



# Media Release

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## **BARRIER-FREE MANITOBA CALLS FOR GOVERNMENT TO HONOUR COMMITMENT**

WINNIPEG – Barrier-Free Manitoba is calling on the provincial government to honour its commitment to address widespread disability discrimination by introducing accessibility-rights legislation during the last sitting of the 35<sup>th</sup> Legislature, scheduled to resume tomorrow.

"Significant headway has been made elsewhere in the 2+ years since we first called for provincial accessibility-rights legislation," said Dale Kendel, member of, and spokesperson for, the Barrier-Free Manitoba Steering Committee. "Canada has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the US has made substantial improvements to the Americans with Disabilities Act, and new legislated accessibility standards have come into force in Ontario, with others now being finalized in the areas of communication, employment and transportation."

In Manitoba, there have been promising words but little in the way of concrete action. Commitments have been made by Premier Selinger in his candidacy for the NDP leadership, then in the Provincial Government 2009 Throne Speech and, most recently, in two discussion papers. While the soon to be opened Canadian Museum for Human Rights is already attracting national and international attention, disability discrimination remains, as it has for over a decade, the foremost reason for complaint to the Manitoba Human Rights Commission, reaching an all-time high of 47% of formal complaints made last year. "These are unacceptably high levels," Kendel commented.

Barrier-Free Manitoba, with the endorsement of more than 100 coalitions and groups spanning the disability and seniors communities, and many hundreds of concerned citizens, believes that now is the time for resolute action. "We will be

looking for legislation to be tabled during this sitting, as well as for all-party support, so that it can be passed and proclaimed in advance of the upcoming provincial election," Kendel said.

Barrier-Free Manitoba ([www.barrierfreemb.com](http://www.barrierfreemb.com)) is a non-partisan, non-profit, cross-disability initiative that was formed in 2008.

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