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An Open Letter to Premier Gordon Campbell
Via e-mail

November 9, 2010

Dear Premier Campbell,

First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition was one of the organizations that took time to respond to the call for input into next year's budget by the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services. Many of our coalition partner organizations also participated in sharing their ideas and recommendations with the Committee. We all participated in this exercise in good faith, trusting that the Committee's report and recommendations, expected on November 15, would reflect our views, among others.

Your announcement on October 27, 2010 of an income tax cut costing the 2011 provincial budget \$568 million was a slap in the face to the Standing Committee and everyone who made submissions to its deliberations. The consultation document specifically asked British Columbians to share our budget priorities for 2011/12, with the figure of \$650 million shown as "Available Revenues."

Our coalition exists to mobilize British Columbians on behalf of children and youth. We regularly encourage our coalition partners and contacts around the province to engage in the democratic process, such as participating in formal consultations by legislative committees, in order to make the case for the importance of allocating resources to properly support children, youth and families.

Your action, preempting even the appearance of considering the Standing Committee's recommendations, has made it harder for people to believe that their time is well spent preparing briefs and recommendations to inform government decision-making. It has increased cynicism about our relationship as citizens with our government. It has made it more difficult to convince young people that public consultations by government have integrity and are worthy of their interest and effort.

On behalf of our coalition partners, we would appreciate hearing from you as to why this 2011/12 budget decision was made prior to the submission of the Standing Committee's report from its public consultations.

We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Adrienne Montani
Provincial Coordinator
First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition

Copies to Finance Minister Colin Hansen and the members of the Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services.