

September 14, 2020

Legal Aid Manitoba Board of Directors
c/o Chair Allan Fineblit
4th Floor – 287 Broadway
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0R9

Re: The Public Interest Law Centre (PILC)

Dear Members of the Board:

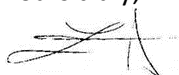
As a follow-up to our letter dated May 25, 2020, we are writing in advance of the Legal Aid Manitoba (LAM) board meeting on September 15 where the future of the Public Interest Law Centre (PILC) will be discussed. We would like to reiterate our deep concern that consideration is being given by the Provincial government to eliminating PILC's funding and moving PILC outside of the framework of Legal Aid Manitoba.

SEED Winnipeg works to increase opportunities for people through financial empowerment programs and services. Key pillars of this work include access to benefits and consumer protection. PILC has won significant victories in these areas on behalf of Indigenous Peoples, newcomers, people with disabilities, people in custody and other marginalized groups in Manitoba.

We share the concerns expressed by many groups about the potential defunding of PILC by the Provincial government. It is troubling that LAM has been put in a position, by way of advice sought by the Minister of Justice, of being complicit in placing PILC's financial sustainability in jeopardy. The elimination of core funding from the Provincial government would leave PILC vulnerable to the whims of charitable giving and the instability associated with short-term project-based funding. Recent events have underlined the imperative of ensuring the long-term sustainability of PILC. The Black Lives Matter Movement and the disproportionate impacts of the pandemic on vulnerable groups have highlighted the urgency of addressing long standing systemic inequities.

It is our hope that you will broaden your engagement with underrepresented groups and work in collaboration with these groups to ensure that PILC's important work can be sustained into the future.

Yours truly,



Louise Simbandumwe
Co-Director



Carinna Rosales
Co-Director

