

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.

Despite the protections confirmed by the Charter of Rights, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Manitoba Human Rights Code and the Accessibility for Manitobans Act, persons with disabilities continue to face injustice and discrimination at an alarming rate. In 2018, 44% of all formal complaints registered with the Manitoba Human Rights Commission were related to a person's physical or mental disability.

PILC has an established history of working together with persons with disabilities to uphold and reinforce their rights. PILC has helped Manitoba move towards being a more just, inclusive and accessible society. Important work lies ahead of us, and destabilizing PILC will threaten our ability to dismantle the barriers that have been facing persons with disabilities for far too long.

Access to justice is a human right and is foundational to the protection of all other human rights. 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.

Sincerely,



D. Erickson, CEO, Manitoba Possible



L. Cooke, Program Director, Manitoba Possible

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