

Tuesday, April 7, 2020

To: Kenneth Armstrong, CBABC President

Subject: Correspondence from the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada

Dear Mr. Armstrong:

Thank you for your correspondence of January 16, 2020, sent on behalf of the Canadian Bar Association, BC Branch, concerning the judicial complement and vacancies in British Columbia. I regret the delay in responding.

I appreciate the time you have taken to share your views, and those of the individuals who provided their personal experiences, on this issue.

As you note, in October 2016, the Government of Canada announced several reforms to increase the openness, transparency, and accountability of the judicial appointments process as well as to increase diversity in Canada's judiciary. I am pleased that the Government has made 39 appointments to the Supreme Court of British Columbia since that time. This includes four in June 2019, one in December 2019, and two on March 8, 2020. I am also pleased to see that the Judicial Advisory Committee for British Columbia is fully functional, which will assist in ensuring that there are a sufficient number of exceptional candidates for appointment.

Drawing from the lists of candidates recommended by the Judicial Advisory Committee for British Columbia, I will continue to identify outstanding individuals for appointment who have the requisite knowledge and experience, and who reflect the diversity of the population they will serve. Please be assured that I recognize the importance of filling vacancies, and that I am working diligently to accomplish this.

I would like to take this opportunity to note that the Canadian Bar Association's work in identifying deserving candidates for judicial positions, as well as for positions on the independent judicial advisory committees, has been a big help towards making our appointments as strong as they have been.

With that said, as indicated to you during a recent conversation with Mr. François Giroux, Judicial Affairs Advisor in my office, we are always looking to widen the pool of qualified applicants and reach new networks.

While details of provincial and territorial requests are confidential, I can assure you that departmental officials are working with British Columbia, as well as with other jurisdictions, to ensure that our courts are adequately resourced. I am strongly committed to ensuring that our justice system is effective, fair, and accessible for all Canadians.

Thank you again for writing.

Respectfully,

The Honourable David Lametti, P.C., Q.C., M.P.
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada