



News Release: Manitoba Human Rights Commission
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**Manitoba Human Rights Commission Supports Bill,
Looks Forward to Further Amendments**

Winnipeg - The Manitoba Human Rights Commission said today that it is pleased that the Manitoba Government has introduced legislation allowing same-sex couples to adopt. "We urged the Government last year to amend a number of statutes, including The Adoption and Vital Statistics Acts," said Janet Baldwin, Commission Chairperson. "All families ought to have the same rights and responsibilities, and we are pleased that this Bill addresses some of the remaining inequities faced by same-sex common-law partners."

Ms Baldwin said, however, that as much as the Commission supports the amendments, it is disappointed that this Bill did not address some other significant issues. Property laws determining the division of property on the breakdown of a relationship or the death of a spouse are not yet amended to include common-law partners, whether of the opposite or same-sex. The Intestate Succession Act is also not included in the Bill. "We are pleased, however, that the Government is committed to dealing with these important issues during this session," she added.

"Some of these issues would be less pressing if the federal government changed The Marriage Act to allow same-sex couples to marry," Ms Baldwin said. "However, our provincial government could both amend property legislation and create a scheme of civil union that would permit common-law couples, both same-sex and opposite sex, immediately to enjoy similar property rights to married couples."

The Charter Compliance Bill proposes a number of other changes, including the amendment of conflict of interest provisions in various statutes so that they apply to same-sex common-law partners.

The Commission is also pleased that the Government recognizes the Human Rights Code and process as the appropriate vehicle generally for addressing discrimination issues.

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