

February 5, 2026

The Honourable Mickey Amery
Minister of Justice and Solicitor General
Government of Alberta
7th Floor, 9833 – 109 Street NW
Edmonton, AB T5K 2E8

Via email: ministryofjustice@gov.ab.ca

Dear Honourable Mickey Amery;

The BC Civil Liberties Association (BCCLA), Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA), and the Ligue des droits et libertés (LDL), are jointly writing to ask that you reconsider the decision to deny funding to the Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre (ACLRC). Organizations such as the ACLRC exist to promote respect for civil liberties and human rights and support access to justice – both key components of any free and democratic society.

We understand that recent legislative amendments now require ministerial approval for any Alberta Law Foundation grant over \$250,000. While this change raises legitimate concerns about political oversight of an independent funding body, we acknowledge that the Alberta Legislative Assembly supported it. Even so, it is hard to accept that the amendment was meant to justify cutting support for research, education, and legal literacy. The impact of how these newly legislated powers are being applied is deeply troubling.

The Alberta Law Foundation's Board, an independent body with statutory responsibility and expertise in allocating funding in the public interest, made the decision to grant funding to the ACLRC. The Ministry's decision to override that determination represents a significant departure from established practice and undermines the independence of the Foundation's governance process.

Equally concerning are the consequences of this decision. The denied grant represents approximately 95% of the ACLRC's core funding. As a result, this decision effectively threatens the organization's continued existence. We are not aware of any other organization that has been similarly denied funding through this process, making the ACLRC the sole organization affected in this way. This raises serious questions about fairness, consistency, and the criteria being applied.

As leading civil liberties organizations across the country, we know first-hand the importance of ensuring that the education and public information sharing work of the ACLRC continues. The ACLRC has a long-standing record spanning over 40 years of supporting research, education, and public engagement on civil liberties, constitutional rights, and the rule of law in Alberta. Cutting off the vast majority of its funding risks silencing an independent, non-partisan institution whose work contributes to informed public debate and democratic accountability. The appearance that civil liberties research is being uniquely targeted is highly concerning and sends a chilling message to other civil society organizations.

Taken together, the new ministerial approval requirement, the override of the Alberta Law Foundation Board's decision, and the disproportionate impact on a single organization create a chilling effect on civil society, academic freedom, and independent policy research. These developments risk eroding public confidence in the neutrality and integrity of public-interest funding processes.

The BCCLA, CCLA and LDL jointly urges the Government of Alberta to reverse course on this decision. Respect for the Rule of Law and democratic values requires not only tolerance of independent and critical voices, but active support for the institutions that sustain them.

Sincerely,

Liza Hughes
Executive Director
BC Civil Liberties Association

Howard Sapers
Executive Director
Canadian Civil Liberties Association

Laurence Guénette
Coordinator
Ligue des droits et libertés