

October 2, 2026

VIA EMAIL: lorne.doerkson@conservativebc.ca

Lorne Doerkson, MLA
Leader, Conservative Party of British Columbia

Re: Protecting Access to Justice: The Need for a Clear Plan for Paralegal Regulation

Dear Mr. Doerkson:

The British Columbia Paralegal Association (BCPA) is a well-established professional organization that has represented hundreds of members across British Columbia since 1979. Our membership includes experienced legal professionals working in private practice, government, in-house legal departments, administrative tribunals, and other justice-sector roles. For many years, the BCPA has been actively engaged in discussions surrounding paralegal regulation and access to justice, advocating for a modernized legal services framework that expands public access while maintaining professional standards, accountability, and protection of the public interest. It is from that perspective that we offer the following comments.

We understand from several public statements that the Conservative Party of British Columbia intends to repeal the 2024 *Legal Professions Act*. Your recent letter confirms that position in writing, stating, "We'll repeal the NDP's 2024 Legal Professions Act changes that undermine the profession's independence and self-governance."

The BCPA notes that your letter focuses on concerns relating to the governance and regulation of the legal profession. However, absent from that letter is any indication of how the Conservative Party intends to address the future regulation of paralegals in British Columbia should the *Legal Professions Act* be repealed. This omission creates significant uncertainty regarding the future of a profession that has been the subject of extensive policy development and consultation.

The 2024 legislation represents a historic effort to create a pathway toward the regulation of paralegals as legal professionals in British Columbia. For many years, policymakers, legal stakeholders, and public-sector participants have recognized that the growing access-to-justice crisis requires innovative solutions that expand the public's ability to obtain affordable, competent legal assistance.

A regulated paralegal profession has the potential to be one of those solutions.

Across British Columbia, many people face legal challenges without representation because traditional legal services remain financially out of reach. In 2024/25, 39 per cent of family law appearances and 69 per cent of small claims appearances in the Provincial Court of British Columbia were made by people with no lawyer or agent present (*Provincial Court of British Columbia, Annual Report 2024/25*).

The consequences of this reality are not experienced equally. Rural and remote communities, Indigenous peoples, newcomers, low-income British Columbians, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups often face the greatest barriers to obtaining legal assistance. Expanding the availability of qualified, educated, and regulated legal professionals gives the public more options while maintaining standards of competence, accountability, and public protection. A regulated paralegal profession would provide an additional pathway through which British Columbians may obtain legal assistance, particularly for those communities that have historically faced the greatest obstacles in obtaining legal support.

Respectfully, it is not sufficient to state that the legislation will be repealed. Your letter states that commitment in clear terms but offers no corresponding vision for the future regulation of paralegals in British Columbia.

If the Conservative Party believes the current model should be abandoned, British Columbians deserve to understand what will replace it, how consumers will be protected, and how access to justice will be improved rather than diminished. In discussing the insurance sector, your letter argues that greater consumer choice and competition produce better outcomes for the public. Yet it does not address whether the same principles should apply to the delivery of legal services.

A regulated paralegal profession could increase consumer choice, expand service options, and promote competition in areas where many British Columbians currently struggle to obtain affordable legal assistance. If choice and competition are viewed as beneficial in one context, it is fair to ask why those same principles would not apply in another.

Opposition to legislation should not be conflated with opposition to the underlying policy objectives that legislation seeks to achieve. The work leading to the regulation of paralegals has involved years of effort by experienced legal professionals, policymakers, academics, community advocates, and justice-sector stakeholders. Many have dedicated significant time and expertise to addressing longstanding access-to-justice challenges.

In light of those efforts, and while criticism of the existing model is a legitimate part of democratic debate, any proposal to repeal the existing framework should be accompanied by a clear and credible alternative. Public policy of this significance should not be dismantled without explaining how its underlying objectives, particularly improving access to justice and expanding consumer access to legal services, will be achieved. Much of that work has moved beyond consultation into implementation, and repeal without a replacement framework would leave British Columbians, legal professionals, and prospective regulated paralegals without clear answers about what comes next.

Accordingly, the BCPA respectfully requests clarification of the Conservative Party's position on paralegal regulation and, in particular, answers to the following questions:

1. Does the Conservative Party support the regulation of paralegals through a dedicated regulator, a multi-profession regulator, or another regulatory model, and what would that structure look like?

2. How would such a framework ensure consumer protection and professional accountability?
3. How would the Party address the ongoing access-to-justice challenges facing British Columbians, if not by expanding access to regulated legal service providers?
4. What consultation, if any, has occurred with paralegals and paralegal organizations regarding the potential repeal of the legislation?
5. How does the Conservative Party intend to ensure that rural, remote, underserved, and marginalized communities continue to benefit from expanded access to affordable legal services?

These questions are important not only to paralegals, but to the public. The future of legal services in British Columbia should continue to advance both the independence of legal professionals and meaningful access to justice. The BCPA believes these objectives can be pursued together within an appropriate regulatory framework.

The BCPA remains committed to working collaboratively with government, regulators, lawyers, and justice-sector stakeholders to ensure that British Columbians have access to a legal services framework that is independent, effective, and responsive to the needs of the public.

We would appreciate a response by October 16, 2026, and would welcome the opportunity to meet with you or your staff to discuss the future of paralegal regulation in British Columbia.

Sincerely,

BC Paralegal Association

Rosina Jagore

Rosina Jagore
President

on behalf of the Board of Directors

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