



From the office of
Doug Routley MLA
Nanaimo-North Cowichan

February 17, 2021

Honourable David Eby
Attorney General
Parliament Buildings Victoria, British Columbia V8V 1X4

I am writing to you today to provide feedback on the existing Family Compensation Act, also referred to as Wrongful Death Legislation.

I recently met with my constituent Sharon Andersen who was joined by Michael-James Pennie, President of the Wrongful Death Society. Sharon lost her longtime partner, Shirley, in 2015 under tragic circumstances while attempting to seek medical care at Cowichan District Hospital. Under the current legislation Sharon was left with no options to seek justice, as Shirley lived with a disability and therefore had no “financial loss” to be considered.

Sharon’s story is tragic, but sadly not unique. I know yourself and many of our colleagues have heard similar and equally tragic stories from families across our Province. While the current legislation only recognizes the financial contributions of an individual, I think you will agree that families and loved ones are often more concerned about justice and accountability when facing a tragic and unnecessary loss.

In a progressive and democratic society, I would argue that financial compensation, while also important, should not be the determining factor in a person’s value or worth. The emotional loss of a loved is often far greater than any dollar figure could capture.

Equally important is that when someone dies in a tragic and preventable matter, we learn from these situations and take steps to ensure it does not happen again. Under the current legislation these mechanisms simply don’t exist, unless the person who dies has a financial loss to be considered.

I am reminded of the story of another constituent who many years ago lost their child to a tragic accident involving a soccer net. She spent many years and a lot of time and effort advocating for change, not to the benefit of herself, but to prevent other children from suffering the same fate. As someone who has served for many years as a Member of the Legislature it is my opinion that this is one of the most noble and selfless ways, I have seen change occur.

Sharon and Michael have both suffered the tremendous loss of a loved one and any changes made now to the current Legislation are unlikely to change anything for them personally. However, they continue to share their stories and advocate so that others may be able to seek the justice they themselves were unable to find.

I am grateful that our government has committed to updating and modernizing the current legislation, and I have the utmost confidence in your ability to address the current gaps in the Family Compensation Act.

This letter serves to add my voice to this issue and to offer my support in any way needed to ensure this Legislation is updated during this term of government. I would also like to encourage you to continue working with Michael and the Wrongful Death Society, as they will be strong allies in this work and in gaining public support for the necessary changes.

Sincerely,



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