

## **Guiding Principles for Political and Civil Activity in the Canadian Bar Association – Alberta Branch**

### **A. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to maintain public confidence in the Canadian Bar Association – Alberta Branch (CBA Alberta) as a non-partisan voice for the legal profession, while affirming the right of CBA Alberta members to participate fully in the political and civic life of Canada as private citizens.

Political and civic activity involving CBA Alberta and its members is guided by the following principles.

### **B. Member Political and Civic Participation**

#### **1. Right to Participate**

CBA members are encouraged to participate in political and governmental affairs in their personal capacities, including:

- voting;
- joining or serving in political parties;
- providing financial support;
- communicating with party officials and candidates;
- participating in peaceful and lawful protests; and
- serving in elected or appointed offices at the local, provincial, or national level.

#### **2. Civic and Community Engagement**

CBA members are encouraged to contribute to their communities through civic, charitable, and volunteer activities that promote access to justice, the rule of law, and the public good.

### **3. Informed Democratic Participation**

Members are encouraged to be informed and engaged participants in the democratic process. As legal professionals, members have a particular interest in policies that uphold the rule of law and the independence of the justice system.

### **4. Respect for Diverse Views**

CBA members should not judge one another based on political views, affiliations, or voting choices. Members may hold a wide range of political perspectives, and all should feel welcome and respected in CBA settings.

## **C. Use of the CBA Name, Position, and Affiliation**

1. Members who seek elected or appointed public office must not imply, without authorization, that they are endorsed by the CBA or its leadership.
2. Members should avoid statements or conduct that could reasonably be interpreted as endorsement by the CBA of any political party, platform, policy, or candidate.

## **D. CBA Institutional Neutrality**

1. The CBA is neutral with respect to political parties, political platforms, and candidates for political office. The CBA does not endorse any political party or candidate, nor does it advise members how to vote.
2. Principles consistent with CBA values and priorities may be reflected, to varying degrees, across different political parties and platforms.
3. As Canada's largest association of legal professionals, the CBA advocates on issues that matter to its members, brings lawyers' perspectives to public debate, and promotes the core values of the legal profession.

## **E. Public Policy Positions and Authorization**

1. In exceptional cases where CBA interests are engaged, the CBA may take non-partisan positions on public policy matters to represent its views.
2. Only the CBA President and Board may authorize:
  - committing the CBA to support or oppose specific legislation;
  - sharing the CBA's perspective on judicial matters; or

- expressing the CBA's position on moral or social issues.
3. Even when the CBA takes a public position on a political matter, it does not direct elected officials to vote or act in a particular way. CBA members who hold public office act independently and do not speak on behalf of the CBA unless expressly authorized.

## **F. CBA Events, Programming, and Resources**

1. Political advocacy, party affiliation, or electoral campaigning must not be the primary focus of CBA seminars, meetings, or events. Section leaders are responsible for ensuring that CBA activities remain focused on professional development, access to justice, and matters relevant to the legal profession.
2. CBA records, directories, facilities, and similar resources may not be used for political purposes.
3. In planning CBA events, including conferences, educational programs, and Board retreats, reasonable efforts should be made to invite speakers who can address issues from a non-partisan or politically neutral perspective, consistent with the CBA's commitment to inclusivity and public confidence in its neutrality.

## **4. Conclusion**

This policy is intended to balance robust civic engagement by members with the CBA's institutional commitment to non-partisanship and public confidence in the legal profession.