

## Media Release

For immediate release

April 11, 2008

### West Coast LEAF Urges the Attorney General to Refer the question of Polygamy to the Courts.

(Vancouver) The Board of Directors of West Coast LEAF (Legal Education and Action Fund), voted Thursday to support Special Prosecutors Richard Peck, Q.C. and Leonard Doust, Q.C. recommendations to refer the question of the constitutionality of Canada's polygamy laws to the Court of Appeal. Mr. Doust's opinion, released Monday, April 7<sup>th</sup>, made a strong case for proceeding by way of a constitutional reference\* to the court, rather than lay polygamy charges against an individual.

"The governments of Canada have an obligation to uphold Section 15 of the *Charter* and the equality rights of the women of Bountiful," says Alison Brewin, Executive Director of West Coast LEAF. "We believe a reference question is a good way of addressing the constitutionality of Canada's polygamy law in the courts and ensuring that this issue doesn't prevent the government from protecting women and children from the abuses of polygamy as it is practiced in Bountiful.

"The reality of polygamy as it is practiced in the FDLS church and Bountiful is that women and children are the property of the male leadership," says Brewin. "West Coast LEAF urges the BC Government to move quickly to uphold Canada's laws though the reference procedure."

\* In a reference, the court is asked for an opinion about the constitutionality of a law.

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