

YORK UNIVERSITY
OSGOODE HALL LAW SCHOOL

March 8, 1992

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

Dear Mr. Weiner:

I am writing to express my surprise and disappointment that the Court Challenges Program was cancelled last week. As a strong supporter of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and as a visible and identifiable (often in the media) supporter of many of the efforts that your Government has made on a wide range of constitutional issues, I find it difficult to believe that your Ministry would cancel a superb program without any notice or, as I understand it, any consultations with those who administer the program and those who are affected by it.

Your Government has a good record on many civil rights issues. Moreover, your Government has a solid record of trying to implement the Charter in a fair way. One of the most creative and important components of your track record in this regard was the Court Challenges Program which enabled many poor people and the groups supporting them to bring important issues before the Canadian courts. A good deal of the excellent Charter jurisprudence that now exists in Canada would not have developed without the Court Challenges Program.

I know that in times of financial restraint difficult decisions need to be made. However, one would hope that these decisions would be made after some open consultation with individuals and groups who might be affected. I understand that your Ministry engaged in no discussions with anybody about the sudden termination of this viable program. Accordingly, I join with others across the country in asking you to reconsider the decision taken by your Ministry last week.

Your sincerely,

J.C. MacPherson
Dean

JCM/ms

c: The Hon. Kim Campbell, Minister of Justice.