



August 28, 2023

SENT VIA EMAIL - arif.virani@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Arif Virani, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada
284 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0H8

Dear Minister Virani,

RE: Delays in appointments to the Saskatchewan Court of King's Bench

As President of the Canadian Bar Association, Saskatchewan Branch, I am writing to express the strong desire of our members that the federal government take all available steps to reduce the delays affecting appointments to the Court of King's Bench for Saskatchewan.

The CBASK does thank the Minister of Justice for the appointment of Jodi R. Wildeman, K.C., whose appointment to the Court of King's Bench was recently announced. That said, the Court currently has two further vacancies, including the Associate Chief Justice. This shortage complicates the ability of the Court to fulfil its function, including:

1. To schedule trials and other hearings;
2. To render substantive decisions in a timely manner, to allow parties to obtain final resolutions on their legal disputes;
3. To allow interim decisions in a timely manner, which may hold up other parts of a proceeding until they are made.

Some of these vacancies remain unfilled for lengthy periods, and are part of a broader trend of consistent delays in filling judicial vacancies. Our concerns about slow appointment timelines (in our own province) have recently been strongly expressed publicly by members of the profession in other provinces, as well as the Canadian Judicial Council.

Many CBA Saskatchewan members have expressed the view that these current vacancies tangibly impact the timelines within which matters can proceed through the Court system. This undermines the public confidence in the speed in which justice can be delivered in this province.

We would be grateful to receive details on how your office is approaching this problem, so that we can report to our members. Numerous members have enquired whether it would be possible to have a standing list of pre-approved candidates, who can be quickly appointed when vacancies are scheduled to arise. We would be interested in your comments on whether this would be practical.



Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Jana Linner, K.C.
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CC:

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