



September 15<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 Board:

We write to you today to highlight and reinforce the need for a strong and stable Public Interest Law Centre (PILC). It is our understanding that the Legal Aid Manitoba (LAM) Board is in a position where they must consider PILC's future today. As outlined in the letter of May 25, 2020, signed by almost 50 organizations and individuals across Manitoba including Barrier Free Manitoba, the breadth and depth of the important work accomplished by PILC cannot be overstated.

In reading your recent Strategic Plan it is apparent that LAM is committed to access to justice for all and ensuring that marginalized groups in Manitoba have the opportunity to be represented on major legal issues particularly those that represent broad public interest. A stable and well supported PILC is imperative to meet these goals.

Barrier Free Manitoba has partnered with PILC many times to uphold and reinforce the Charter of Rights, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Manitoba Human Rights Code and the Accessibility for Manitobans Act. People with disabilities make up almost 25% of the population in Manitoba, yet are underrepresented and marginalized in almost all facets of life. The current pandemic has highlighted this in stark and significant ways. This is not

This document is available in alternative formats.

For assistance please contact (204) 791-9319.



the time to weaken the protection for this and other underrepresented groups. This is the time to strengthen and stabilize.

While we acknowledge that the LAM Board faces this decision through no choice or plan of its own, we urge you follow the stated values of the organization and not be complicit in the dismantling of the Public Interest Law Centre.

Should you decide otherwise, we request that you share both the decision and process you took (including who and how you consulted with impacted communities) publicly. This decision will have far reaching impact and we urge you to represent those that you were appointed to protect and serve in a transparent and thoughtful manner.

Signed in earnest by all,  
Barrier Free Manitoba  
Steering Committee Members

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