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January 4, 2023

## **"Day of Action"**

Counsel;

We write to you on behalf of the newly formed AFLA (Alberta Family Lawyers' Association).

While we hope that most Alberta Family Lawyers have now heard of AFLA, we are sending out a direct message to the Family Bar to seek support, encourage discussion, and gather information to advance our collective interests. The intent of forming this organization is to add a loud voice for Family Lawyers in advocating for changes to Family Justice in Alberta.

In line with this objective, AFLA is announcing the first ever "Day of Action" for Alberta lawyers to draw public notice to the family justice crisis in this province. We are focusing specifically on the lack of appropriate Legal Aid coverage and funding for family law matters, and the suspension of the planned Unified Family Court. These are not the only issues that need to be raised to improve access to justice for families, but these are pressing issues that resonate with many of us. The date of Tuesday, February 21, 2023 (the day after Family Day) has been selected as this "day of action".

In order to draw public attention to these matters, AFLA is asking all counsel to refrain from booking any family court matters on February 21, 2023, and to seek adjournments, where possible and appropriate, of any matters already scheduled for that day. By taking this step together, and with your support, family lawyers in Alberta will draw public attention and support for these issues, but not in a manner that would prejudice the real victims of this crisis – the clients and members of the public. A noteworthy side effect is that it should open the day for self-represented litigants to appear and have matters move forward, which in turn will highlight the value and need for accessible family law services. In addition, all family law firms in Alberta are also being asked to consider closing your office with notice to your clients that you are doing so to draw attention to, and in support of, the "day of action", or alternatively to avoid scheduling meetings or other matters at their offices on that day.

It is hoped that all members of the Bar in Alberta, and especially family practitioners, are made aware of this effort. It is likely we have all complained about these access to justice issues privately for years, but now there is an opportunity for each of us, in a very small way, to try and do something about it. A unified family court and improved access to Legal Aid helps every family lawyer.

Please pass this on to other family law practitioners as our mailing list certainly will not have everyone on it. Also please encourage all lawyers, and especially family law lawyers to sign up for a free membership in AFLA so that we are able to boast a large membership in our advocacy efforts.

Thank you so much for your attention and support!

Sincerely,

**ALBERTA FAMILY LAWYERS ASSOCIATION**

Steering Committee:

Doug Moe, KC, Wayne Barkauskas, KC, Sue Channan,  
Moosa Jiwaji, Tracy Brown, Ken Proudman, Ashley Cox,  
Melissa Oakley, Krista Cossar, Emma Benarzi, Justine  
Fallu, Mathieu Maillet