

**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 LAUREN HANDLEY

I, LAUREN HANDLEY, of the City of Peterborough, in the Province of Ontario, student
MAKE OATH AND SAY AS FOLLOWS:

1. I have grown up in Ontario in various towns, including Ivy, Cookstown, Bradford, Barrie and Orillia. I am now going to school in Peterborough. I have always enjoyed my civics and politics courses in school. The way that political power is produced, distributed, and reinforced, often in violation of Canadian ideals like democracy and equality, has always piqued my interest. I have recently graduated from Simcoe Shores Secondary High School, where I have had an array of opportunities in recent years to transform this natural interest

into action, engaging deeply with the social and political issues that I care about. It is these actions and experiences that inspire me to advocate for the voting rights of youth in Canada.

2. I turned 18 on September 28th, 8 days after the most recent federal election. I had been following the issues and am disappointed that this arbitrary age cut-off has deprived me of an important opportunity to participate. I have been disenfranchised in a way that does not make sense.
3. One of the issues I care about is the mental and social health of young people. In 2019 I volunteered with The New Mentality, a community-based campaign to bring attention to youth mental health during Youth Mental Health Week. Additionally, as part of the Students Commission of Canada's annual "Canada We Want" conference, I worked with other young people to investigate the radicalization of youth, creating the report "Partnering in Practice: Preventing Social Polarization."
4. These experiences have repeatedly reaffirmed to me that the mental health and social development of young people is an important and pressing political issue. Growing up in the digital age has imposed unique and unprecedented social pressures on us, and has contributed to significant and pervasive mental health challenges for young Canadians. This is exacerbated in the COVID-19 pandemic context, when youth may be isolated from their friends and cannot access the social and educational supports available in a school environment. I often see the mental health of young people given tremendous lip service in political contexts, but the meaningful policy outcomes we need—for example reducing wait times for young people seeking mental health care—usually fail to materialize.
5. Other issues that are central to my personal politics include Indigenous rights and climate justice. Regarding the former, I have been frustrated to see elected representatives at all

levels of government continually fail to secure safe access to water, food, and health care for Indigenous peoples in my community and across the country. Regarding climate justice, I am pursuing a post-secondary education at Trent University in science and environmental studies to inform my advocacy for more proactive climate action in Canada and internationally.

6. Since I have not yet been able to advocate for these issues through electoral politics, I have attempted to express my views through other political engagement. I joined the NDP party because I was allowed to even though I was only 16 at the time. In 2018, I assisted the Students Commission of Canada in writing their report “A Youth Policy for Canada: Working Towards the Canada We Want,” which was submitted to the Government of Canada as part of their consultations on youth involvement in politics. These consultations ultimately led to the creation of Canada’s first Youth Policy, which outlines key policy priorities for young people and commits the government to improving the political engagement of youth.
7. However, as much as the Youth Policy was a positive development, the 2019 federal election made it glaringly clear to me that no working group, consultation, or advisory committee can replace the foundational right to vote in an election. It was deeply frustrating and disempowering to watch adults in my life cast their votes while I was forced to stay home, despite my full and passionate appreciation of the issues at stake.
8. Following this election, I joined the Students Commission of Canada’s Vote16 campaign in the hopes that future young people will not have to face such arbitrary unfairness. I have watched the political priorities of my generation continually be discounted and diminished,

and I firmly believe that it is time we vindicate the right to vote for all youth in Canada so that we may finally have our voices truly heard.

AFFIRMED REMOTELY BY Lauren Handley at the City of Peterborough, in the Province of Ontario before me at the Town of Stouffville, in the Province of Ontario on the 25th of November, 2021, in accordance with O. Reg. 431/20, Administering Oath or Declaration Remotely.



Commissioner for Taking Affidavits

Athena Josephine Caldarella,
a Commissioner, etc., Province of Ontario,
for Justice for Children and Youth.
Expires January 8, 2022.



Lauren Handley