

PILC Presentation to Legal Aid Board by Meaghan Erbus, Advocacy and Impact Manager at Harvest

Good Afternoon. I just want to start by thanking you for the opportunity to present and advocate for our colleagues and friends at the Public Interest Law Centre

My name is Meaghan Erbus and I am the Advocacy and Impact Manager at Harvest.

For those of you who are not familiar:

- Winnipeg Harvest is a non-profit, community-based, food distribution and training centre committed to providing food to people who struggle to feed themselves and their families. We seek to maximize public awareness of hunger and poverty, while working towards long-term solutions. We were founded in 1984 and have a comprehensive understanding of the issues facing Manitobans, especially low-income and vulnerable peoples.
- Winnipeg Harvest has been working with the Public Interest Law Centre for over a decade on issues related to poverty and consumer rights.
- Public Interest Law Centre has represented Harvest on issues related to payday loans, Manitoba hydro, and the guaranteed annual income concept.
- Among our achievements are:
 - Regulation and lower Pay Day Loan rates
 - Utility rate reduction with the rejection of a Manitoba hydro application for a 7.9% rate increase
 - Advocacy for access to television, internet and cell phone use to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission
 - And the Public Interest Law Centre successfully represented us in the MB court of Appeal on whether the Social Services Appeal Board could hear Charter cases.
 - And that is just to name a few

· Throughout all the years we have worked with the Public Interest Law Centre the quality of service and dedication from the staff at has been truly special

· Their interactions with clients and our community is dignified and patient. I have personally learned so much from them.

· The PILC is committed to public engagement- together we have engaged with 1000s of Manitobans through opinion surveys and focus groups.

· They ensure groups such as low-income persons, food bank clients and person with disabilities, first nations peoples, and newcomers and asked are heard

· Public Interest Law Centre has allowed for organization like Harvest to affordably participate on a level playing field with large companies and government.

· They have enabled us to bring our issues forward and to seek justice

- They have been an empowering force that has assisted us in creating coalitions and organizing community to be better informed, better protected and keep money in the pockets of those that need it the most.
- We deserve the services of the public interest law centre and we need them in the future.
- As clients our hope is to stabilize and strengthen the PILC.
- We want a fully funded, mandated in law, PILC that is independent from political interference and is sustainable
- Today you will hear from our colleagues and friends of PILC and that message will be consistent
- We all want what is best for PILC.
- We support them, we stand with them because we need them.
- Thank you again for your time, your commitment to Public Interest Law centre and your consideration.

Meaghan Erbus

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