

June 6, 2005.

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Attn: Mr. Wayne Sales, CEO, and the Board of Directors

Dear Members of the Board

## **RE: Donations to the Children's Aid Society by Canadian Tire**

I recently read a letter from a 13-year-old Barrie, Ontario teenager to your company in which she was asking that Canadian Tire stop funding the Children's Aid Society because the CAS was abusing children and families. As a parent with my own very unpleasant experience with CAS, I was very surprised to find out that Canadian Tire was a financial contributor to the Children's Aid Society.

I am a single mother of three beautiful girls, 13, 8 and 5 years of age. My family too, was the victim of the Children's Aid Society. My three children and I have been harassed and our privacy violated by the CAS for very minor reasons which primarily result from the fact that my family happens to be supported by social assistance and we are unable to maintain the same standards of living as enjoyed by the well-paid workers who work with the CAS. Basically, we have been a target because we are poor.

Up until a few months ago, children's aid workers had been coming into our home and intruding into our lives. Although I had never abused my children, I was put under regular supervision because in the CAS worker's opinion, there was always something they thought was wrong. In the views of CAS workers, either conditions in my home were not up to the standards of these young, inexperienced CAS workers or it was decided that was perceived that I might get into a relationship with the wrong guy. With these CAS workers it was nothing but people having power and control over your family all the time. My children and I literally lived in fear of these CAS agents, never knowing when they might show up at our home or at the children's schools. One worker reported in her notes that she had seen clothes "piled on the floor" in my home and my house was not clean to her standards. To these CAS workers, it did not seem important that

my children were happy and healthy, but only that workers (most of them childless) were the ones telling me how to raise my children. It seemed apparent CAS made it their job and spent taxpayer's money to do not much more than to regularly check on my housekeeping. Being a single mother with three children and on welfare certainly does not allow us to live to the same standards as middle income families and it seems that CAS targets those families who are financially disadvantaged because they are too poor and know little about the law to put up much of a fight.

My oldest daughter complained how these CAS workers came to school and embarrassed her by showing up unannounced at the school and questioning her at the office. Of course, when school staff and the other students see CAS workers coming to the school to interview your children, it is automatically assumed that the parents must be bad and that there is trouble at home. The CAS workers came into our home and looked for anything that they could find to justify her regular "inspections" to my home. One time, the CAS worker illegally entered my apartment after the worker asked the landlord to let her have access to my apartment while I away visiting friends with my children.

At one point, I was fortunate enough to have a volunteer from Canada Court Watch help my family. When Court Watch started probing into why the CAS was involved with my family in the first place, suddenly the CAS worker became not so arrogant and pushy. One time when a support person from Court Watch was present in my home to provide support during a scheduled home visit by the CAS, the CAS worker suddenly and without any explanation refused to go ahead with the scheduled visit or to discuss matters in the presence of the Court Watch supporter. The worker then left my home without even starting the visit and said that she could not return unless her supervisor was present at the meeting with her.

The fear that this CAS worker had of having witnesses present clearly demonstrated to me that these CAS workers don't want witnesses and don't want anyone asking questions about the work they do. Not long after this incident, the worker's supervisor did show up at my home and advised me that the file on my family was to be closed. I believe the CAS was worried at this time about the wrongdoings of its workers being exposed and did not want Court Watch probing any further as to why the CAS was involved with my family in the first place.

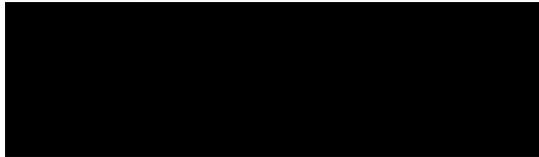
Although I was advised that my family's file was now closed and although I had asked the CAS to officially confirm that the file was closed, I never did get a response to my request to confirm closure of the file. After repeated phone calls and letters to the CAS asking confirmation that my file was closed, I finally did get a letter. However, the date the file was officially closed was more than two months after I had been told by the supervisor that the file had been closed. It is my belief that even though the CAS was no longer involved with my family, they still kept the file technically "open" so that they could continue to collect money from the provincial government through its funding formula.

If Canadian Tire really wants to help support children and families in the community, as your company says it does, then I would suggest that your company stop funding the CAS until the CAS agrees to be more accountable for the way it operates. Better yet, fund some other causes that ensures that money more directly helps those in need. All I can say is that in my case, the CAS must have spent thousands of dollars intruding into our lives with absolutely nothing done except to harass and intimidate us. I have heard of others in my community who have had similar experiences involving the CAS. If the money that CAS has spent on having workers intimidate and harass us would have been much better spent had the money been given directly to my children directly in the form of financial assistance.

I too, believe that your company has been misled into supporting the CAS which is doing more harm than good to children and families. The CAS should be made to clean up its act before receiving money from private companies like Canadian Tire.

If anyone from Canadian Tire would like to speak directly to me or my children personally about our horrible experience with the CAS, then please feel free to contact me at my phone number listed below. I find it troubling to learn that Canadian Tire is providing funding to an agency which maintains a veil of secrecy over its operations and clearly is hurting many children and families in the community.

Yours truly

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

 ( single mom of three beautiful children)

Tel: 