



March 25, 2024

Open letter co-signed by twelve legal organizations from across Canada expressing concern to the BC Attorney General about the Single Legal Regulator reform process

We, the undersigned, collectively voice our concern regarding the BC Government's proposed legislation that amalgamates lawyers, notaries, and paralegals within a single regulatory body.

Point 1: Transparency

The development of this legislation warrants full and transparent discussion with all impacted parties. We urge the government to share the proposed draft legislation with the entire legal profession in advance of its introduction.

Point 2: Safeguarding Independence of Lawyers

An independent bar is critical to the integrity of the legal system and a properly functioning democratic society. The bar can only be independent if it is self-governed and self-regulated. There is no greater protection of the public than ensuring a bar and judiciary free from government influence and interference.

Point 3: Access to Justice

People have a right to access to justice. We do not believe the proposed legislation will meaningfully improve access to justice for British Columbians. Other changes, such as increasing funding to legal aid, will have a much greater impact.

Point 4: Diversity

The proposed legislation must ensure a diversity of backgrounds, lived experiences, and geographic regions are represented on the regulator's board.

Conclusion:

We look forward to open and comprehensive engagement with the BC government to address our concerns regarding the proposed legislation. We stand ready to modernize how legal services are delivered in British Columbia, provided such changes meaningfully improve access to justice, ensure high standards of legal services, and crucially, safeguard the legal system by ensuring lawyers maintain self-regulation and independence.

Sincerely,

Michael Elliott
President, Trial Lawyers Association of BC

Scott Morishita
President, Canadian Bar Association, BC Branch

Co-Signers

Federation of Asian-Canadian Lawyers (BC)

South-Asian Bar Association (BC)

Alberta Civil Trial Lawyers Association

Saskatchewan Trial Lawyers Association

Abbotsford & District Bar Association

Cowichan Valley Bar Association

Kamloops Bar Association

South Cariboo Bar Association

Surrey Bar Association

Vancouver Bar Association

Media Contacts:

David Denhoff Manager of Public Affairs, Trial Lawyers Association of BC

E-Mail: david@tlabc.org

Phone: 236-317-1919

Jo Brayshaw Manager, Marketing & Communications, Canadian Bar Association, BC Branch

Email: media@cbabc.org

Phone: 604-638-1907