

**Senator Sandra Lovelace Nicholas
(New Brunswick)**



**Senator Lillian Eva Dyck
(Saskatchewan)**

PRESS RELEASE

Senators and Indigenous Women Leaders Issue Urgent Call for Public Support: Help Us Get Equality for Women in the Indian Act Now!

Ottawa, October 31, 2017 – Two Indigenous Senators, Senator Lillian Dyck and Senator Sandra Lovelace-Nicholas, have joined their voices with Jeannette Corbiere-Lavell, Yvonne Bedard, Sharon McIvor and Dr. Lynn Gehl in a call for support for the elimination of the discrimination against women in the *Indian Act*. Having engaged in more than forty years of advocacy, including fighting in the courts for equal status for women in the *Indian Act*, these Indigenous women leaders say it is time to end the discrimination against them.

"Shocking as it is, women still do not enjoy the same entitlement to full Indian status, and the same ability to transmit their status to their descendants, as Indian men," Senator Lovelace-Nicholas said. "This discrimination has existed since the *Indian Act* was first introduced in 1876. We believe that 141 years of sex discrimination is enough."

This urgent call for support comes as the Government of Canada is poised to pass another amendment to the *Indian Act*, Bill S-3, which will remove a sliver of the sex discrimination but leave the core of it in place. The Senate of Canada, after its consideration of the Bill S-3, unanimously passed an amendment. The effect of the Senate's amendment would be to ensure that, for the first time, Indian women and their descendants would be entitled to full Indian status on the same footing as Indian men and their descendants. But the Government of Canada removed this amendment in the House of Commons, and wants the Senate to agree to Bill S-3 without the equal status amendment by December 22, 2017.

"Recently the Prime Minister urged Mexican Senators to make new efforts to support women's equality," said Senator Lovelace-Nicholas. "We believe the Prime Minister should support Canadian Senators' efforts to advance the equality of Indigenous women."

The Famous Five fought to gain recognition for the equal personhood of women in 1929. So too, these six Indigenous women are fighting for recognition of the equal personhood of Indian women. The 'Famous Six' urge Canadians to demand that the Government of Canada entitle Indian women and their descendants to equal status in the *Indian Act*. Organizations and individuals can support this call for equality and act by (1) signing on to a letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau; (2) contacting your Member of Parliament; and (3) contacting Senators from your province or territory.

For background information and to find out how to support, go here: [http://fafia-afai.org/en/solidarity-campaign/ - tab-3](http://fafia-afai.org/en/solidarity-campaign/-tab-3)

"As Indigenous women, we cannot be successful in the fight for equality alone," Senator Dyck said. "We need the support of our non-Indigenous sisters and allies, as well as of our Indigenous brothers and communities. And we need it now."

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For contact information for Senator Lillian Dyck, Senator Sandra Lovelace-Nicholas, Jeanette Corbere-Lavell, Sharon McIvor, and Dr. Lynn Gehl:

The Office of Senator Lillian Dyck

Contact number: (613) 995-4318

The Office of Senator Sandra Lovelace-Nicholas

Contact number: (613) 943-3635