



**For Immediate Release, April 16, 2021**

**JOINT STATEMENT FROM SABA TORONTO, FACL, CABL AND CMLA – #FULLSTOP MOVEMENT AT LAW SOCIETY OF ONTARIO**

TORONTO, ONTARIO – Yesterday, the so-called “StopSOP/FullStop Campaign Team” sent an inflammatory and inaccurate e-mail to members of the Ontario Bar entitled “Join the #FullStop movement to restore the LSO”. The South Asian Bar Association of Toronto (SABA Toronto), the Federation of Asian Canadian Lawyers (Ontario) (FACL), the Canadian Association of Black Lawyers (CABL), and the Canadian Muslim Lawyers Association (CMLA) are deeply concerned by the campaign’s implicit denial of systemic racism in the profession, by its gross mischaracterization of Critical Race Theory, and by its disparaging description of the Law Society of Ontario (LSO)’s EDI efforts as the “politicizing influence of extreme ‘woke’ ideology”. This was the same campaign that fielded a slate of candidates in the 2019 bencher election on the false premise that their sole concern was the impact of the Statement of Principles on freedom of expression (“StopSOP”). What has since become clear, especially in light of this recent communication, is that they are opposed to profession-wide equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) reforms.

In this latest communication dated April 15, 2021, this campaign makes alarming statements about the 2023 bencher election. It intends to field a slate of candidates with the goal of ending the LSO’s efforts to address barriers faced by racialized licensees (“Full Stop”).

SABA, FACL, CABL, and CMLA strongly condemn this divisive messaging. Systemic racism is a lived reality for many lawyers, and EDI reforms are an important part of the change needed. The LSO has a central role as a regulator in effecting EDI-related change as part of its public interest mandate.

As lawyers, we hold a privileged societal role in preventing and eliminating discrimination. These are part of lawyers’ duties to the public and are aligned with the values of the *Human Rights Code* that lawyers, as service providers and/or as employers, owe to their clients and each other. Now more than ever, it is imperative that we live up to these values. We call on members of the legal profession to come together in pursuit of these shared professional commitments and to listen the concerns that many racialized lawyers continue to voice. We believe that now is a time for unity, for awareness, and for healing as a profession.