



# BRITISH COLUMBIA LAW INSTITUTE

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BRITISH COLUMBIA  
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BC FAMILY STATUS LEGAL RESEARCH PROJECT

## Media Release

### **BCLI to Research the Meaning of “Family Status” under the BC *Human Rights Code***

*for immediate release*

**Vancouver, 19 May 2011** —The British Columbia Law Institute has launched a new research initiative to study the meaning of the ground of “family status” under the BC *Human Rights Code*.

BC’s human rights law lists a number of protected grounds, including race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation and age. Recent court and tribunal decisions indicate that the meaning of the term “family status” is unclear. Differing interpretations of family status discrimination across the country has resulted in confusion about what it means to be free from discrimination on the ground of family status.

“It is time to step back and reflect on a meaning of family status that gives full regard to the broader purposes of human rights legislation and reflects the real challenges to participation in society faced by people living in different family arrangements,” states Executive Director Jim Emmerton. “Families have become increasingly diverse over the years.”

The BCLI will publish its Discussion Paper on the family status ground in June 2012. The paper is intended to serve as a resource for academics, practitioners and decision-makers, as well as the general public, and to explore whether further law reform is required to address family status discrimination. See the BCLI website for more information about this project, including a project backgrounder: <http://www.bcli.org>.

This project has been generously funded by the Law Foundation of British Columbia and will be supported by volunteer project advisors from the legal community.

The BCLI strives to be a leader in law reform by carrying out the best in scholarly law-reform research and writing and the best in outreach relating to law reform.

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