



Women's Legal  
Education and  
Action Fund

Fonds d'action et  
d'éducation juridiques  
pour les femmes

## Join LEAF and Abortion Access Now PEI in Seeking Abortion Access and Equality for PEI Women!

March 2016

Dear Friend,

The women of Prince Edward Island need our help.

Right now, as you read this, the Prince Edward Island (PEI) government is violating their equality rights. If a woman currently living in PEI decides to have a safe, legal abortion, where she lives, she can't. PEI's abortion policy prevents a woman from accessing this basic health service in her home province.

The Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) and Abortion Access Now PEI (AAN PEI) have joined together to seek justice for women in PEI. LEAF is supporting AAN PEI in filing a legal challenge against the PEI government's discriminatory and unjust policy. That policy violates the right of PEI women to equal access to health care services, contrary to section 15 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. The policy unlawfully discriminates on the basis of sex and pregnancy because it excludes abortion – a basic health care service required by women – from the health care services offered in PEI. PEI's archaic abortion policy perpetuates the historic disadvantage faced by women in relation to their bodies, reproductive health and decision-making.

**We're writing you today to ask you to support a legal challenge launched by AAN PEI. PEI women are the only women in Canada without access to safe, legal abortion in their home province.** For more than 25 years, PEI has flouted the spirit of the Supreme Court of Canada's decision in *Morgentaler* by completely denying access to abortion on the Island. It is time for PEI to abide by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and treat its citizens with the dignity afforded to those of every other province.

This is a serious healthcare issue for PEI women who are adversely affected both economically and emotionally. Presently, women living in PEI incur expenses related to travelling out of province, most often to either New Brunswick or Nova Scotia, to obtain an abortion. The monetary costs involved can be high – transportation costs, lodging, and in some cases childcare and lost wages – particularly for low-income and young women. Indeed for those without the financial resources or personal supports to access this simple procedure out of province, the panic and stress can be extreme. Local research on the barriers faced by PEI women shows the impact of PEI's abortion policy. Some women actively tried to self-induce and risked their health and lives due to the complete lack of on-Island abortion access.

The reality is that PEI women have endured a direct violation of the equality rights guaranteed under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* ever since those rights were enacted. The last abortion performed in PEI was in 1982. Since that time, activists across PEI have worked tirelessly to challenge the abortion policy through public engagement, dialogue with government, demonstrations, research and reports.

Women in PEI have no alternative. As a last resort, they are pursuing legal action to effect change. AAN PEI advised the PEI government of their legal challenge to the discriminatory and illegal abortion policy on January 5, 2016. AAN PEI seeks full and unrestricted access to on-Island, publicly-funded abortion services for PEI women. LEAF is proud to provide litigation support to AAN PEI, which is represented by Halifax-based counsel Nijhawan McMillan Barristers.

### Yes, I want to support LEAF and the AAN PEI legal challenge.

☐ Yes! I recognize the importance of this legal challenge.  
I have enclosed my donation.

☐ \$75 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$200 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$ Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### Payment Options:

DM3-2016

☐ Cheque payable to Women's Legal Education and Action Fund

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**LEAF believes this challenge is critical for women’s equality but a legal challenge requires vital resources and funds.** LEAF has pledged to provide the initial funds to launch the challenge, but as a non-profit feminist organization, its resources are already extremely limited. AAN PEI is a small grassroots non-profit with enormous energy and a complete lack of funds. **We need your help to cover the immediate expenses related to the first stage of this legal challenge.** The funds raised will cover essential litigation costs such as court filing fees, engaging expert witnesses, preparation of exhibits, briefs, travel costs, and other case-related disbursements.

It is critical for equality rights to be realized. For all women in Canada, having full access to abortion services is an essential determinant of women’s health, autonomy and substantive equality. Access to reproductive justice is also a component of women’s full and equal citizenship in Canada. Reproductive justice entails elements of reproductive health care such as access to contraception, health care information and support for parenting, as well as access to housing, employment and education.

**You can make a difference in the lives of women in PEI.  
Please donate to LEAF’s case fund today.**

Access to abortion cannot be taken for granted in Canada. We have taken the first step in this legal challenge but we need your help to support women in PEI who are simply seeking access to a basic health service in their province. Join us, as we come together with our sisters in PEI to seek equality. Please donate in aid of this historic legal challenge. Thank you for your support!

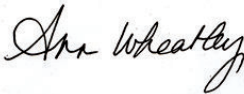
Sincerely,



Michelle Bullas  
Chair, LEAF



Dr. Colleen MacQuarrie  
Co-Chair, AAN PEI



Ann Wheatley  
Co-Chair, AAN PEI

***P.S. Every other province in Canada provides in-province abortion access. PEI should not deny women this vital health service. Please make a donation to LEAF in support of AAN PEI’s challenge to the PEI government’s unlawful and discriminatory abortion policy.***

About Abortion Access Now PEI (AAN PEI)

AAN PEI was incorporated in 2015 by a group of women with a three decade history of working for reproductive justice and access to abortion services in Prince Edward Island. AAN PEI’s purpose is to promote, advocate for and create the conditions for full and unfettered access to surgical and medical abortion services including diagnostic and follow-up care, in the province of Prince Edward Island, paid for by the PEI healthcare system. Building on the work of its sister organizations both past and present, AAN PEI will identify legal, socio-economic and political barriers to abortion access and take legal action to overcome those barriers. For more information visit [www.aanpei.com](http://www.aanpei.com).

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Charitable Registration No. 108219916 RR0001  
Please donate today at [leaf.ca](http://leaf.ca)  
Connect with us: @LEAFNational | @AANPEI



Yes, I want to support LEAF’s equality work through a monthly donation.

☐ I authorize a monthly donation of:  
☐ \$15   ☐ \$25   ☐ \$50   ☐ \$75   ☐ \$100   ☐ \$ Other \_\_\_\_\_

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Your gift will be processed on the 15th of each month. Tax receipts are issued once a year, for eligible donations over \$10, on or before February 28 of the next calendar year. You may cancel this authorization at any time with written notice or by calling LEAF at 416.595.7170 or toll-free 1.888.824.LEAF (5323).  
☐ I would like to become a LEAF Member, please send me the form.  
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