

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA
FACULTY OF LAW

March 5, 1992.

The Honourable Gerry Weiner
Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship
House of Commons
Room 533 Confederation Building
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

My Dear Minister:

Speaking for myself and many of my colleagues at the Faculty of Law, University of Manitoba, I wish to express my deep disappointment at the decision to cancel the Court Challenges Program. This innovative and internationally-respected program has to raise crucial issues of public policy in what is often the only forum open to them in any meaningful way. I would have thought that with decisions such as that of the Supreme Court of Canada in *Butler* (focusing the law of obscenity in a way which represents an important and acceptable balance of conflicting interests) the program would be seen by the Government of Canada as being of very great assistance to it in the resolution of complex and controversial issues. One can make the same point with virtually every decision of the Court in which the Court Challenges Program has played a significant role. I note in this respect, particularly, the role of the program and the courts in resolving in an acceptable way some delicate and difficult minority language issues. With respect it seems to me that by no stretch of the imagination can it be said that the program is either extravagant in terms of the amount of money spent on any particular case or unfocused, or unimportant.

May I strongly urge you to take every possible step to restore a program which has, as I have noted, won international as well as national praise, and deservedly so.

Yours sincerely,

Roland Penner
Dean.

RP: clh.

c: The Hon. Kim Campbell, Minister of Justice.
bc: William W. Black.