

Dear Colleagues,

Re: Resolution at February 6, 2023 Special Meeting

We write to you to ask your support in opposing a resolution before the Law Society of Alberta. The resolution is the subject of a petition challenging the Law Society's Benchers' ability to mandate specific continuing professional development and ultimately the Law Society's role as a self-regulating body. A Special Meeting of the Law Society will take place for active Alberta lawyers on Monday, February 6, 2023, when the resolution from the petitioners will be debated and voted on.

The privilege of self-regulation is at the heart of the upcoming Special Meeting. The Law Society of Alberta must continue to uphold the expectations that come with self-governance.

The Law Society has been operating as an independent regulator since 1907. In consideration of this authority, the Law Society must regulate in the public interest, which includes promoting and enforcing a high standard of professional and ethical conduct by Alberta lawyers.

Continuing professional development (CPD) programs serve the public interest by strengthening public confidence in Alberta's legal profession. Alberta lawyers are required to participate in activities that enhance their skills, integrity, knowledge and professionalism. CPD programs have, in fact, become an essential aspect of professional education in Canada. Most law societies and regulators of other professions across the country have implemented compulsory CPD programs from time to time. While we have no plans for other compulsory programs like The Path, having the ability to think critically and make thoughtful decisions is an essential role of the Benchers.

Next week, we will hear a motion submitted by 50 Alberta lawyers. They believe that the Law Society should not have the authority to mandate specific continuing professional development programming, including the recent Indigenous cultural competency course called The Path. Completion of The Path was mandated following the findings and recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

This motion comes as self-regulating professions face intense scrutiny. Policy makers, along with the general public, are paying close attention to whether organizations like the Law Society are focused on the public interest or on member interests. If we value self-regulation, we must ensure that we continue to discharge our duties using the lens of the public interest in everything we do, including continuing professional development. We believe that Rule 67.4 serves the public interest and should not be repealed.

We ask that you take the time to think about these important issues carefully and if you haven't already done so, please register for the February 6th meeting, join the debate and vote against the motion, supporting the Law Society in upholding its professional commitments and continuing in its role as a self-regulating body.

As a reminder, in order to participate in the meeting on February 6th at 11 a.m., interested active lawyers must register for the meeting by no later than Friday, February 3rd at 11 a.m. Once registered, you will receive a unique meeting link that will grant you access to the meeting and the right to vote. Lastly, please note that because this meeting is being held virtually, you must log in to the meeting by 10:45 a.m. on February 6th. The virtual meeting 'door' will open at 10 a.m. and will then automatically lock at precisely 10:45 a.m., preventing further admission to the meeting regardless of whether you registered or not. Please give yourself ample time to log in before the door locks at 10:45 a.m.

If you are looking for more information on the Special Meeting or the issue at hand, we encourage you to review the [Law Society's FAQ](#).

Signed,

Law Society of Alberta Benchers

Ken Warren, KC, President
Bill Hendsbee, KC, President-Elect
Sony Ahluwalia, KC
Ryan D. Anderson, KC
Glen Buick, Lay Bencher
Lou Cusano, KC
Ted Feehan, KC
Corie Flett, KC
Kene Ilochonwu, KC
Cal Johnson, KC
Levonne Louie, Lay Bencher
Jim Lutz, KC
Bud Melnyk, KC
Mary Ellen Neilson, Lay Bencher
Sanjiv Parmar
Sandra Petersson, KC
Stacy Petriuk, KC
Ronald A. Sorokin
Deanna Steblyk, KC
Margaret Unsworth, KC
Maira Váně
Grant Vogeli, KC
Salimah Walji-Shivji, KC
Louise Wasylenko, CPA, CMA, Lay Bencher