

**ONTARIO
SUPERIOR COURT OF JUSTICE**

BETWEEN:

**Amelia Penney-Crocker, Parker Boot-Quackenbush, Khadijat Folasayo Dairo,
Catherine He, Tharan D'Silva, Katie Yu, Diego Christiansen-Barker, Lachlan
Brown, Zoey Ann Purves, Jacob Colatosti, Milan Rozotto-Lagos, Oswaldo Paz
Flores, Lauren Handley and Justice for Children and Youth**

Applicants

and

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL IN RIGHT OF CANADA

Respondent

AFFIDAVIT OF KATIE YU

I, KATIE YU, of the City of Iqaluit, in the Territory of Nunavut, student MAKE OATH AND
SAY AS FOLLOWS:

1. My name is Katie Yu. I am a 15-year-old Grade 10 student at Inuksuk High School in Iqaluit, Nunavut. I am our high school representative at the Iqaluit District Education Authority this year. I am involved in many youth groups and clubs such as the Girl Guides Ontario and Nunavut Youth Forum and Air Cadets. Although young people are given so many responsibilities and opportunities to make a difference in their

communities, we are not allowed to exercise one of the most important ways to make a difference – the right to vote. That needs to change.

2. I have been very involved in many activities in my community and in extracurriculars.

I'm a cadet with the 795 Iqaluit Air Cadet Squadron, where I learn about aviation and develop my leadership skills. I spent eight years in Girl Guides and seven years as part of the Iqaluit Dance Academy, where I participated as a dancer and spent a year assisting with teaching dance classes to three to six-year-old children on the weekends. I currently volunteer at the Iqaluit Centennial Library and help with story time and craft programs for children. In school I am part of our choir, the Inuksuk Drum Dancers, and I lead our Green Club. I am also a member of the Girl Guides Ontario and Nunavut Youth Forum, where a group of youth in Guiding get the chance to plan events, give feedback on initiatives, and participate as members on adult committees. This year I participated in UNICEF Canada's Youth Advocacy Program, and I also participated in Rotary Youth Programs such as the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards. Community involvement and youth participation are really important to me; I have been very fortunate to have had so many opportunities to engage in youth advocacy.

3. As a resident of Nunavut, I think that many Canadians are ignorant about the issues faced by residents of Nunavut (Nunavummiut). This ignorance distracts from the very serious truths and realities of people in Nunavut. Some of the issues that are really important to me are food insecurity, infrastructure issues and the housing crisis, technological inequality, mental health issues and the suicide epidemic, and Indigenous inequity.

4. Many Nunavummiut have limited access to food – that is why our schools have food programs, where they serve breakfast and lunch daily. Since the beginning of the pandemic, schools have had to broaden their food security efforts. They have provided food hampers for students and families to take home, and even to community members who don't have a student at the school. We are currently seeing the infrastructure issues manifest with our water crisis, where all of Iqaluit has been without a safe drinking water system for almost two months. Bottled water is being provided to families on a daily basis – a set up that is unsustainable. Although we have a temporary recycling set up we don't have a proper system that would address our recycling needs in the long term. Our technological infrastructure is also not the best – internet bandwidth is often limited. Remote learning during the pandemic highlighted this technological gap, as we were unable to have live online classes.
5. Many Nunavummiut face mental health struggles and health issues like those related to smoking. Youth suicide rates in Nunavut are the highest in the country. This is an issue that I am active about. Just last week I marched to the legislature with students from my school to bring attention to the need for improved mental health and suicide prevention services. This action received national media attention. Nunavut healthcare facilities are not as advanced as those across Canada, which makes accessing quality health care much more difficult. I know that many patients need to be flown south to obtain certain types of care. These disadvantages further worsen the inequity that Inuit, who make up most of the population of the territory, face. I am very aware of the intergenerational trauma faced by the Indigenous peoples in the territory caused by the residential school system.

6. I want to break down this ignorance by raising awareness of not only Nunavut's needs, but also our strengths. In Nunavut everyone works together to support each other, Inuit arts and culture is not only accepted, but celebrated, and people enjoy many activities out on the land. Young people are very engaged in our communities, however, it is difficult for us to feel like we can fully participate in and have influence on our government's policies when so many Nunavummiut, like other youth across Canada, cannot vote. I understand Nunavut has the youngest youth population in the country, which means a particularly large proportion of Nunavummiut are excluded from voting. I think the government makes an effort to represent youth interests, but those issues are often overshadowed by other priorities. When that happens, we do not get an opportunity to push back by voting. If young people get the right to vote, the government will become more responsive to our concerns.
7. One issue I often advocate for is climate change and environmental degradation, especially because we are uniquely impacted by it in the north of Canada. The Arctic is warming about three times faster than the global average, and one significant impact is that the sea ice is melting, which is threatening Inuit ways of life and the habitats of Arctic wildlife. In the north, we also have less funding for programs and initiatives that benefit the environment, such as recycling. We need to prioritize the preservation of the Northern environment, especially because the land and outdoor activities are an integral part of Inuit culture. This summer I worked as an intern at WWF-Canada (World Wildlife Fund), where I learned more about environmental issues and solutions, helped out with community initiatives such as clean ups, and created communications materials such as

blogs and posters. If we get the right to vote, then I, along with many other young people, will continue to advocate for the environment and the fight against climate change.

AFFIRMED REMOTELY BY Katie Yu at
the City of Iqaluit, in the Territory of
Nunavut before me at the City of Toronto, in
the Province of Ontario on the 28th of
November, 2021, in accordance with O. Reg.
431/20, Administering Oath or Declaration
Remotely.



*Commissioner for Taking Affidavits
Mary Birdsell, LSO # 38108V*



Katie Yu