



News Release

Federation Statement on Integrity of SCC Appointment Process

**For Immediate Release
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The Federation of Law Societies of Canada expresses its deep concern over published and broadcast reports that have exposed confidential aspects of the appointment process to the Supreme Court of Canada. The judicial appointment process requires that the identity of candidates in the appointment process, and the assessment of those candidates, be kept highly confidential to protect the reputations of the applicants and the institution itself.

“Canada’s justice system is the envy of the world. It is vital that our judicial institutions continue to be respected, in Canada and abroad” says Federation President Ross Earnshaw.

“By publicly disclosing information about prospective candidates and the merits underlying their consideration during the consultation and deliberation phase of the selection process, an essential feature of the process has been undermined”, he added. “This is an unacceptable violation of what all prospective candidates had been led to expect when they put their names forward.”

The task of screening and nominating candidates for the Supreme Court belongs to an Independent Advisory Board, a non-partisan selection committee appointed by the government. The Federation of Law Societies of Canada was consulted on the establishment of the process and is represented on the Advisory Board. The final decision on any Supreme Court appointment rests with the Prime Minister.

“When the current process was established, one goal was to eliminate any perception that partisan considerations enter into what Canadians ought to expect to be a purely merit-based appointment process” Federation President Ross Earnshaw emphasizes. “It is critical to the integrity of that process that individuals under consideration have no fear that their identity or other information will be used for any purpose other than the one intended. It is deeply concerning that such information was leaked in this instance.”

The Federation is the national coordinating body of the 14 provincial and territorial law societies that regulate Canada’s 125,000 lawyers, Quebec’s 3,800 notaries and Ontario’s 9,000 paralegals in the public interest. It is a leading voice on issues of national and international importance relating to the administration of justice and the rule of the law.

For more information on the Federation, please visit our web site at www.flsc.ca.

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