



Canadian Association of
Black Lawyers (CABL)
20 Toronto Street
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April 7, 2025

Re: CABL's statement regarding the importance of equity, diversity, and inclusion in the legal profession

The Canadian Association of Black Lawyers (CABL) is concerned by reports of organizations retreating from their commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the legal profession.

We are deeply disappointed by the decision of one of the country's most prominent law firms, McCarthy Tétrault LLP, to [pause its hiring program for Black and Indigenous law students](#). This program served as an important hiring initiative for young and racialized talent that are notoriously underrepresented in the legal profession. The decision to pause this program, particularly without a clear rationale, raises concerns about the firm's stated commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

We are similarly disappointed by the decision of The Advocates' Society (TAS), one of the most prominent legal professional associations, [to revoke its invitation to Tareq Hadhad to be the keynote speaker for its End of Term Dinner](#). Mr. Hadhad, a Syrian refugee who has become a Canadian entrepreneur and humanitarian advocate, has been internationally recognized for his achievements and was initially invited by TAS to share his inspiring personal story of perseverance. The decision to rescind this invitation due to concerns that some members may disagree with his perceived political views—which were not the proposed topic of his keynote remarks—is incredibly troubling. It sends a message that racialized voices are subject to greater scrutiny and are only valued as long as they are not opposed by others.

These decisions highlight a [troubling trend](#) of institutions backing away from open dialogue and action on diversity, equity and inclusion. A genuine commitment to these values requires us to remain committed despite political, financial, or social pressures. It requires us to amplify diverse voices. It requires us to respect diversity of thought, religion, and politics, even if they are not the same as our own.

In 2020, many law firms and legal organizations made commitments to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in their workplaces. These commitments arose from vital conversations during a global reckoning with anti-Black racism and racial justice following the tragic murder of George Floyd. We believe the current shift away from these commitments represents a dangerous retreat from the necessary work required to create a safer and more inclusive profession and society.

It is well documented that the legal profession in Canada has long been impeded by systemic discrimination that prevents Black, racialized, and other underrepresented groups from accessing opportunities and leadership roles. This problem is connected to the profession's history of exclusion and Canada's legacy of colonialism, slavery, and segregation. Moreover, these deep-rooted inequities have resulted in a legal profession that inadequately reflects the diverse society it serves, negatively impacting how marginalized groups experience the legal system and access justice.

In the current climate, where the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion are being challenged and voices advocating for these values are being suppressed, it is crucial for law firms and legal organizations to take a principled stance and uphold the commitments that they have previously made.

CABL remains committed to advancing diversity and using our platform to raise awareness and combat racism, inequality, and injustice. We urge McCarthy Tétrault LLP and The Advocates' Society to reconsider their decisions that reflect a step backwards from their stated principles. We further encourage other law firms, legal organizations, and corporations to reaffirm their commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion, not just through words, but through meaningful action.

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF BLACK LAWYERS