

**AFFIDAVIT**

I, [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] in the City of Vancouver, in the Province of British Columbia, MAKE OATH AND SAY AS FOLLOWS:

1. I have personal knowledge of the matters included in this affidavit except where statements are made based on information and belief, in which case I verily believe them to be true.
2. I am a 38 year old Cree woman. I have a six year old son and a 19 year old son, both of whom reside with me. I am a single mother and I have never received any child support. I also have an older child who is 22 years old and who does not reside with me.
3. I have Crohn's disease, a type of inflammatory bowel disease. My health status is unpredictable. I can be fine for a few months, and then I will have a flare up of Crohn's disease and I will be unable to work for anywhere from three to five months depending on how long the flare up takes to treat. Stress can worsen my health.
4. I received provincial disability benefits for approximately two years from 2010 to 2012. In 2012, my band funded me to attend Vancouver Community College to take the Health Care Assistant Program. I completed the Program, went back on income assistance for three months, and then I found a job as a healthcare aid.
5. I worked as a causal healthcare aid for over two years. I generally worked one of three shifts: from 7:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m., from 3:00 p.m. until 11:00 p.m. or from 11:00 p.m. until 7:00 a.m. During this time, my youngest child was in school and attended licensed afterschool care from 3:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. during the week. My 19 year old son provided the remainder of my youngest son's child

care because it saves on cost and existing child care services were not available for the hours I needed.

6. For example, if I worked from 3:00 p.m. until 11:00 p.m., my teenage son would pick up my youngest son from afterschool child care, cook him, dinner, and put him to bed. If I worked 7:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m., my teenage son would get my youngest son up in the morning, get him ready for school, and drop him off. If I worked from 11:00 p.m. until 7:00 a.m., I could put my youngest son to bed before I went to work and get home in time to get him up and ready for school, but my teenage son stayed with him all night.
7. The period while I was working as a healthcare aid was incredibly stressful and I struggled to balance my work and home life. My youngest son began acting out because he had no consistent schedule. Sometimes I was there to put him to bed, sometimes I was not. Sometimes I was there to take him to school, sometimes I was not. Sometimes I was there to pick him up from childcare, sometimes I was not. While my teenage son did the best he could, he was a teenager and was not in a position to consistently parent his brother.
8. As a healthcare aid, I earned over \$22 per hour. That made my annual income too high to qualify for a provincial childcare subsidy, so I paid the approximately \$365 per month for my son's afterschool care.
9. Eventually, the stress of trying to juggle parenting and my work caused my health to decline and I had a flare up of Crohn's disease. I went on medical leave from my employment in March 2015 until I resigned in January 2016. I was in and out of the hospital from August to November 2015. My teenage son cared for his brother while I was hospitalized; if he had not been there, my younger son may have been apprehended.
10. During my medical leave, I had no employment income. My only consistent income was from federal child tax benefits in the amount of approximately \$160 per month. I eventually registered with the Vancouver Aboriginal Child and

Family Services Society because I needed support. They provided vouchers for clothing for my youngest son and vouchers for food. I also relied on a program provided at my youngest son's school, which provided food and gift cards for groceries. During this period, my car was repossessed and I went into debt with my son's afterschool child care provider.

11. I also borrowed money from friends and acquaintances so that I could buy food for my children. When I eventually received income, I owed much of it to the people I had borrowed from.
12. I went back on income assistance in January 2016 and I am still receiving it. I am in the process of re-applying for disability status so that I can receive disability benefits, but I feel that because I left disability benefits to work, it is twice as hard to convince the government that I am disabled.
13. To make ends meet, I was briefly working for a friend as a cleaner. I left for work at about 8:00 a.m. so my teenage son would drop my younger son off at school. I was sometimes finished work by 2:30 p.m. so I could pick up my younger son after school. When I had to work longer, my teenage son picked up his brother. During spring break, my teenage son cared for his brother during the days while I was at work.
14. Because I owe my youngest son's former afterschool child care provider approximately \$1,500 from when I became ill in late 2015, he cannot attend there again until the debt is paid in full. It has been referred to a collection agency and I cannot afford to pay it right now. It would be a big relief if my younger son could attend before and after school childcare there. On my current income, I would qualify for a childcare subsidy.
15. While I was working as a cleaner, I was earning about \$15 per hour or \$360 every two weeks. I was not reporting that income to the government because I understood that it would have been deducted off of my income assistance. That extra income meant that I was able to buy a small used car to get to work, I could

pay my car insurance, I was able to re-pay debts I accumulated while I was sick, and I could consistently put groceries in our fridge. My teenage son was happier because, although I was still dependent on him for a significant amount of child care, I could sometimes pay him.

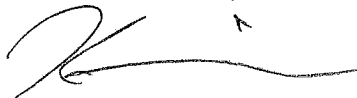
16. My health was okay for a couple of weeks after I started working as cleaner, but by the third week I was hospitalized overnight. It was very stressful to still be depending on my older son for child care and I had no time for myself to focus on my health. I recently became ill again and I decided to resign from my job because I could not attend reliably.

17. Having my teenage son provide so much childcare for his brother has not been ideal. When he is providing child care, he does not get to go out and do things like a normal teenager. He has now graduated from high school, but he has not been able to work when I have needed to rely on him for child care for his little brother.

18. In the future, I would like to go back to school to be a nurse, but I plan to wait until my youngest son is older to do that because working shift work as a single parent requires a lot of support, either from family or other sources. I think that it is nearly impossible to work in healthcare as a single parent without significant supports.

19. I consent to the use of this affidavit in any court proceedings.

AFFIRMED BEFORE ME at the City of Vancouver, in the Province of British Columbia, this 20<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2016.



A Commissioner for taking Affidavits within British Columbia

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