



February 11, 2026

Via email: anna.gainey@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Anna Gainey, MP
Secretary of State for Children and Youth
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Secretary of State Anna Gainey,

Re: Invitation to Annual Meeting and Engagement on Children's Rights

The National Child and Youth Law Section (CYL Section) of the Canadian Bar Association (CBA) is pleased to invite you, in your capacity as Secretary of State for Children and Youth, to attend our annual meeting at the CBA offices in Ottawa, on the morning of April 23, 2026. We would be honoured by your participation and welcome the opportunity to engage with you on priorities affecting children and youth across Canada.

The CBA represents over 40,000 legal professionals and is a leading advocate for the rule of law in Canada. Our Section serves as the national voice within the CBA on legal and policy issues affecting children and youth. Our work focuses on promoting children's rights and best interests by monitoring emerging legal developments, assessing the impact of legislation and policy, and advancing frameworks that strengthen children's participation, protection, and access to justice.

We would welcome the opportunity to share our perspectives and explore how the Section's expertise could support the important work of your portfolio, including through dialogue, evidence-based policy development, and collaboration with civil society and professional stakeholders.

Current Legislative Proposals

In particular, the Section is currently engaged in a number of federal law reform initiatives affecting children and youth, including collaborative work with other CBA Sections on criminal, family, and youth justice legislation.¹ We are also aware of the government's intention to advance forthcoming online harms legislation and would welcome the opportunity to work with you and your colleagues to ensure it reflects children's rights, lived realities, and legal safeguards. We would value the opportunity to discuss how these initiatives intersect with broader children's rights objectives and to exchange views on areas where national leadership and coordination can make a meaningful difference.

¹ CBA Submission (Criminal Law and Children and Youth Law) on [Bill C-14](#), the *Bail Sentencing and Reform Act*; CBA Submission (Criminal, Family, and Children and Youth Law) on [Bill C-16](#), the *Protecting Victims Act*; CBA Submission (Family and Children and Youth Law) on [Bill C-223](#), the *Keeping Children Safe Act*.

Rights of the Child

The Section has also been actively engaged in advancing Canada's implementation of its obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, including during Canada's 2022 reporting cycle. Our work emphasizes the importance of child-centred law- and policy-making, effective accountability mechanisms, and sustained engagement between governments and civil society to improve outcomes for children and youth.²

- Ratification of the Third Optional Protocol to the UNCRC;
- Incorporation of the UNCRC into Canadian law;
- Establishment of a National Commissioner of Children's Rights³; and
- Implementation of mandatory Child Rights Impact Assessment in policy- and law-making across the federal government.

Other jurisdictions, including Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, are advancing innovative approaches to children's rights, participation, and well-being. Canada likewise has an opportunity to strengthen its national approach to children and youth, and we welcome your leadership in identifying practical pathways forward within the federal role.

We would be pleased to meet with you either at our annual meeting, as noted above, or at another time convenient to you, to discuss these priorities and opportunities for ongoing engagement.

Sincerely,

(original letter signed by Yasmin Khaliq for Tina Parbhakar)

Tina Parbhakar
Chair, National Child and Youth Law Section

² CBA Child and Youth Law Submission from May 31, 2022: To better protect children | CBA, [online](#).

³ CBA Child and Youth Law Submission from December 2025: Bill S-212 - An Act respecting a national strategy for children and youth in Canada | CBA, [online](#).