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Mr. Michael MacPherson
Clerk, Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights
Sixth Floor, 131 Queen Street
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

March 4, 2016

Re: Committee Study – Access to the Justice System

Dear Mr. MacPherson,

I am writing on behalf of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA) to request an opportunity to appear before the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights in relation to its recently initiated study concerning access to the justice system.

CCLA was founded in 1964 and is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organization dedicated to protecting and promoting fundamental human rights and civil liberties. CCLA is recognized as an organization with significant expertise on human rights and we have been involved in advocacy, both in and out of court, to address concerns related to access to justice, including some of the topics that will be covered by the Committee's study. Moreover, we were the only intervener in the recent Federal Court case of *Schmidt v. Attorney General of Canada* (2016 FC 269) concerning the interpretation of s. 4.1 of the *Department of Justice Act*. Last year we initiated the #CharterFirst campaign which is exploring options for ways to ensure that *Charter* concerns are dealt with proactively in the legislative process.

We feel that we have valuable expertise to share with the Committee and contribute to its study of this important issue. We invite you to share this letter with members of the Committee and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Cara Faith Zwibel
Director, Fundamental Freedoms Program

cc: Anthony Housefather, Chair
Ted Falk, Vice-Chair
Murray Rankin, Vice-Chair