

Manitoba Bar Association Addresses Removal of NDP MLA Mark Wasyliv

Winnipeg, MB: The Manitoba Bar Association is deeply concerned by the removal of NDP MLA Mark Wasyliv from caucus, which has been linked to his association with criminal defence lawyers. This decision raises serious concerns about the role and perception of defence lawyers in our justice system.

Jessica Schofield, President of the Manitoba Bar Association, says: “It is disappointing that the association of the work of a partner in Mr. Wasyliv's office was used for the basis of his removal from caucus. Criminal defense lawyers play a crucial role in safeguarding the rights of individuals and ensuring a fair and just legal system. This decision undermines the essential function of criminal defense lawyers, whose work ensures that the justice system remains balanced and accessible to all.”

The Manitoba Bar Association reiterates its previous comments that Criminal Defense lawyers are an important and valued part of the legal community and a critical part of the operation of the criminal justice system. The presumption of innocence and the right to legal representation for every individual facing criminal charges are fundamental principles within our justice system. Every individual who is charged with a criminal offence has the right to challenge the charge and the evidence against them, especially when their liberty is at risk. These checks and balances cannot be upheld without the hard work of criminal defence lawyers.

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The Manitoba Bar Association, a branch of the Canadian Bar Association, represents over 1,600 lawyers, judges, notaries, law teachers and law students from across Manitoba.

An essential ally and advocate for members of the legal profession, we promote fair justice systems, facilitate effective law reform, uphold equality in the legal profession and are devoted to eliminating discrimination.