

Minister of Justice  
and Attorney General of Canada



Ministre de la Justice  
et procureur général du Canada

The Honourable / L'honorable Arif Virani, P.C., M.P. / c.p., député  
Ottawa, Canada K1A 0H8

**October 24, 2023**

Ms. Jana Linner  
President  
Canadian Bar Association, Saskatchewan Branch

**(by email)**

Dear Ms. Linner:

Thank you for your correspondence of August 28, 2023, sent on behalf of the Canadian Bar Association, Saskatchewan Branch, concerning judicial vacancies in Saskatchewan.

At the outset, I appreciate the time you have taken to share your members' concerns about the pace of appointments to the Court of King's Bench for Saskatchewan, as informed by their first-hand experiences.

As Minister of Justice, I take very seriously my responsibility for judicial appointments, and I understand the need to fill vacancies. I am keenly aware of the importance of access to courts and timely resolution of legal disputes, both for individuals and for maintaining public confidence in the administration of justice.

I am proud that the Government of Canada has appointed more than 660 judges since November 2015. This includes more than 30 appointments in Saskatchewan, of which 25 were to the Court of King's Bench. Since I was named Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada on July 26, 2023, I have been pleased to announce another 37 judicial appointments, which included the appointment of the Honourable Jodi R. Wildeman that you note in your correspondence. Moreover, in 2022, my predecessor announced 4 additional appointments to the Court.

I recognize that vacancies remain on the Court of King's Bench for Saskatchewan, and I appreciate the challenge that this poses for both your members and their clients. It is important to note that one of these vacancies is the result of our government's work to increase the capacity of superior courts by funding new judicial positions. As you know, our government funded the creation of the new Associate Chief Justice position through Budget 2022. While Chief Justice and Associate Chief Justice appointments are ultimately made by the Prime Minister, I am actively supporting efforts to ensure that this vacancy is filled. I am also continuing to work to fill the additional vacancies for puisne judges on the Court.

Please be assured that our government is committed to identifying opportunities to make the judicial appointment process more efficient. On September 5, 2023, I was proud to announce that newly appointed Judicial Advisory Committees (JACs) will serve three-year terms instead of two-year terms, and that their candidate assessments will now be valid for three years rather than two. Extending these terms will decrease the time spent selecting new JAC members, will allow each JAC to evaluate more candidate files over an extended period, and will ensure that the same JAC does not assess a candidate twice. These recent changes build on reforms to the appointments process announced in October 2016, which were aimed at increasing openness, transparency, and accountability in the process, while also promoting diversity on the bench.

Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Arif Virani', with a stylized flourish.

The Honourable Arif Virani, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada