my IA going  
2 to get cut off, are you going to tell my social worker?"  
3 And they're living with this constant panic of  
4 homelessness, just not having this safety net.

5 And I think people who have that safety net  
6 -- like, just the knowledge that if something goes really  
7 wrong in your life, you can go crash with your parents?  
8 Just gives you this sort of feeling of, like confidence,  
9 that you can go out there and mess up and it's gonna be  
10 okay. And the youth who were raised in care often don't  
11 have that. So they're just living in fear all the time, of  
12 like, I'm just two steps away from being homeless.

13 And I don't think people realize what it's  
14 like to live with that fear, and that AYA is just a  
15 continuation of that. It's like, "Well, if I mess up, if I  
16 don't go to STRIVE or I don't go to school, I'm homeless  
17 again."

18 So, I think it would make more sense if we  
19 just had that be guaranteed, and we just said, "Okay, we're  
20 gonna support you till you're 25 and we're gonna encourage  
21 you to be working towards something, but we're not going to  
22 cut you off if you stumble." Right? So that they feel  
23 safe enough to make mistakes or follow their passions and  
24 thrive, just like children who come from families that are  
25 able to support them at any age, right?

1                   **MS. SHELBY THOMAS:** Can you guys share your  
2 experiences of reconnecting with your family or your  
3 community?

4                   **MS. FIALKA JACK:** So, me and my mom, I  
5 hadn't seen her since I was like four or five years old.  
6 And when I moved here, it was a difficult situation,  
7 because I had just moved from my father. But like,  
8 reconnecting with her, to be honest, has been super  
9 awkward, and it's only been since May of last year. So  
10 it's awkward, and as much as I know she's my mother, she,  
11 in a way, feels kind of like a stranger to me.

12                   And it's not because I don't love her, and  
13 it's not because I don't appreciate what she's given to me.  
14 It's that I have been my parent for the last 25 years. I  
15 have been the one that has been there for me. She hasn't  
16 been the one that has held my hand while I've cried over a  
17 boy breaking my heart; she wasn't the one that was there  
18 for me when anything happened to me. So it's difficult.  
19 And I feel like there's something missing, and I can't put  
20 my finger on what it is; and I feel like she feels the same  
21 way, she's -- I don't know, it's really difficult.

22                   And like, when I was homeless a couple of  
23 years ago, my dad got back in contact with me and he kept  
24 just shilling me money to keep my mouth shut over the abuse  
25 that he had given me, and it was his only way to make me

**Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan**

1 shut up. And I was like, "okay." And when I finally got  
2 back in contact with my stepmom that he was contacting me,  
3 he immediately blocked me out of his life, and it was  
4 difficult, but I realized that it was probably the  
5 healthiest thing that I could have had. Because he isn't a  
6 healthy relationship to have with, is I guess the best way  
7 to put it.

8 And I don't think that I would want to have  
9 him in my life and to be able to share the things that I'm  
10 doing with him, because he has destroyed almost everything  
11 that is beautiful to me. And it's not easy to forgive and  
12 forget, I guess. And I want to, but I don't think that  
13 I'll ever want to reconnect with him.

14 **MS. CHEYLENE MOON:** I have a large family,  
15 so. I guess I could start with my mom, because after a  
16 year or two of us being in care, she stopped showing up to  
17 our visits, because she got further into her addiction. So  
18 I'd only see her, like, two or three times a year for a few  
19 years. And like slowly her addiction got worse, until it  
20 was to the point of drug-induced psychosis, so I just don't  
21 talk to her or see her anymore.

22 But like, my dad has always been there for  
23 us, and he's always been very loving and supportive. But  
24 he has a brain injury and a walking disability, so he  
25 wasn't able to look after us when our mom couldn't. But

**Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan**

1 he's always been very supportive, although he is always  
2 asking me for help with things. So, along with supporting  
3 myself and my younger brother, I also have to support my  
4 dad. So, yeah, at a young age I kind of took on the  
5 mother role in my family, because I'm like the oldest  
6 daughter that I grew up with.

7 And just like a month or two ago, I met my  
8 older sister for the first time, which was really nice,  
9 because she's really friendly. And I've always wondered  
10 what it would be like if I knew my older sisters. To have  
11 a good, healthy female -- like, growing up with my parents,  
12 my mom was like really hard working, did anything she could  
13 to support us. And it's just once we got taken away that  
14 she became homeless, and then all that grief, like, it just  
15 took her down a bad path, I guess.

16 And, like, when I was 15, my younger brother  
17 and sister moved to Merritt with our aunt, which we had  
18 only met like a few months before they moved up there. And  
19 she was really strict and kind of abusive, and like, my  
20 siblings have not been the same since they lived there with  
21 her. Because her and my dad were part of the Sixties  
22 Scoop, and the home that they lived in was very abusive.  
23 And so, I think that just kind of got passed along to us.

24 Because my aunt also didn't like my dad, and  
25 she was willing to be open about it with us, because he was

**Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan**

1 continuing the cycle since we ended up in care. And so,  
2 like, it's me and my siblings have all blocked her out of  
3 our life.

4 And then I think a couple of years ago, we  
5 reconnected with my mom's side of the family. And that was  
6 really nice for us, because I only have a couple of  
7 memories of them from when I was three years old. And  
8 then, another memory from when I was 11, meeting, like  
9 having my grandma come stay over. And so, like my mom's  
10 side of the family is always trying to, like, check in,  
11 make sure me and my siblings are doing okay and stuff. And  
12 they're trying to become part of our lives again. Which is  
13 really nice.

14 But yeah, I also lost connection with my  
15 older brothers when we went into care, because they have  
16 different dads. So I didn't really see them much after  
17 going into care. So, yeah, it's just a lot of different  
18 ways to feel about the different parts of my family, I  
19 guess.

20 **MS. SHAE-LYNN NOSKYE:** So, my mom comes from  
21 a large sibling group. She has five sisters and a half-  
22 brother, and they all ended up in care as children. And  
23 this was in Alberta, and obviously, after hearing the  
24 things we've gone through, you can just imagine what  
25 someone in care back in the '80s would have had to go



1 through. It was a lot worse.

2 And so I can't blame her for the troubles  
3 that she faces. But there's definitely a disconnect there.  
4 I have to respect the choices she makes, and when she's  
5 ready, yeah.

6 **MS. SHELBY THOMAS:** Commissioner Robinson,  
7 can we have a 15-minute break?

8 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Yes, let's do  
9 that, we'll have a 15-minute break, and we'll be back at  
10 2:55.

11 --- Upon adjourning at 14:40

12 --- Upon resuming at 15:05

13 **MS. SHELBY THOMAS:** What differences are --  
14 can you guys explain what differences are experienced by  
15 kids in the foster system, and what is experienced with  
16 children who have parental support?

17 **MS. SHAE-LYNN NOSKYE:** I think it's really  
18 important to note that, for parented youth, you're not cut  
19 off at 19. There's still a place to go if you're scared,  
20 if you're hungry, if you need to do your laundry. It's not  
21 really something that youth in care get to experience.

22 I read in a report once, I believe  
23 approximately 7 out of 10 families still provide free rent  
24 and groceries and emotional support to their children  
25 between the ages of 19 and 28. So, yeah.

Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan

1                   **MS. ERIN PAVAN:** I think part of it, too,  
2                   while you're in care, it's just about consistency and  
3                   stability. As we know, some people get moved around to a  
4                   lot of foster homes. Actually Indigenous youth are more  
5                   likely to get moved around, there's more risk of the  
6                   placement breaking down. You also get switched between  
7                   social workers, so sometimes you don't really get a chance  
8                   to build a relationship with anyone. And like the young  
9                   women have spoken about, it's hard to trust people and  
10                  build relationships when you were raised that way.

11                  So a lot of the times you just don't get a  
12                  chance to really connect to anyone, and then the next thing  
13                  you know, you're aged-out. And it's inconsistent, too;  
14                  like, you might get put in a group home, or you might get  
15                  put in a foster care placement; you might get put with your  
16                  siblings, you might be split up. And some foster homes are  
17                  better than others.

18                  And if you don't like where you are, it's  
19                  not really easy to get moved. And I think Cheylene touched  
20                  on that, that running away from your foster home doesn't  
21                  mean that your social worker is going to say, "Oh, are you  
22                  not happy there? Like maybe we should move you somewhere  
23                  else."

24                  Yeah, that's it.

25                  **MS. CHEYLENE MOON:** I don't know very many

Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan

1 people that are living with their parents. I know a lot of  
2 youth in care, from all the programs that I've gone to.  
3 Yeah, I don't really know much of the difference.

4 **MS. FIALKA JACK:** I think the difference  
5 between youth in care and youth that may not be in care and  
6 have support, is that the supports that youth have during  
7 care are the supports that you can only have until you're  
8 19. And then they're cut off. And you learn as you grow  
9 up in care that everything is temporary and nothing is ever  
10 really set in stone.

11 And tomorrow, you could be in a new place,  
12 you could have a new social worker, and -- or, you might  
13 not even have any of your belongings. Like, it is so up in  
14 the air, and it's like -- I feel like there isn't enough  
15 stability for foster children.

16 And I think that is a huge issue and  
17 McCreary Centre Society did a report, I don't remember  
18 exactly which one, but I know that there's a report, that  
19 they talked about how moving around a certain amount of  
20 times actually will cause instability and will cause issues  
21 later in life. So, foster children move at any given time,  
22 five to six times, if not more, during a year. So, that's  
23 once a month to every other month, you know, some children  
24 move on a weekly basis.

25 And there's not a lot of foster homes that

**Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan**

1 are available. So to jump from home to home, you're really  
2 going to start jumping from group home to group home once  
3 your social worker's not really interested in filling out  
4 the paperwork to get you into a foster home. So, like,  
5 when -- I'd assume that when you grow up in your home, you  
6 know, you go to your parents and tell them what's going on  
7 in school or what the issues are that, you know, might  
8 arise in your personal life. But, like, as a foster child,  
9 who do you go to? Who do you think of, that these foster  
10 children turn to? They -- they're probably less likely to  
11 turn to their foster parents, because why would they want  
12 to open up to someone that they know they might not even  
13 see in two weeks?

14 You know? They don't -- like, it's  
15 difficult, and I think it definitely, like -- yeah.

16 **MS. CHEYLENE MOON:** I only know like a few  
17 people that live with their parents who are also Native,  
18 and like, they still struggle a lot, too, the ones that I  
19 know. And some of them have to work to help support them  
20 and their family at a young age, just like I do. And -- I  
21 don't see a big difference between me and my friends that  
22 do live with their parents. So, I don't know, just -- it's  
23 hard for all Native youth, I think, growing up in this  
24 city; and also in urban areas as well.

25 **MS. SHELBY THOMAS:** You're all lovely and



**Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan**

1 confidence. And now when I do public speaking, I can look  
2 at the crowd and count how many people are in the audience  
3 while I'm waiting for my turn to speak. And like, I love  
4 math, so the numbers actually help calm me down when I'm  
5 counting people. Also, my favourite singer, Ronnie Radke,  
6 who's also the lead singer of "Falling in Reverse," his  
7 music has really helped me through hard times and it's been  
8 very inspirational and he helped me to keep going when I  
9 felt like I had no one there to support me.

10 And so I usually talk about him a lot. And  
11 I got my first tattoo after him. Yeah, music and poetry  
12 has really helped me to express myself. Also, yes, dying  
13 and cutting my hair; because when I'm upset, I just go and  
14 I change my hair. And then I feel a bit better, because  
15 I'm kind of like a new person with this new look.

16 **MS. SHAE-LYNN NOSKYE:** I just want to take a  
17 moment and recognize the fact that I was really lucky to  
18 graduate on time, in 2013. And then shortly after, in  
19 2014, I aged-out. So it's taken me nearly five years now  
20 to sort of get to a place where I feel like I have  
21 stability and a sense of permanency. And, you know, caring  
22 connections. And while some of them are still paid  
23 connections, I feel like I've been able to broaden my  
24 horizons and sort of just meet genuine people who actually  
25 care for me.

1                   And it's definitely motivated me to continue  
2                   my work with advocacy, as well as going back to school. So  
3                   in May, I start my prerequisites; I'm looking to go to  
4                   Langara and do the Social Service Worker program, and  
5                   eventually I want to work towards my Bachelor's of Social  
6                   Work. And I just want to continue with my youth advocacy,  
7                   because it's really important for people with lived  
8                   experience to be able to be there and support you, and go,  
9                   you know, "I was exactly where you are now, and it does get  
10                  better. It takes a while. But the only thing holding you  
11                  back is your own, I guess -- your own limitations."

12                  **MS. CHEYLENE MOON:** I remembered some other  
13                  stuff. Like, also from my youth advocacy work, it's helped  
14                  me realize that my voice matters. And that I can make a  
15                  positive change in society. But also, I forgot to talk  
16                  about my goals and aspirations in life.

17                  Right now I'm trying to get enough credits  
18                  to transfer to the Forestry Campus at UBC, because like, I  
19                  love nature, and I just want to work in nature. And I'd  
20                  like to do something for the economy. But I also want to  
21                  learn natural medicines and become like a medicine-person.

22                  **MS. FIALKA JACK:** I honestly don't think I  
23                  would have been able to make it this far if it wasn't for  
24                  my uncle, who has honestly stood by me for the last 11  
25                  years, through everything, even my addiction. And he was

**Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan**

1           probably the only person that fully accepted me within my  
2           addiction and didn't judge me. And was always there to  
3           tell me that what I was going through was going to get  
4           better; and that even though it might not seem like it, it  
5           was just a matter of time; and that it was a matter of me  
6           having to take those steps, and to be able to find my own  
7           self-worth.

8                                 And even to this day, I still have to remind  
9           myself of my own self-worth, and that I am gonna get  
10          somewhere, and that I am going somewhere. And my writing  
11          has really helped a lot, I think. I write a lot of poetry  
12          and it really does help take out everything on my chest,  
13          and to, I guess, put to words feelings that I wouldn't be  
14          able to if I was to tell someone in a conversation.

15                                And, I'll be honest, I was never -- I wasn't  
16          overly proud of my Native heritage and it wasn't because I  
17          didn't love that part, it was that I was ripped away from  
18          it at such a young age. And I was shoved into a white home  
19          and only with white people, and it was really hard to  
20          reconnect to my culture. And even to this day, it is hard.  
21          And it takes so much umpffh to be able to text someone, and  
22          be like, "Hey, I really need to go to the sweat lodge this  
23          week," you know, and to be able to reach out to people.

24                                And to be honest, I think that reconnecting  
25          to my culture has honestly been one thing that has helped



**Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan**

1 me in the last few years. And I think that more youth  
2 should reconnect to their culture because it is like -- it  
3 is the most amazing feeling to know that there are people  
4 out there that care, and that the Creator is there  
5 listening to every single tear that drops, and that He is  
6 there catching you, no matter what.

7 And it's -- finding your purpose is  
8 important as a foster child. And I think that growing up,  
9 we aren't told that we have purpose, and we aren't told to  
10 learn to find our purpose. And we aren't taught that we  
11 have something, we are here for a reason. And I really do  
12 think that is something we should all work on as, like,  
13 before aging-out of care, is showing that these youth have  
14 self-worth and that they have purpose in life. And that  
15 they aren't just a foster child that's going to age-out at  
16 19 and have a 50-50 percent chance of being homeless or  
17 addicted to drugs.

18 I think that these kids need to find that  
19 gem within themselves to feel good about themselves, and  
20 they have every right. And like I've said multiple times,  
21 Directions Youth Services has been the one that has really  
22 helped me figure out what my purpose was.

23 And growing up, I always, even at like  
24 three, four years old, I always wanted to help people and I  
25 always loved people. Most parents would be like, "Don't

**Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan**

1 talk to that person, they're on drugs!" I was that person  
2 that would go up to them, and I'd be like, "I love you,  
3 you're amazing!" And like, it was just something that I  
4 couldn't help but do. And if I don't do that during the  
5 day at some point, helping someone, I can't go to bed at  
6 night. I can't go to bed at night feeling easy and feeling  
7 okay, knowing that there are people out there that are just  
8 as lonely as me and just as scared and just as unloved, or  
9 unnoticed. And I don't want anybody else to ever feel the  
10 way that I have felt. And so, yeah.

11 **MS. CHEYLENE MOON:** I'm similar, where like,  
12 if I'm down, helping someone else makes me feel better.  
13 And I just remembered about this poem that I wrote when I  
14 was 18. I wrote it to like share with people and I feel  
15 like now is a good time to share it, because it's also a  
16 good reminder for myself when I share it with other people.

17 "Chaos, it can happen to anyone, in all  
18 different ways.

19 It is no fun when you're stuck in this haze,  
20 Separation, abuse, heartache and shame,  
21 In the end, it all feels the same.

22 But do not worry, there is still hope,  
23 No need to hurry to learn how to cope.

24 Healing takes times, something we all need  
25 to learn.

1                   You will be fine, maybe there's just bridges  
2                   to burn.

3                   Find what makes you happy and hold on tight  
4                   Make sure it's worth the fight to be part of  
5                   your life.

6                   Happiness isn't hard to find, it's all in  
7                   your mind.

8                   So work your way out of the darkness and  
9                   into the light."

10                  **MS. SHELBY THOMAS:** What do you guys believe  
11                  would help children transitioning from foster care?

12                  **MS. FIALKA JACK:** So on average, when foster  
13                  children in Vancouver -- not every foster child will end up  
14                  with a housing worker or a transition worker -- but when  
15                  you do, sometimes it's usually within the last four weeks  
16                  before you age-out. I was lucky enough to have two social  
17                  workers that were really on my ass about trying to work on  
18                  things, and they had me have a transition worker from the  
19                  moment I turned 16 and it was probably one of the most  
20                  helpful things to have.

21                  Because they taught me how to budget with  
22                  the money that I had, even though obviously that's not how  
23                  much you get when you age-out of care. But at least, you  
24                  know, I was able to learn what were essentials and like  
25                  what I personally needed in my diet. And I think,

**Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan**

1 definitely, having peers that have had lived experience  
2 would be super helpful. Because when you're 19 and you've  
3 just aged-out of care, in that moment, you could feel so  
4 alone and you feel like your pain is your pain, and only  
5 you have ever felt that. But, you don't realize that there  
6 are a thousand other kids in B.C. that are aging-out at the  
7 same time as you. And that you're not the only one that is  
8 feeling bad.

9 So, I think that having peer support that  
10 has lived through and could have a positive impact on you  
11 aging-out, would probably be really helpful. And I know  
12 that the three of us do that type of work, and we help  
13 foster children that are aging-out right now. And we give  
14 them peer work and we don't get paid, we go, and we go  
15 bowling with them; we've done a few different things. And  
16 it's -- to be honest, I wish that was something that was  
17 around when I was aging-out, or getting ready to age-out.  
18 Because, then it would have been able to connect me to  
19 other foster children and know that I wasn't the only one  
20 that was going through that at that time.

21 And to be able to make friends, and to be  
22 able to make peer mentors, so -- yeah.

23 **MS. CHEYLENE MOON:** Yeah, I think a solid  
24 support network for youth aging-out of care is very  
25 important. Just like having healthy people to look up to

**Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan**

1 and maybe someone who's been through similar experiences,  
2 but has gotten out of those dark times. It's like --  
3 really important.

4 And also, like Collective Impact, where with  
5 our Connect to Thrive event, we're having all these  
6 different organizations and programs. And you get little  
7 stamps or stickers with their information for the youth  
8 that attend that gathering. And I think that's really  
9 important to have that little black book of all the  
10 services that youth can utilize after they've aged-out of  
11 care.

12 Because, like if you're lucky enough to have  
13 a social worker that knows about the stuff and passes that  
14 information on to you, like I did, then you can find ways  
15 to survive. But for those youth that don't know about all  
16 these services, they're the ones that are more likely to  
17 end up on the street, or addicted to drugs and stuff.

18 I just think all the youth from care need  
19 that little black book of services that are available to  
20 them and a good support network.

21 **MS. ERIN PAVAN:** So, like Cheylene  
22 mentioned, I don't think that we said that we're all part  
23 of a Collective Impact Initiative. So I don't know if  
24 anyone's familiar with this. It's a model for systemic  
25 social change, it's grass roots, so it's basically just

**Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan**

1 people coming together around an issue that's affecting the  
2 community. And for us, it's youth aging out of care in  
3 Vancouver. We have over 100 members who've been around for  
4 four years now.

5 These three young women are all part of the  
6 Collective Young Leaders, so that's like the Youth Advisory  
7 portion of the Collective. We have people from different  
8 government ministries, all the different agencies across  
9 Vancouver who are supporting youth aging-out, and we've  
10 been working on this for a few years of how to make better  
11 outcomes for the youth who are aging-out in Vancouver every  
12 year.

13 And one thing that we do is, every year, all  
14 the youth who are aging-out in Vancouver that year are  
15 invited to a big marketplace, where all the resources are  
16 there. We have a table, and there's food, and you find out  
17 all the things you're gonna need to know when you age-out.

18 And you get a transition kit. So it's like  
19 -- a toilet brush and a frying pan, and stuff you don't  
20 know, like a shower curtain; expensive stuff that you don't  
21 know you're going to need when you turn 19 and are going to  
22 be on your own. So this is a difficult, it's a complex  
23 issue. We've been working on it for years.

24 In a nutshell, I would say for the youth who  
25 are in care, we need to provide better services while

1           they're in care. And one thing is, I think the  
2           Guardianship Social Workers have unmanageable caseloads. I  
3           think they're at around three times what is reasonable for  
4           them to actually provide good quality service and have time  
5           to check in with all the youth that they're responsible  
6           for.

7                           We need more foster parents. Like really  
8           badly. We do not have enough foster parents and enough  
9           good foster parents, we need people to step up.

10                           And we need to make sure we have good  
11           transition planning that starts early, so that we teach  
12           those life skills early. So that by the time they turn 19,  
13           they're ready. And I also would like to see that 19 pushed  
14           up. Like I said, I think 19 is not reasonable, your brain  
15           is still developing; you're not really ready for the long-  
16           term thinking. And we also see that demographically with  
17           the rest of the population, people aren't moving out at 19.  
18           So it just doesn't, it's a policy that got put in place a  
19           long time ago that is no longer appropriate. So I would  
20           say, raise the age and then do better planning for the  
21           transition.

22                           **MS. SHAE-LYNN NOSKYE:** So there's a B.C.  
23           report called "Fostering Success: Improving Educational  
24           Outcomes for Youth in/from Care". And they have 12 action  
25           items that they believe will improve the outcomes for

1 youth.

2 The first one, is to set an expectation of  
3 success within MCFD and the Ministry of Education for  
4 children and youth in care. This includes closing the  
5 graduation gap, encouraging youth to succeed and use their  
6 full potential, as well as valuing the effort that they're  
7 able to give.

8 The second one, is validate the value of  
9 caring relationships. So, relation-based practice is  
10 pivotal to positive outcomes. Trust is built based on  
11 interactions between individuals, not between children and  
12 government officials. There needs to be more importance  
13 placed on relationship-building between youth and their  
14 social worker. That way the youth feels comfortable in  
15 sharing their struggles and successes. It should not be  
16 common practice to only see your social worker every three  
17 to five months unless you're in crisis.

18 Just for a reference, in 2013, when I asked  
19 my social worker how many cases they had on their load? I  
20 was told 38. That's 38 young women and men that require  
21 support and are expected to put their trust and faith into  
22 the same individual. And that's a recipe for disaster if I  
23 ever saw one.

24 The third one, is to promote the work and  
25 support of peer community mentors. As you can tell, just



**Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan**

1 by the panel, many youth in care agree that it's important  
2 for there to be people with lived experiences similar to  
3 their own, that they're able to talk to about their  
4 struggles. Peer support workers are pivotal to academic  
5 achievement and transitional success. They foster a sense  
6 of belonging in someone who might have originally felt as  
7 if they were meant to live on the island of misfit toys.

8 The fourth one, is to expand the  
9 implementation of how the wrap-around approaches. There  
10 needs to be focus placed on the coordination of tracking  
11 the educational outcomes of youth in care in order to  
12 better support them and celebrate their successes.

13 Number five, is strengthen knowledge and  
14 practices in relation to cultural competency. So, ensure  
15 youth have access to, and are supported in, engaging in  
16 various learning opportunities and professional development  
17 in a culturally relevant way. This might include exploring  
18 linkages with Indigenous organizations and opportunities to  
19 strengthen the cultural identity of students.

20 It wasn't until I was in high school that I  
21 learned how to smudge. And it was my Aboriginal Mental  
22 Health clinician that took me to my first few sweats. As I  
23 learned about the culture I'd been denied as a child, I  
24 felt as if I was unlocking a whole piece of my identity  
25 that I was never aware I had. What I was being taught felt

**Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan**

1           inherently right within me, it positively affected my  
2           mental health, and every youth deserves to feel that exact  
3           same way.

4                         Number six, is support the development of  
5           turning separate practices into pieces of a forward  
6           community. So that means strengthening the ties between  
7           agencies involved with a specific individual for best  
8           practice to support a youth. It's an interconnected  
9           approach that looks at the bigger picture instead of the  
10          current problem or just a specific jurisdiction.

11                        Train and support caregivers to focus on  
12          educational outcomes. Encourage their involvement. When I  
13          was 14, my foster parent didn't care whether or not I made  
14          it to class. They actually -- they actually told me that  
15          it didn't matter to them whether I attended or not, because  
16          at the end of the day it didn't affect them in the long  
17          run.

18                        And number eight, is convene education  
19          partners who will praise the success of young people in  
20          care. Social worker support alone is often not enough, but  
21          having a youth in care flagged within a school data base  
22          can help educators know when to bring together social  
23          workers, care givers and other supports to strategize how  
24          to make school a meaningful experience.

25                        In 12<sup>th</sup> grade, my champion was my Aboriginal

**Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan**

1 support worker at school. I was starting to deal with a  
2 lot of social anxiety and they allowed me to do my course  
3 work in their office when my anxiety got so intrusive that  
4 I was not longer able to sit among my 30 peers in a given  
5 class. Because at the time there was definitely overflow  
6 of students in the classroom.

7 Number nine, is explore funding models to  
8 promote school success for youth in care, trying to change  
9 the educational outcomes of such a large group of people  
10 requires teamwork from the community level all the way up  
11 to provincial strategies.

12 The 10<sup>th</sup> point is, strengthen the cross-  
13 Ministry joint protocols on educational outcomes for youth  
14 in care. And specifically what is meant by this, is that  
15 there needs to be an address of how to properly share  
16 information, while also protecting the privacy of the  
17 youth. And collaboration to determine the joint areas of  
18 responsibilities.

19 The 11<sup>th</sup> point, is ensure information systems  
20 identify and track youth in care's pathways through school.  
21 And I'm not quite sure if this is a reality yet, to my  
22 knowledge there is very few studies that track the outcomes  
23 of youth who have aged out of care. Except for at their  
24 transition meeting with MCFD when they're getting ready to  
25 age-out and have not actually done so yet.

1           The few statistics that we do have from the  
2           677 youths that aged-out in B.C. between April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012 and  
3           March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2013, 48 percent ended up on income assistance  
4           within six months of their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday. According to  
5           Opportunities in Transition, 45 percent of the youth in the  
6           sample had been involved in the justice system in 2003.  
7           And out of the 37 youth that were interviewed for the  
8           report, when youth had aged-out of care, 13 were parents  
9           and 4 were expecting their second child by final report.

10           So there's a foster care alumnae study that  
11           examined the outcomes for 659 youth who had aged-out  
12           between 2000 and 2002: 25 percent had PTSD, which is  
13           higher than the rate found in US war veterans; and 54  
14           percent had been diagnosed with at least one mental  
15           illness; from that, 40 percent of those youth had three or  
16           more diagnoses.

17           And so the last one, is to give special  
18           attention to the educational pathways of youth in care on  
19           independent living and youth agreements. Youth living on  
20           their own need extra support to have their education  
21           treated like the priority that it is.

22           **MS. SHELBY THOMAS:** At this time, do any of  
23           you have anything else to share?

24           **MS. ERIN PAVAN:** There is something that I  
25           would like to say, that we also need to be focusing on

**Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan**

1           keeping kids out of care in the first place. So, we want  
2           to do something to end the over-representation of  
3           Indigenous youth in care, it just keeps climbing, right?  
4           And so, I think there's a few things that should be done  
5           about this.

6                                One is that when First Nations communities  
7           want to take jurisdiction over their child and family  
8           services, they need to be supported to do that, and have  
9           the funding that they need to deliver quality services.  
10          And in a way that makes sense for their community.

11                           And we also, like I said, I think MCFD is  
12          just underfunded and understaffed, and we need more family-  
13          strengthening programming, right? It's just - when you  
14          don't have a lot of funding and a lot of staff, you're  
15          always just going to be doing damage control. So anytime  
16          there's cutbacks at MCFD, Child Protection is, like that's  
17          the core. Anything other than that is going to be seen as  
18          cut-able, right?

19                           So, we need to really prioritize the  
20          programming that's going to help parents keep their  
21          children at home. And we need to think about why  
22          Indigenous kids are being put into care, and it's mostly  
23          what's called "neglect". And that's really poverty, right?  
24          It's about not having, not being able to house your kids  
25          and having to maybe even put them in voluntary care, just

1           because you don't have somewhere for them to live that's  
2           safe. Or not having, working so much that you're not also  
3           able to clean the house and make sure that they get to  
4           school because you're working two jobs to make ends meet.  
5           And you don't have enough money to make sure that they have  
6           the clothes and the school supplies and the food that they  
7           need. So, no one should be forced by poverty to have their  
8           kids be put in care.

9                           And then the other piece is about the  
10           intergenerational trauma and mental health and addictions.  
11           So, we need people to be supported to be well enough to be  
12           good parents to their kids. And we need programming to  
13           help people access counselling or treatment, whatever it  
14           is. And then the issue of aging-out, would be lessened  
15           once we have less kids in care. So I just wanted to speak  
16           about that as well.

17                           **MS. SHELBY THOMAS:** Are there any other  
18           things you want to say?

19                           **MS. CHEYLENE MOON:** Well, Fialka said, "all  
20           my relations," and that reminded me of this prayer my dad  
21           taught me as a teenager. It's:

22                           *"Kooks-chum* (phon) Great Mystery, for all  
23           our relations and their ships which keep us all united and  
24           bonded within reality's healthy and happy grass.

25                           *Kooks-chum* Great Mystery for the preparation

Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan

1 and presentation of a healthier, happier society. Give  
2 care."

3 Oh, yeah -- and also, because most people  
4 have incorporated the Western view of "taking care". And  
5 my dad says care is not something that can be taken, it's  
6 something that's supposed to be given. So, if you can  
7 replace "take care" with "give care" when you say goodbye  
8 to people; it's like, it's going to be much healthier,  
9 because the words you say are actually really important.  
10 And they have an impact on society. So even just like  
11 saying "give care" every once in a while can help create  
12 positive changes.

13 **MS. SHELBY THOMAS:** Commissioner Robinson,  
14 do you have any comments or questions?

15 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** So many! I  
16 thank all of you so much for being here with us, for  
17 sharing with us. Sharing with the rest of the country.

18 I have some questions and many of them  
19 you've actually answered as we went along. I have this  
20 habit, in the margins, I have questions and things I'm  
21 thinking about. And Erin, you talked about how important  
22 it is -- I know care is needed in some cases, right? But  
23 the importance of the support and resources before it  
24 becomes the option. And I was wondering if there were  
25 things, specifically, that you three would like to have

1           seen. Like what are the things you needed that weren't  
2           there that you would want to share with me.

3                           **MS. FIALKA JACK:** So a year-and-a-half ago,  
4           I went and I wrote the Ministry for my foster care records.  
5           Because I wanted to see the actual reason behind why I was  
6           taken away. And a couple of weeks ago I got it back, after  
7           a year-and-a-half of waiting. And it was probably like, it  
8           was a late Christmas gift, to be honest. Really sad  
9           Christmas gift.

10                           But as I was reading through it, I was  
11           noticing that my mother needed a lot of support. My mom,  
12           at the time when she found out she was pregnant with me,  
13           she diagnosed with leukemia. And she refused to go through  
14           with treatment, because she knew that that meant she would  
15           have to abort me. And she continued on with her pregnancy  
16           and she still had me. And she was still sick, and it was  
17           written in my records that it seemed like she was wishy-  
18           washy, but I know that she was really, really sick with  
19           cancer at the time. And to be honest, I think that  
20           probably would have helped a lot, if they had given her  
21           more supports around that. And if they had been a little  
22           bit more lenient in the timing of what she was dealing  
23           with.

24                           Because there were days that she might not  
25           have made appointments that she was supposed to meet me



1 for, or social worker appointments, and it was because she  
2 was sick. And she was at the hospital.

3 So, for the fact that we were taken away,  
4 because she wasn't able to make appointments because she  
5 was sick and trying to take care of herself to make sure  
6 that she was there for her children. It just kind of seems  
7 -- I don't even think redundant is the right word; it's --  
8 ridiculous. Because I could have grown up in my mother's  
9 care if they had given her supports around her sickness and  
10 her illness. So.

11 **MS. CHEYLENE MOON:** Yeah, when I was in  
12 care, my mom told me that her work-search person that was  
13 helping her, she wanted to become a bus driver. But since  
14 she already had a degree in, I don't remember what it was  
15 called, but she was like a care giver, she looked after  
16 this person that was paralyzed on half her body. So she  
17 worked like 12- and 24-hour shifts, looking after someone  
18 who couldn't get out of bed.

19 And so her boss at the time was like the  
20 lady's daughter and she wouldn't always pay her on time, or  
21 pay her the full amount. So that's part of why we got put  
22 into foster care, even though my mom had bus passes for all  
23 four of us kids, plus herself. And she'd spend \$100 on  
24 groceries every week, and she was the main support for us,  
25 because our dad has a disability; like, he's had trouble

**Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan**

1 walking since he was 21. I think if my mom was actually  
2 able to have her employment person actually listen to her  
3 when she wanted to become a bus driver and work for  
4 TransLink, that she would have had a more stable job with  
5 better payment, instead of having this person who's not  
6 always going to pay her properly.

7 And not overwork her, because part of the  
8 reason why we went to care is because she accidentally fell  
9 asleep after one of her shifts, when she was only planning  
10 to take a nap. So we were left at school until 8:00 p.m.,  
11 and then we got put into foster care.

12 So I think if the workers could actually  
13 listen to what the parents want help with, then we probably  
14 could have still stayed with my parents, and then I  
15 wouldn't have had to walk from 57<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> all the way to  
16 Britannia and back every day, just to hang out with  
17 friends, because my foster parents wouldn't give me bus  
18 fare. And like living with my parents, I always had a bus  
19 pass.

20 So I wouldn't have so much trouble gaining  
21 weight now, because I can lose up to five pounds just by  
22 sleeping, because I starved as a teenager, because I'd run  
23 away all the time. And like, I was only given \$5 a week,  
24 so I'd spend that on food pretty quickly. And so I wasn't  
25 really eating, I wasn't really sleeping, but I was walking

Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan

1 a lot. So it's taken a lot of years for my stomach to grow  
2 back to a normal size and for me to regain my appetite.  
3 And I've been working hard at trying to gain weight, but  
4 it's still pretty hard for me.

5 Yeah, just supporting the parents more to  
6 find out what they want and what they need to look better  
7 after their kids would have been really helpful in my case.

8 **MS. SHAE-LYNN NOSKYE:** I definitely have to  
9 agree that there needs to be more support for parents.  
10 I've spoken about it a couple of times, but the adult  
11 mental health supports that are out there are not nearly as  
12 much as is needed, I guess. You really have to start with  
13 the parent and do a bit of fact-finding and figure out what  
14 exactly that person needs to thrive themselves, before they  
15 can even think about starting to support their children.

16 Definitely, it's always difficult being a  
17 single parent as well. There needs to be more programming  
18 out there that connects mothers with other mothers, and  
19 fathers with other fathers. Just to, I guess, continue to  
20 build that sense of community that I really feel like we've  
21 lost. Yeah.

22 Do you have another question, or do you want  
23 me to talk about that one?

24 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** I do have more  
25 questions, but I do want you to talk about that one, too.

Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan

1           If you have some additional thoughts that you wanted to  
2           provide, recommendations.

3                       **MS. ERIN PAVAN:** Yeah, I think I've probably  
4           already said all my recommendations so this might be  
5           repeating myself. But, I think part of it is about the  
6           community taking more responsibility as well. I think that  
7           this is something that governments can definitely do  
8           something about and put more funding into. But I also  
9           think the community can step up. And that could mean, like  
10          volunteering to be a mentor; it could mean becoming a  
11          foster parent. It could just mean getting more involved  
12          with your neighbours and finding out what's going on and  
13          offering support.

14                      When you think about, before there was care,  
15          what would have happened if parents were going through a  
16          hard time and their kids needed help? Then, the extended  
17          family and the community would have come in and helped the  
18          family and taken care of the kids. So, I think there's  
19          still room for that now, of people coming together and  
20          helping each other.

21                      And maybe like a cultural shift around  
22          mental health and addiction. But I think we're starting to  
23          see it not being something shameful; same with poverty,  
24          something you can actually talk about, that when you're  
25          going through a hard time, that you can -- people reach

**Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan**

1 out. And going to therapy or counselling is nothing to be  
2 ashamed of, or needing extra support for food or childcare  
3 is nothing to be ashamed of either. And providing those  
4 supports and having that be more normalized, so that  
5 parents aren't, I think, afraid to reach out. And may be  
6 sometimes afraid to reach out because they don't want  
7 people to know, because then their kids will get taken  
8 away.

9 So it's like, yeah, a shift around openness  
10 and acceptance, that it's normal to struggle with your  
11 mental health and addiction, and it happens to so many  
12 people. And to struggle to pay your bills and feed your  
13 kids, and an attitude of reaching out and people helping  
14 each other, rather than being afraid.

15 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Absolutely.  
16 One of the things that you mentioned earlier, and the  
17 programs that all of you spoke about -- I'd like to know  
18 how these programs are funded. And the stability of that  
19 funding; I understand the bulk of them are non-profits, is  
20 that correct?

21 **MS. ERIN PAVAN:** Yeah, that's my  
22 understanding. So it's a lot of not-for-profit agencies,  
23 like the one I work for, writing proposals and bidding on  
24 these government contracts. And having year-to-year  
25 funding; like, my program doesn't have stable funding, it

Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan

1 runs out in October. And every year, we don't know if  
2 we're going to continue.

3 At a not-for-profit, you spend a lot of your  
4 time writing those proposals, right, instead of delivering  
5 services. I'm lucky I work for a big organization, where  
6 we have people, their whole job is just the fund  
7 development and the proposal-writing side. But smaller  
8 organizations don't have that capacity. So you end up  
9 doing that at home at night or on the weekends, writing  
10 your proposals, while you're trying to deliver the  
11 services. And never knowing if you're going to have to  
12 tell your clients that your program is done, because you  
13 don't have funding. Or if you're going to have a job.

14 And then you also have the different  
15 organizations competing with each other for scarce  
16 resources, which is really not a good culture to be working  
17 in. Because we're actually working together, supporting  
18 the same clients a lot of the time. But then we also know  
19 that there is not enough funding for all of us, and that  
20 we're putting in proposals for the same contracts. So it  
21 can be kind of toxic.

22 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** It's that  
23 interconnected web that you spoke about, if those different  
24 service providers are then competing for the funds. Do you  
25 have any recommendations on how funding can be delivered in

1 a more effective way?

2 **MS. ERIN PAVAN:** I think longer-term  
3 contracts would be good, for starters. These short-term  
4 contracts are really difficult. We've even gotten grants  
5 that were for less than a year, and it's just too tight of  
6 a turnaround and you don't have the time to really build  
7 and learn and grow. So, more stability.

8 And then, the scarcity issues, and so, a  
9 problem, right?

10 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Final question  
11 -- I'd like to know, and you don't have to answer if this  
12 is something you're not comfortable with. But how many of  
13 your communities, the First Nations you're either a member  
14 of -- are involved in your care, have been notified of your  
15 care or participated in any way? Because I know --  
16 actually, I have two questions.

17 I know that in some provinces and  
18 territories, there's an obligation for the Ministry to  
19 notify a child's Indigenous community or First Nation when  
20 they're in care. Is that the case here?

21 **MS. ERIN PAVAN:** I mean, I actually can  
22 speak to that a little bit, because I was employed as a  
23 Roots Worker for Aboriginal Child and Family Services in  
24 the Lower Mainland. And that's a position, it's actually  
25 like a corrective position, to address the systemic racism

**Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan**

1 in the Ministry of Children and Families. And your role  
2 was to help the Indigenous youth connect to their home  
3 community and their culture, and to write cultural plans as  
4 well. Like if there was an adoption, or if they were being  
5 adopted by a non-Indigenous family, you'd have a cultural  
6 plan in place and cultural connections. So we would always  
7 contact the First Nation whenever a child or youth came  
8 into care.

9 And my experience with that, is that it's  
10 difficult with the amount of movement that you get, that  
11 sometimes it's -- sometimes the community is very far away.  
12 And that they don't have the capacity a lot of the time to  
13 respond. You're trying to call a Band office where they're  
14 understaffed and they don't get back to you for a while.  
15 And in the meanwhile, there's pressure to place the child  
16 right away. And it's hard to wait until they can actually  
17 get back to you and put the word out in the community and  
18 find out if there's any families that can take the child.  
19 And I would be in a position of sort of, trying to get a  
20 social worker to wait while I was trying to get in touch  
21 with a Band, a couple of provinces away. And you know, a  
22 couple of months would go by and it was quite difficult.

23 **MS. FIALKA JACK:** So I actually wasn't aware  
24 that other provinces notified Bands when kids ended up in  
25 foster care. I know that in the case of my Band, that when



**Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan**

1 I was 16, I had already been in care for quite some time  
2 and I asked my social worker if I could move to my reserve.  
3 And he was totally gung-ho to let me go, but when he  
4 contacted my reserve, he came back to me and he told me  
5 that the only foster home on my reserve was my little  
6 brother's foster dad, and he only took boys.

7 And that was the only shot that I had to be  
8 able to connect to my culture, because my Band refuses to  
9 let you learn the language, learn anything about the  
10 culture, unless you live on the reserve for a certain  
11 amount of time. And I come from hereditary-chief blood,  
12 and for me to not be able to have that connection, it  
13 hurts. And to know that I got refused at 16, to be able to  
14 learn about my culture, is horrifying.

15 And to know that there are other youth that  
16 are probably dealing with that exact same issue. And so,  
17 to know that there's other provinces that will help contact  
18 reserves, it kind of broke my heart hearing that. And I  
19 really hope that other youth can be able to connect to  
20 their culture, instead of waiting years and years and where  
21 there's such a disconnect between themselves and their  
22 culture. So.

23 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** The final  
24 question I have is, I understand that in B.C., children in  
25 care have legislated rights, specific rights. And you also

Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan

1 have all sorts of other rights; human rights, Indigenous  
2 rights. Were you ever informed or educated about your  
3 rights by either social workers or people within the  
4 programs about your rights as a child in care, or your  
5 rights as a citizen, or your rights as an Indigenous woman?

6 **MS. CHEYLENE MOON:** Well I had my social  
7 worker come to my foster home and go over a little book of  
8 rights a couple times when I first went into foster care.  
9 Like when I first became a CCIYA; anyways, I was 12 to 14  
10 at the time; and so it didn't really click in when our  
11 aunt, who lived in Merritt, that my younger brother and  
12 sister were living with -- that like she was not respecting  
13 our rights. And like, using -- removing family visits as a  
14 punishment for like stupid things that we'd done, like me  
15 dying my younger brother's hair because he asked me to.  
16 She wouldn't let us have our visit the next month because  
17 of that; actually I think it was for two or three months I  
18 couldn't see my siblings, because I did something my  
19 brother asked me to do. Which we were already doing before  
20 they moved to Merritt, but once they moved to Merritt and  
21 lived with her, we couldn't do anything that we wanted to  
22 do and that our parents were okay with us doing.

23 That really messed up my younger siblings.  
24 Like I was too young to understand that those rights were  
25 being violated at the time.

1                   **MS. FIALKA JACK:** I didn't know I had rights  
2 as a foster child until two years ago when I got hired by  
3 McCreary. And we were handed pens, and it was showing all  
4 our rights as foster children. And I remember just sitting  
5 there and reading it, and I was like, "Wait, I had rights  
6 as a foster child when I was in care?" So, yeah, I think  
7 that's something, as a foster child, you should really,  
8 really know. And especially as an Aboriginal woman, I  
9 think you should really know what your rights are.

10                   **MS. SHAE-LYNN NOSKYE:** So like Cheylene, I  
11 was given that booklet of your rights. I was told to read  
12 it on my own, and if I had any questions, to ask. And once  
13 I realized I had these rights, I started to try and  
14 advocate for myself. And it just became really apparent,  
15 that even though there's this booklet that tells me I have  
16 these rights, as a youth in care, being under the age of  
17 majority -- you don't have any sort of, I guess, say, in  
18 what happens to you.

19                   I've been in some pretty horrific  
20 placements, where I would try and talk to my social worker  
21 about why I was feeling unsafe. And my rights were not  
22 respected to the point where my foster parent would be  
23 standing at the stairs, listening in. So I wouldn't feel  
24 comfortable talking to my social worker about what was  
25 really happening. And so on the phone, I'd talk to her

Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan

1 about all this other stuff. But once she came in to  
2 investigate, I no longer was able to say anything. And so  
3 I was just really shut down. Your rights are just a piece  
4 of paper if people aren't going to respect them. Yeah.

5 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** I want to  
6 thank you all so much for joining us today. I'm speechless  
7 in so many ways. I've been wanting to hear from you,  
8 youth, since I started this mission that we're all on, this  
9 journey. And I've heard from so many women who've talked  
10 about the impact the child welfare system has had on them  
11 as mothers and as kids. And to hear from you, bringing  
12 this full circle in very many ways.

13 But I also -- you're just awesome, and I  
14 just want to raise my hands to you all for your fortitude,  
15 your -- there's no words. I want to give you some gifts of  
16 appreciation -- acknowledgement. It's more important than  
17 appreciation, I think.

18 So I asked my friends here. I said, these  
19 young ladies need a bundle. We give seeds and a feather,  
20 and you will get that. But you talked about finding your  
21 purpose, you talked about being free to find out who you  
22 are; your culture, your being. And I just texted these  
23 ladies, and I said, they need -- what did I say -- I said,  
24 "We need something for their toolbox, a bundle."

25 So the feathers I'm presenting to you women,

Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan

1       you young women, are white feathers. The white feather is  
2       from the Bald Eagle. And these feathers, what I've been  
3       taught, is that they go to the warriors.

4               I'm also gifting you with a rattle. So when  
5       you're with other Indigenous women in your circles, in your  
6       rallies, in your gatherings, Pow Wows, wherever it may be;  
7       and a song starts -- I don't know if you have drums yet,  
8       but you'll have a rattle, to join in.

9               I'm going to put the mic down.

10              **MS. AUDREY SIEGL:** I would like also to  
11       raise my hands and say, *hai-thetka* (phon) for standing up  
12       and answering the call. I'm sorry you've had to be so  
13       strong. There were prayers put into this work. Our friend  
14       from Musqueam, Sean Hall, who makes these rattles, she's a  
15       powerful woman. And like you, she's a warrior woman. I'm  
16       a former kid in care; everything you say was true in 1989  
17       when I went into care. And three years later when I came  
18       out of care, and I would like to -- I don't share that to  
19       make it about me, I share it so you know.

20              The light that you're looking for, the light  
21       that you need, it's in you. You carry it. You carry it  
22       for all the women before you who weren't able to shine, who  
23       weren't able to make their way. And we share these warrior  
24       feathers with you, because you are warriors. You're  
25       warriors of truth, of light and justice. We honour you, in

**Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan**

1 the highest way we know how. To share the feathers of the  
2 protectors and the truth-speakers.

3 We do that because you need medicine now.  
4 You came, you opened yourselves up, you were vulnerable,  
5 and now we're going to close you up. We're going to close  
6 you with love and with songs and prayers and with  
7 medicines. If you need anything after this at any point,  
8 you are welcome to contact us. Not just today. The work  
9 that you're doing, you are changing the world. You are  
10 making it a better and safer place. You are finding ways  
11 to shine light and truth when most likely you didn't have  
12 anyone to show you how. So you are bringing the light, and  
13 you are the light, and we see that, and we honour that and  
14 we love you for it. I say that from my heart and from my  
15 mind, and I say that for the mothers that you miss and  
16 love. *Tsep-ka* (phon).

17 **MS. TERRELLYN FEARN** I just want to add,  
18 these rattles that we're gifting you, can be added to your  
19 bundle. And we want to honour you. And in my teachings,  
20 what I was taught is, our understanding, our songs, our  
21 language, our ways, are not lost; they're in our blood, our  
22 blood-memory. And it's our role to journey back, to learn.  
23 And let these rattles be one step in your bundle, to get  
24 you connected to those songs. And I have a lot of  
25 wonderful women here that will, once we gift you these

Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan

1 rattles, we'll all sing the Strong Women Song, and we would  
2 like for you to shake your rattles with us.

3 So, thank you.

4 So this is what was shared with me about the  
5 song that we will all sing together. And we ask that you  
6 let the love from this song enter with you, the "Strong  
7 Woman Song," here's what was shared with me. It's a little  
8 bit likely that I want to share what's in here, because  
9 it's important.

10 "In 1962, this song came to a young  
11 Anishinabe woman serving time in solitary confinement at  
12 the Kingston Penitentiary, Kingston Prison for Women, in  
13 Kingston, Ontario. There were many atrocities committed  
14 against First Nations women in the prison and many  
15 suicides. The guards brutalized and belittled the women in  
16 solitary, seemingly to no end. They were allowed out of  
17 their cell once per day to stand alone in an open space,  
18 worrying if she would survive to see her children.

19 The woman stood in the yard and prayed for  
20 strength. The song that came was healing, and the words,  
21 although in her own language, soon helped to lift up the  
22 other women. Before long, it became an anthem for the  
23 women in Kingston. And soon, they called themselves the  
24 Native Sisterhood. They carried on the Sisterhood with  
25 women in prison and out of prison, as the Native Sisterhood

Youth Panel: Cheylene Moon,  
Shae-Lynn Noskye, Fialka Jack and Erin Pavan

1 spread beyond Kingston, throughout Cree, Saultaux, and  
2 Saskatchewan prisons, later to Alberta and B.C. And now  
3 anywhere women need to call out for strength. The women  
4 say the song not only brings strength, but also courage.  
5 And it is a reminder that even in the darkest, coldest  
6 dungeons, that they were there to care about one another.  
7 And to hold each other up.

8 The Native Sisterhood also asks for prayers  
9 for our brothers in prisons, many of whom, the Sisterhood  
10 says, have forgotten how to pray."

11 So, there are links all over online to  
12 versions of the song, and there are many versions. And the  
13 way I sing it, is how it was shared with me. And I will be  
14 happy to learn and sing it different ways, too. But so you  
15 know, in case you didn't hear any of the times we've said  
16 it before, we love you.

17 So, we're just going to jump in. Jump in  
18 when you want, and we'll finish with all of us together.  
19 Yeah?

20 --- Exhibits (code: P01P15P0302)

21 **Exhibit 1:** Text by Shae-Lynn Noskye dated 2018-04-06  
22 (eight double-sided pages).

23 --- Upon adjourning at 16:26

24

25



LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

I, Shirley Chang, Court Transcriber, hereby certify that I have transcribed the foregoing and it is a true and accurate transcript of the digital audio provided in this matter.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Shirley Chang', written over a horizontal line.

Shirley Chang

April 17, 2018