



# Bear Witness Day

## Bear Witness Day

The First Nations Child & Family Caring Society holds **Bear Witness Day**<sup>1</sup> every year on May 10. It is also Spirit Bear's *Beard*day! May 10 is also an important date in the history of **Jordan's Principle**<sup>2</sup> at the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal. The Tribunal's first non-compliance order called for Canada to fully implement Jordan's Principle by May 10, 2016. Unfortunately, it took several more years and many non-compliance orders against Canada before any real progress was made.

Jordan's Principle ([jordansprinciple.ca](http://jordansprinciple.ca)) is a child-first principle and legal rule named in memory of Jordan River Anderson. It ensures First Nations children receive the services they need, when they need them.

## Who is Spirit Bear and What is the Spirit Bear Day Act?

**Spirit Bear**<sup>3</sup> is a member of the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council. He represents the 165,000 First Nations children impacted by the First Nations child welfare case at the **Canadian Human Rights Tribunal**,<sup>4</sup> as well as the thousands of other children who have committed to learning about the case and have taken part in peaceful and respectful actions in support of reconciliation and equity.

Spirit Bear joined the Caring Society team in 2008 and immediately committed himself to witnessing all of the Tribunal hearings. In June 2017, Spirit Bear was awarded an honorary "*Bearrister*" degree from Osgoode Law School. In October 2017, he was officially admitted to the "*Bear*" by the Indigenous Bar Association.

*Spirit Bear Day* is a day where provinces and territories can raise awareness of Jordan's Principle, honour Jordan River Anderson and his family, help to end discrimination faced by First Nations children, youth, and families, and celebrate Spirit Bear's *Beard*day annually on May 10.

The province of Manitoba is currently the only province to have begun the process of making Spirit Bear Day a recognized provincial holiday. The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba brought the *Spirit Bear Day Act* to the legislative floor twice, but both times it was not passed. This means that Spirit Bear Day is not a part of the law yet in the province of Manitoba. To see the Bill that proposes that the province of Manitoba holds a Spirit Bear Day, also known as Bill 223 in both English and French, please visit the province of **Manitoba's Legislative Assembly website**.<sup>5</sup>



**First Nations Child & Family  
Caring Society of Canada**

1 <https://fncaringsociety.com/BearWitness>

2 <https://fncaringsociety.com/jordans-principle>

3 <https://fncaringsociety.com/SpiritBear>

4 <https://fncaringsociety.com/i-am-witness>

5 <https://web2.gov.mb.ca/bills/42-3/b223e.php#Explanatory%20Note>

## Let's Put Our Paws to Work!

We need your help by writing to your provincial or territorial legislative assembly to make Spirit Bear Day a recognized holiday in your province or territory! This list below shares contact information of Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) or Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) of each province and territory in Canada. You can mail or email your letters to your MLAs or MPPs asking them to make Spirit Bear Day a recognized holiday in your province or territory to raise awareness of Jordan's Principle and to end discrimination against First Nations children.

Here is the list of current legislative assembly members (MLAs/MPPs) of each province and territory:

**Alberta** – [www.assembly.ab.ca/members/members-of-the-legislative-assembly/constituencies](http://www.assembly.ab.ca/members/members-of-the-legislative-assembly/constituencies)

**British Columbia** – [www.leg.bc.ca/learn-about-us/members](http://www.leg.bc.ca/learn-about-us/members)

**Manitoba** – [www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/members/m्ला\\_list\\_alphabetical.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/members/m्ला_list_alphabetical.html)

**New Brunswick** – [www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/contacts/MLAReport.html](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/contacts/MLAReport.html)

**Newfoundland and Labrador** – [www.assembly.nl.ca/members/members.aspx](http://www.assembly.nl.ca/members/members.aspx)

**Nova Scotia** – [www.nslegislature.ca/members/profiles](http://www.nslegislature.ca/members/profiles)

**Northwest Territories** – [www.ntassembly.ca/members](http://www.ntassembly.ca/members)

**Nunavut** – [www.assembly.nu.ca/members/m्ला](http://www.assembly.nu.ca/members/m्ला)

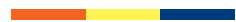
**Ontario** – [www.ola.org/en/members/current/contact-information](http://www.ola.org/en/members/current/contact-information)

**Prince Edward Island** – [www.assembly.pe.ca/members](http://www.assembly.pe.ca/members)






**Quebec** – [www.assnat.qc.ca/en/deputes/index.html](http://www.assnat.qc.ca/en/deputes/index.html)

**Saskatchewan** – [www.legassembly.sk.ca/mlas/m्ला-contact-information](http://www.legassembly.sk.ca/mlas/m्ला-contact-information)

**Yukon** – [www.yukonassembly.ca/mlas](http://www.yukonassembly.ca/mlas)



**First Nations Child & Family  
Caring Society of Canada**

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 @CaringSociety  CaringSociety  
 fncaringociety  spiritbearandfriends



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## Sample Letter

Dear \_\_\_\_\_, Member of the Legislative Assembly of \_\_\_\_\_.

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I want to ask you to please make Spirit Bear Day a recognized holiday in the (province or territory) of \_\_\_\_\_. Spirit Bear is a member of the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council and he represents the 165,000 First Nations children impacted by the First Nations child welfare case at the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT), as well as the thousands of other children who have committed to learning about the case and have taken part in peaceful and respectful actions in support of reconciliation and equity.

I believe that Spirit Bear Day should happen annually on May 10 because it is also Spirit Bear's *Beirthday*! May 10 is also a very important date from the CHRT for Jordan's Principle. Named in loving memory of Jordan River Anderson, Jordan's Principle ensures First Nations children receive the services they need, when they need them.

Making May 10 a recognized holiday will help raise awareness of Jordan's Principle and help to end discrimination against First Nations children so that they grow up safely and be proud of who they are. This is why May 10 should be Spirit Bear Day in the (province or territory) of \_\_\_\_\_.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_ (Your Name Here)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Date)