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Alex Ruff, M.S.C., C.D.

Member of Parliament
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound

MP Ruff Statement on Canada Day & Unmarked Graves at Former Residential Schools

June 30, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Owen Sound- Alex Ruff Member of Parliament for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound issued a statement on Canada Day and the heartbreaking discovery of multiple unmarked graves at former Residential Schools:

“The news of the remains of so many children found in mass graves at former residential schools is tragic beyond words. I acknowledge the deep sorrow and mourning that all Indigenous peoples and survivors of Residential Schools are experiencing at this time and wish to express my deepest sympathies to all surrounding Indigenous communities and Canadians who are sharing in this trauma.

“While communities and families grapple with this unthinkable revelation, we must come together to provide whatever assistance is necessary to aid in the healing process, including the resources needed to protect, honour, and identify the children. The legacy of Residential Schools is a national shame that has had a profoundly lasting and damaging impact on Indigenous culture, heritage, and language. These discoveries are a sombre reminder that so much more work needs to be done to address the devastating and harmful effects that residential schools had, and still have, on many survivors today. I have spoken to both local First Nations Chiefs on this topic and they know they have my support.

“I agree with our leader, the Hon Erin O’Toole who has called for ‘a swift timeline and funding to deliver on the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action 71 to 76 involving missing children and providing healing for families’ and for Prime Minister Trudeau to ‘take action ahead of Canada Day to support the Indigenous communities, and our country, in mourning.’

“I respect the choices of those communities who are grieving, and any community who decides to stand alongside those who are hurting, reflecting, and grieving the lasting impacts of the Residential Schools right now. Canada isn’t perfect. No country is. However, as someone who has proudly served our nation in uniform for over 25 years, there is no other country I’d rather live in. The road to reconciliation and healing should focus on learning from the past and striving

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to do better. I am proud to be Canadian. Personally, I'll be celebrating Canada Day to include paying tribute to a local Owen Sound hero, Corporal Robert Mitchell who made the supreme sacrifice in Afghanistan in 2006, participating in virtual events, and celebrating a constituent's 100th birthday. As well, I'll be remembering all Canadians who have served our nation, while reflecting on how we can all do our part to ensure Canada remains the best country to live in the world.

"I encourage all Canadians to educate themselves as much as possible, and those locally to connect with the Saugeen Ojibway Nation, whether at Saugeen First Nation, or the Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation or the M'Wikwedong Indigenous Friendship Centre to learn more about how best to support local reconciliation efforts."

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