



Federation of
Law Societies
of Canada

Fédération des ordres
professionnels de juristes
du Canada

News Release

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Statement from the Federation of Law Societies of Canada on the International Day of Democracy

On this International Day of Democracy, the Federation of Law Societies of Canada reaffirms the essential connection between democracy, the rule of law, and an independent legal profession and judiciary.

Democracy is more than a system of government – it reflects our shared values: fairness, equality, freedom of expression, and accountability. The rule of law is what turns those values into reality. It ensures that no one – not even governments – is above the law, and that every person has access to fair and impartial justice.

In Canada, the independence of the legal profession and judiciary helps uphold these principles. Canadians can choose their legal counsel, rely on the impartiality of our courts, and trust that their rights are protected through clear and consistent laws.

It means we can vote, and do so freely and without intimidation. Speak openly about political issues. Choose the lawyer we trust. Be judged by impartial courts, not by public opinion or political interference. And know that the law applies equally to everyone, including those in positions of power. These rights may seem self-evident, but in many parts of the world, they are out of reach or under threat. Even in Canada, they must be actively protected.

Yet we must acknowledge that confidence in these systems is not universal. Many Canadians – particularly those from Indigenous or marginalized communities – feel the administration of justice is inaccessible, non-representative and non-responsive.

Recognizing and addressing these concerns is a necessary part of strengthening our democracy by ensuring legal institutions are accessible and serve all members of the public. The path forward must include transparency, education, and efforts to build greater trust in our legal institutions.

Federation President Teresa Donnelly emphasized this balance: “The rule of law, supported by an independent legal profession and judiciary, is the foundation of a free and democratic society. As challenges to these principles grow around the world, Canada must remain a stronghold of integrity, fairness, and justice. We all have a role to play in protecting Canadian justice – by learning more, speaking up, and holding our institutions to the highest standards.”

At a time when democratic institutions face mounting pressures worldwide and many Canadians worry that what’s happening elsewhere could happen here, it is more important than ever to protect and promote the values that underpin our legal system.

Let us reflect, stay engaged, and uphold the rule of law – not as an abstract ideal, but as a living commitment to the dignity and equality of everyone in Canada. It is one of our greatest national strengths, and it is ours to protect.

The Federation of Law Societies of Canada is the national association of the 14 law societies mandated by the provinces and territories to regulate Canada’s legal profession in the public interest. It is the body through which Canada’s law societies collaborate at the national level and share information on trends and issues affecting the legal profession. It is also the national and international voice of the law societies on matters related to the regulation and core values of the legal profession.

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