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The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action were released in 2015. In the past seven years, little significant action has been taken by governments. What steps should be taken to move this process forward in a meaningful and impactful way? What Call to Action do you believe should be prioritized and why?

The 94 Calls to Action that were released in 2015 by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) are deeply important and provide crucial steps to begin addressing and understanding the lasting impacts of the Canadian residential school system. Although the importance of the 94 Calls to Action cannot be understated, little government action has been taken to see these calls integrated into Canadian systems. To begin meaningful engagement and action, educational systems must be put in place to ensure that colonialism and systemic racism are identified and addressed, as they exist in all aspects of Canadian society. I believe Call to Action 50 should be prioritized, which calls for the federal government to provide funding for Indigenous law institutes. By acting on this Call to Action, the federal government can begin to address the colonialism and systemic racism present within Canada's legal system by educating future lawyers on Indigenous laws and unique cultural specificities.

Call to Action 50 should be prioritized because of its multilevel influence and ability to create lasting change. Interwoven into Call 50 are multiple steps the TRC has outlined as important in the process of reconciliation. Call 50 asks for the federal government to collaborate with Aboriginal organizations "to fund the establishment of Indigenous law institutes for the development, use, and understanding of Indigenous laws and access to justice in accordance with the unique cultures of Aboriginal peoples in Canada" (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, pp. 5-6). The initial appeal of this Call to Action is the request for inclusive discussion and integration. The collaboration that is requested lays the foundation for governments to work with Indigenous peoples to create programs, organizations, and systems that are inclusive of Indigenous experiences and knowledge. Collaboration and inclusion are key themes throughout the TRC's 94 Calls to Action, so by prioritizing Call to Action 50 this form of reconciliation can begin to be put into practice.

Alongside collaboration and inclusion, Call to Action 50 increases education surrounding Indigenous systems of governance and cultural awareness. By implementing law institutes that are sensitive to cultural differences and Indigenous laws, a new era of law can begin that prioritizes a system of justice that is equitable for all Canadians. As a white individual who will soon be applying to law schools across Canada, I am aware of the many privileges I am afforded. I am able to see myself accurately represented within the legal system, but I am aware that many individuals are not afforded this luxury. By implementing Call to Action 50, myself and other law students would be provided with an education that is accurately informed. This will create a new generation of lawyers who will seek to restructure spaces that have previously excluded Indigenous peoples and their experiences. Through my career I want to make a change, and if the federal government were to prioritize Call to Action 50 I feel the impact on generations of law students would play a significant role in the process of reconciliation.

Reference:

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/indigenous-people/aboriginal-peoples-documents/calls_to_action_english2.pdf