

Honourable Jody Wilson-Raybould, MP  
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada  
House of Commons  
Ottawa K1A 0A8

March 8, 2018

Dear Madam Minister:

The ADR Institute of Canada and its seven affiliates plus Alberta family Mediation Society, Collaborative Divorce Alberta Association, Dialogue & Resolution Services, Family Dispute Resolution Institute of Ontario, Family Mediation Canada, Family Mediation Manitoba and Mediate BC wish to express their deep and collective concern with respect to the omission of any reference to a commitment for alternate dispute resolution services in the Justice Department's notice which we received on February 27, 2018.

While our respective organizations welcome the announcement that \$77.2 million will be spent over four years to the enhancement of the Unified Family Court systems, we had understood from the roundtable discussion held on January 22, 2018 in Toronto that there would also be a commitment to the enhancement of family mediation and other dispute resolution services and would have expected it include all provinces, not just those referenced in the notice. ADR has a proven record of enhancing the public's access to justice, reducing costs to participants and relieving strain on the family justice system.

Mediation requires an initial screening of both parties for power imbalances and for domestic violence which creates a safer environment for the resolution of family law issues than the court system which does not have a similar requirement. As noted during the roundtable, recent research indicates that shuttle mediation has good outcomes for victims of violence.

In his recap of the meeting, Parliamentary Secretary, Mr. Mendicino, MP, specifically noted that a triage system with early intervention and early mediation would provide a specific enhancement to existing services. Unfortunately, this seems to have been overlooked in this announcement.

Our organizations fully support a Unified Family Court and welcome the commitment to that system. We look forward to its implementation in the near future. However, we ask that you reconsider your commitment to ADR services for all provinces and provide a formal announcement in that respect as well.

We would be pleased to meet with you at your convenience to discuss further.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



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President  
ADR Institute of Canada

CC. Ms. Audrey DeMarsico, Senior Policy Advisor

*This letter is submitted on behalf of the following:*

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