



September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Legal Aid Manitoba  
Board of Directors, c/o Chair Allan Fineblit  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor – 287 Broadway  
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0R9  
Via Email: [alfin@legalaid.mb.ca](mailto:alfin@legalaid.mb.ca)

Dear Members of the Legal Aid Manitoba Board:

I write today to once again express my concern over your pending decision regarding PILC's future within Legal Aid Manitoba. While I can appreciate that you did not initiate the need for this decision, we hope that you will consider very carefully the points we raised in our May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020 letter (signed by many organizations including Abilities Manitoba) as the need for PILC has only been amplified by the gaps and systemic injustices that have been laid bare by COVID-19.

The pandemic has had differential impact on marginalized populations and has highlighted the barriers that certain communities are facing. Abilities Manitoba is a network of service providers who support those with intellectual disabilities (ID) and therefore has a particular interest in issues of importance to the disability community. We are keenly aware that this population continues to experience human rights violations and discrimination in many areas of life and therefore both the principle and the reality of access to justice continues to be a huge concern. A strong and well supported PILC is critically important to the disability community as evidenced by its long and significant history of representing issues such as differential treatment for those with disabilities within different government systems (Stadler, Hampton/Sylvester, etc.), de-institutionalization (Manitoba Developmental Centre) and more.

While we understand that the matter in front of you is not of your own design, we urge you to not be complicit in this decision and to send a strong message, supported by many, that PILC must be maintained and even strengthened.

It is my understanding that a request was made for more presenters to be allowed at your meeting and for interested parties to be present for the deliberations. Since that was denied, should your decision be to agree that PILC must move out of Legal Aid Manitoba, I am asking that you make your full decision public along with your

This document is available in alternative formats.  
For assistance please contact [admin@abilitiesmanitoba.org](mailto:admin@abilitiesmanitoba.org).



rationale. I would also be interested in knowing who spoke in favour of PILC being moved and what reasons they gave.

I urge you to vote to support PILC and its extraordinary body of work, past, present and future. We simply cannot pretend to be a just society or even be working towards becoming one when we fail to support mechanisms that have proven themselves to be the much needed checks and balances against successive governments' over-reach and adherence to ideology over basic human rights.

Sincerely,

Margo Powell  
Executive Director  
Abilities Manitoba

Cc: Sam Reposa, Executive Director, Legal Aid Manitoba  
Byron Williams, Director, Public Interest Law Centre  
Kate Kehler, Executive Director, Social Planning Council