

## MANITOBA COMMITS TO MAKE CHANGES TO FAMILY LAW SYSTEM TO IMPROVE WELLNESS FOR FAMILIES

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The Manitoba government is committing to reform the current family law system in Manitoba in order to make it more accessible and improve wellness and outcomes for families, announced Justice Minister Heather Stefanson today.

“The time has come for Manitoba to put families first and make changes that improve the current system for family law,” said Stefanson. “The system can often be adversarial and irreparably damaging to families. The experience can be especially harmful for young children. Our government is prepared to make changes to the current model, which will greatly improve fairness and well-being for Manitobans who interact with the family law system.”

The Manitoba government will establish a consultation committee comprised of representatives from the Court of Queen’s Bench, family lawyers, and academics. The chair of the committee is Allan Fineblit, an accomplished lawyer in dispute resolution and arbitration.

Fineblit was the CEO of the Law Society of Manitoba for 16 years before returning to private practice in 2014 as counsel and Chief Operating Officer for Thompson Dorfman Sweatman LLP. Earlier in his career, Fineblit also spent nearly 20 years with Legal Aid Manitoba.

“The current system in place for resolving family law matters does not do enough to promote the long-term wellness of families,” Fineblit said. “It is also a system that is inaccessible and unaffordable for many Manitobans. Finding ways to reform the family law system is an opportunity to look at a fundamental shift toward a system that focuses on collaboration and the best interests of families.”

The committee will report back to the Minister in early 2018 with a detailed framework for a new administrative model for family law. The committee’s work may then be used to inform amendments that will be ready for introduction in the next legislative session.

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