

SECTION 1

A registered charity under the Income Tax Act (Canada)

2024

ANNUAL REPORT



WWW.SECTION1.CA

Education for Heroic Citizenship

Towards a curriculum for the liberal democratic citizen.

Our Mission

To promote a civics education for liberal democratic citizens. Education that prepares every student for a life of “heroic citizenship”. To undertake research and to advocate in the public interest against the forces of democratic backsliding and in service of liberal constitutional democracy.

Our Vision

A civil society in which every citizen is imbued with a sense of civic duty to come to the defence of the fundamentals of liberal constitutional democracy.

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Letter from Founder and President, Peter L. Biro



Dear Fellow Citizens and Friends of Section 1,

It gives me great pleasure and satisfaction to be delivering this very first Annual Report. It is my sincerest hope that many will follow over the years and that, more than anything else, the cause of education for liberal democratic citizenship will have been well served as a result!

Section 1 was founded in 2018 at a moment when it was becoming clear to democratic scholars, activists, civil libertarians, civil society organizations and political observers everywhere, that democratic backsliding was occurring at a fast and furious pace throughout the West and that liberal democracy itself was in danger of withering away.

As the democracy deficit increased and the urgency of the need to combat the erosion of liberal democratic civic values and practices became increasingly acute, it was evident that Section 1 needed to expand its reach and intensify its efforts. In order to enhance its effectiveness in this connection, in 2023 Section 1 was incorporated under the Canada Not-For-Profit Corporations Act and was accorded status as a Registered Charity under the Income Tax Act (Canada).

Section 1 is dedicated to helping us recognize, combat and reverse democratic backsliding wherever and however it is occurring in our society, and to elucidate and promote the essential principles – the “fundamentals” – of a liberal constitutional democracy or, as Section 1 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms calls it, a truly “free and democratic society”.

We operate as think-tank, convening conferences and commissioning research and writing; as educators, focusing on the essential content of an education for liberal democratic citizenship, and as public interest advocates for the cause of a liberal democratic civic culture.

We are a nonpartisan organization promoting the values of a society in which each citizen is armed with both an intellectual understanding of the core values of liberal constitutionalism and a civic immune system conditioned to viscerally recognize and react to the ubiquitous and unrelenting threats to the values and practices that define a “free and democratic society”.

As liberal democrats, we assume our responsibility to become the heroes of our shared civic life.

Since its founding Section 1 has been instrumental in the conception, organization and publication of two volumes which I edited and which addressed issues of direct import to Section 1’s stated preoccupations, principles and mission: *Constitutional Democracy Under Stress: A Time For Heroic Citizenship* (2020, Mosaic Press), and *The Notwithstanding Clause and the Canadian Charter: Rights Reforms and Controversies* (2024, McGill-Queen’s University Press). These volumes were published following – and as a result of – conferences convened and organized by Section 1 Toronto Metropolitan University (Formerly Ryerson) and Massey College, respectively. The two conferences and corresponding books featured some of the most acclaimed and distinguished experts, scholars, commentators, jurists, politicians, advocates and activists – such as Dr. Jane Goodall, the Honourable Irwin Cotler, the Honourable Nathalie Des Rosiers, the (late) Honourable Benoît Pelletier, the Honourable Alison Harvison Young, Thomas Axworthy, Robert Leckey, Dwight Newman, Sabreena Delhon, Jamie Cameron, Mary Jo Leddy, Mary Eberts, Jean-Pierre Kingsley, Marion Sandilands, and many other great and brilliant citizens (of Canada and of the world!). To watch all or any part of the superb conference proceedings, please visit <https://section1.ca/the-2019-conference/> and <https://section1.ca/the-2022-conference/>.

Over the course of the last year, we have also laid the groundwork for the production of our groundbreaking project and program, Bootcamp for Heroic Citizenship, an intensive, digital, multi-module “core curriculum for liberal democratic citizenship” for use by teachers, students and anyone interested in arming their civic immune system against the forces of democratic backsliding. Bootcamp will become Section 1’s flagship program once it has been produced, evaluated and refined.

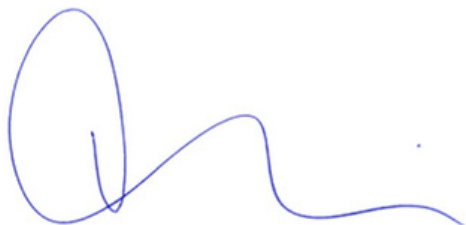
But to accomplish this, Section 1 will need a bit of funding! Not that much; just enough to do it right!

In our first FISCAL YEAR – as a Registered Charity – we have accomplished much in the way of essential “infrastructure”, including rolling out a brand new and much improved website, (www.section1.ca) expanding our Team and our Advisory Board (which includes a number of outstanding and distinguished

Canadians in public policy, law, the academy, government, business, the civil society sector, and the arts), getting our governance house in order with a new and engaged board of directors that has already held regular meetings, appointing our accountants and our superb legal counsel, and developing Bootcamp. And we participated in a number of conferences, public speaking events, workshops and media interviews along the way.

So, all in all, while the world is not in the very best shape, democracy-wise, Section 1 is building its capacities and competencies to be able to answer the call to do its (OUR) part in service of the cause of a free and democratic society!

With hope, resolve and a whole lotta love,



Peter L. Biro
Founder, President and Board Chair

Pre-incorporation History

Section 1 was originally founded by Peter L. Biro in late 2018 and operated as an unincorporated association from its founding until its incorporation under the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act in 2023. It operates as (a) a NON-PARTISAN think-tank, convening conferences and commissioning research and writing on human rights, civil liberties and liberal constitutionalism, (b) an educational organization focused on the development of a civics curriculum for liberal democratic citizenship, and (c) as bulwark against democratic backsliding and as public interest advocate for the cause of a robust liberal democratic civic culture.

Over the course of its first five years of operation, the activities and undertakings of Section 1 were entirely funded by Peter. During that period, Section 1 convened two major conferences, conducted workshops and delivered lectures at high schools and post-secondary institutions, and oversaw the conception, writing and editing of two important volumes *Constitutional Democracy Under Stress: A Time For Heroic Citizenship* (2020, Mosaic Press), and *The Notwithstanding Clause and the Canadian Charter: Rights Reforms and Controversies* (2024, McGill-Queen's University Press). This last volume, although published in 2024, was largely completed prior to incorporation in 2023.

During this pre-incorporation period, Section 1 generated a great deal of interest in its mission and work and attracted the attention of a number of distinguished scholars, public officials, jurists, business leaders, civil society leaders and activists, who agreed

to lend us their moral support and advice by agreeing to join our Advisory Board. Over the course of these last several years, some of those outstanding community members also volunteered to join our Team and to contribute to our work in several much-needed important ways. (See <https://section1.ca/our-team/> for details).

Our vision has, from the outset, been a civil society in which every citizen is imbued with a sense of civic duty to come to the aid and defence of the fundamentals of liberal constitutional democracy.

Incorporation and Registered Charitable Status

Section 1 was incorporated and received its Certificate of Incorporation under the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act on July 27, 2023, with Corporation number 1523371-2.

Section 1 Received its Notification of registration as a charity under the Income Tax Act (Canada) on November 2, 2023, with retroactive effective date of registration of August 16, 2023, and Business number 736845017RR0001.

The Plans for “*Bootcamp for Heroic Citizenship*”

Bootcamp for Heroic Citizenship (“Bootcamp”) - an in-class and web-enabled curriculum for liberal democratic citizenship targeting Grade 10/11/12 students across Canada and in other Western democracies. This program is one prong of a larger public policy (education reform) advocacy piece – aimed at prioritizing education for liberal democratic citizenship - that is at the core of the Section 1 mission and that is intended to be adopted in the public school system.

Problem Definition

We are witnessing, throughout the Western world, an unmistakable retreat from the allegiance to the liberal democratic principles that saw political theorists prematurely proclaim the triumph of liberal democracy and the arrival of a post-ideological universe.

The cardinal values of liberal democracy are pluralism, the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary, the separation of powers between executive, legislative and judicial branches of government, freedom of expression, including freedom of the press, freedom of conscience and religion, freedom of association, mobility rights of free persons, legal rights. These values, which find institutional expression in our laws, in our government agencies, and in our political and civic practices, are all very much at risk and in need of rescuing and rehabilitation.

Canada needs to take democracy education seriously, particularly at the High School level before students are exposed to a multitude of influences in the University environment and in society at large – including, of course, in the on-line world and the “metaverse”. As the target of our project is students graduating from high schools in Canada, we estimate that population to be.

~381,000. Voter participation in the 2021 Federal Elections amongst the 18-24 age group was an abysmal 46.7%, the lowest amongst all ages.

If it continues to fail this responsibility, liberal constitutional democracy itself will be the casualty. Civics education, and public education in general, are failing to educate students into a culture of liberal democratic citizenship.

Democracy, which, from Plato to J.S. Mill, assumed an enlightened citizenry (of one sort or another), had been predicated on the universal commitment to freedom of inquiry, to the pursuit of truth, to reason, to criticism and refutation, to science and, ultimately, to the growth of knowledge. Social media, by its very nature and structure, has fragmented the “public square”, cultivating a universe of self-affirming, metastasizing echo chambers.

Free citizens must, therefore, be equipped to safeguard and defend their liberties and their democracies. Therefore, they must take up “arms” against the threat of demagoguery, autocracy, populist nativism, dictatorship and wannabe strongmen bearing gifts. And with what shall they “arm” themselves? **NOT WITH GUNS and other lethal weapons, but with knowledge of and a conditioned allegiance to the non-negotiable values, norms and conventions of a just constitutional order.**

Good laws and institutions, while vitally crucial vehicles for the preservation of democracy and freedom, are poor proxies for free citizens vigilantly guarding and exercising their own agency.

Without the stewardship and vigilance of what we call “Heroic Citizens”, just laws and strong institutions will inevitably fail to safeguard freedom and democracy.

Every law and institution, no matter how virtuous, is capable of being misused, disregarded or undermined. It is always necessary for citizens to hold governments to account and to ensure that the fundamentals of constitutional democracy are respected and upheld. In the absence of the insistence and vigilance of citizens, institutions and lawmakers cannot be counted upon to promote justice, uphold the constitution and provide the oversight of the exercise of executive power. Constitutional Citizens are the ultimate gatekeepers of a constitutional democracy.

Program Area: Education and Policy Reform

While civics curricula typically expose students to the general architecture of western democratic political systems, including, to formal processes, institutions, and standard modes of civic engagement, and while they also invariably discuss some of the core values of democratic societies, they do not attempt the difficult and necessary work of providing both the intellectual and psycho-social grounding in the core Fundamentals of liberal democracy. And, most importantly, they do not – and, given the standard curriculum and general approach to the subject-matter, cannot – actually succeed in turning students into effective “liberal democratic citizens”.

Ideally, we would aim to have Bootcamp adopted – as a mandatory element – in The Toronto District School Board curriculum, **and in comparable curricula across Canada** AND, ULTIMATELY, IN SCHOOL SYSTEMS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

None of the current course offerings in the standard TDSB curriculum addresses what we call the “Fundamentals” of liberal constitutionalism as we propose. None are focused on fostering both intellectual AND visceral understanding.

But even as we intend for Bootcamp to be usable as an “off-the-shelf” program – whether in the classroom or for independent study – its larger purpose is to serve as a sort of “billboard” for the argument that liberal constitutionalism is simply not sustainable without a citizenry fit and equipped for the responsibilities and challenges of this particular political system and that, in the absence of a properly conditioned citizenry – one educated into the culture of liberal democratic citizenship – liberal constitutional democracy will inevitably succumb to democratic backsliding. The evidence of that backsliding, both in Canada and abroad, is mounting every day. (In this connection, we direct your attention to Peter Biro’s volume, *Constitutional Democracy Under Stress: A Time For Heroic Citizenship* (Mosaic Press, 2020) and, in particular to his chapter, “The Retreat from Liberal Constitutional Democracy and the Urgent Need For Heroic Citizenship”, which sets out many of the leading causes and factors at play in the backsliding.)

Project Budget: \$150,000 - \$200,000 (estimated) Comprised of technical support, editorial, digital and graphic production, studio rental, limited travel and accommodation. We have developed a more detailed budget breaking down each aspect of the project.

Objectives and Activities

While increased civic engagement is a desirable objective and outcome, active participation in public life and in the life of the community and broader society alone is not adequate or sufficient. Our objective is to teach and train for the qualitative character of all engagement rather than merely for increased civic activity. The sort of “engagement” required of liberal democratic citizenship begins not with action, but with attentiveness, evaluation and judgment. All of this must precede any intervention or active engagement, otherwise we find a society replete with “social justice warriors” implicated in causes which may or may not be salutary, but which, in any event, do not stem from the individual citizen’s both considered and visceral reaction to discrete threats and perils to, or transgressions of fundamental liberal constitutional ground-rules and institutions.

Accordingly, the key objectives are to be understood as a form of deep enlightenment and conditioning (as inculcation rather than indoctrination) and as a shaping and educating of the civic immune system. Evaluating outcomes is, of course, not a simple matter, and we are not initially focused on traditional social scientific “impact measurement” so much as on the students’ own demonstrated enlightenment, increased political and civic awareness, and, perhaps most importantly, on their self-assessment.

To these ends, we expect to develop and implement an evaluation protocol, both for instructors and for students.

Curriculum & Activities:

The Bootcamp will be delivered as a digital multi-module curriculum using both video, text, graphics and animation, both as an in-classroom aide and independently via the Internet.

Specific Modules:

A preliminary draft outline of the first iteration of the multi-module curriculum proposes the following sequence:

- **Module 1:** A curriculum for citizenship in a Liberal Democracy: Arming the civic immune system against the threats of democratic backsliding.

- **Module 2:** The “Fundamentals” of liberal democratic citizenship:
 - a. The Equality Principle
 - b. The Fair Distribution Principle
 - c. The Pluralism Principle
 - d. The Apostasy Principle
 - e. The Truth Principle
 - f. The Rule of Law Principle
 - g. The Self-Determination Principle
 - h. The Counter-majoritarian Principle
 - i. The “Section 1” Principle
 - j. The Indispensable “Heroic Citizen” Principle

- **Module 3:** What's wrong with this picture? Dishabituation and the power of noticing
- **Module 4:** Constructive disagreement and communication in a polarized society
- **Module 5:** Understanding and Navigating Disinformation
- **Module 6:** Digital Literacy and AI for Responsible Democracy in the Internet Age
- **Module 7:** Public Interest Advocacy in a Liberal Democracy
- **Module 8:** Forms of Civic Engagement

These modules will be produced with the participation of leading scholars, best-selling authors, educators and policy experts who have been identified and who are renowned in their fields.

Target Group:

The initial target audience is 10th, 11th and 12th grade school students – but it will be designed for broad use and easy adaptation for other age groups – both more junior and also post-secondary – and wider use by civil society organizations, community associations and public and private sector institutions.

We will be engaging with Ministry of Education officials, School Boards, and educators directly.

Team

Peter L. Biro – President. Senior Fellow, Massey College, Adjunct Professor, University of Toronto Faculty of Law (GPLLM Program), Chair Emeritus, Jane Goodall Institute.

Marion Sandilands – Section 1 Senior Fellow, Constitutional Law. Partner, Conway Litigation

Daniel Clarke-Serret - Section 1 Senior Fellow, Democracy Analyst. Barrister, Poet, Teacher

Cindy Miao – Section 1 Junior Fellow. Law Student, University of Toronto Faculty of Law

Alper Yilmaz – Section 1 Junior Fellow. Law Student, University of Ottawa Faculty of Law

Jason Noble – Development Director. Founder & CEO, Noble Search Group

Tara Seosankar – Research and Public Education Outreach. Employment and Research Lawyer

Louise Lopes – Administration. Operations Manager, Romanovsky & Associates LLP

Benjamin Biro - Communications

Advisory Board

Sharry Aiken – Professor and Academic Director, DGipICL, Queen’s University, Faculty of Law

David Brown – Partner, Head of M & A, Private Equity and Corporate Finance, WeirFoulds LLP

Donald Bur – Constitutional law scholar and practitioner

Art Eggleton – Retired Senator, Former Minister of Defence, President of the Treasury Board, Minister of International Trade, and Mayor of Toronto

Asher Honickman – Partner, Jordan Honickman LLP, Founder, Advocates for the Rule of Law

Mohnish Kamat – Senior Consultant and Financial Services Executive, Humance

Marcus Kolga – Writer, Human Rights Advocate, Senior Fellow, Macdonald-Laurier Institute and the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights

Mary Jo Leddy - Founder, Romero House Community for Refugees, Writer, Theologian, Social Activist

Jo-Anne McArthur – Founder, We Animals and We Animals Media, Photographer, Writer

Rachel Parent – Journalist, Food safety and security activist, Founder, Kids Right to Know, and Gen-Earth.Org

Gary Saarevirta – Founder, Daisy Intelligence

Evan Saperstein – Teacher, Lecturer in Education and Social Studies, William Paterson University, and Bergen Community College

Mario Silva – Distinguished Fellow and Lecturer, Toronto Metropolitan University, Ted Rogers School of Management and Lincoln Alexander School of Law, former Member of Parliament and Toronto City Councilor

Peter Sloly - CEO, Sloly Solutions Inc., former Chief of Police, Ottawa Police Service, former Deputy Chief of Police, Toronto Police Service

Board of Directors

Peter L. Biro – Board Chair (Note: Peter chairs the board, in addition to being an officer of the corporation, as this is very much a start-up, activist, board and Peter is neither employed by, nor remunerated or materially incentivized in any way, by the corporation).

Catarina von Maydell – Adjunct Professor and Senior Lecturer at George Brown College School of Management, and Humber College, and Strategic Facilitator.

Zachary Remez – Business Manager, Agility PR Solutions.

Financial Statements (Fiscal Year-end: May 31)

SECTION 1

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Unaudited)

FOR THE PERIOD ENDED MAY 31, 2024

KURIN AND PARTNERS LLP

Chartered Professional Accountants

1210 SHEPPARD AVENUE EAST, SUITE 308 • TORONTO, ONTARIO • M2K 1E3

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COMPILATION ENGAGEMENT REPORT

To: The Directors of
Section 1

On the basis of information provided by management, we have compiled the statement of financial position of Section 1 as at May 31, 2024, and the statements of operations and net assets for the period then ended, and Note 1, which describes the basis of accounting applied in the preparation of the compiled financial information ("financial information").

Management is responsible for the accompanying financial information, including the accuracy and completeness of the underlying information used to compile it and the selection of the basis of accounting.

We performed this engagement in accordance with Canadian Standard on Related Services (CSRS) 4200, Compilation Engagements, which requires us to comply with relevant ethical requirements. Our responsibility is to assist management in the preparation of the financial information.

We did not perform an audit engagement or a review engagement, nor were we required to perform procedures to verify the accuracy or completeness of the information provided by management. Accordingly, we do not express an audit opinion or a review conclusion, or provide any form of assurance on the financial information.

Readers are cautioned that the financial information may not be appropriate for their purposes.



CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANTS
LICENSED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

Toronto, Ontario
September 06, 2024

SECTION 1
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
(Unaudited)

MAY 31, 2024

OPERATING FUND	
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Bank	\$ <u>5,695</u>
Property, Plant and Equipment	<u>8,575</u>
	\$ <u>14,270</u>
LIABILITIES	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts payable	\$ 1,000
Due to director	<u>200</u>
	<u>1,200</u>
NET ASSETS	
Unrestricted Net Assets	<u>13,070</u>
	\$ <u>14,270</u>

SECTION 1

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS AND NET ASSETS
(Unaudited)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED MAY 31, 2024

Revenue

Donations \$ 33,923

Expenses

Accounting and legal 19,413

Amortization 1,313

Bank charges and interest 127

20,853

Excess of Revenue over Expenses 13,070

Net Assets, Beginning of the Year -

Net Assets, End of the Year \$ 13,070

SECTION 1

NOTE TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Unaudited)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED MAY 31, 2024

1. **Basis of Accounting**

The basis of accounting applied in the preparation of the financial information is on the historical cost basis, reflecting cash transactions with the addition of:

- property, plant and equipment amortized on the same basis as for income tax
- accounts payable and accrued liabilities

Acknowledging our supporters

As most of this first year of incorporation has been spent building basic infrastructure – including our website and our legal and governance framework – we have not yet been able to dedicate time and effort to systematic fundraising, including application for support from various agencies and foundations. We shall shortly be turning our attention to those efforts! In the meantime, we have incurred expenses (professional fees, marketing and website development, and basic administrative costs) and so we have needed some funding to meet those obligations. In this connection, we acknowledge the ongoing support from Peter L. Biro who has contributed the necessary operating and start-up funding.

We are also grateful to kind and generous donors and supporters who have donated funds and/or who have contributed their valuable time in furtherance of our work and undertakings. These include:

Terry Farmer

Arthur Milnes

Ira and Paula Kuchinsky

Jason Noble

Mohnish Kamat

Sai Man

Catarina von Meydell

Zachary Remez

Alper Yilmaz

Louise Lopes

Erika Biro

Michael Biro

YPO (Young Presidents Organization) Ontario

Certain donors who preferred to remain anonymous, but whose generosity speaks volumes!

We must also express our appreciation to our corporate and charities counsel, Lauren Crosby and her team at Torkin Manes LLP, whose guidance, assistance and encouragement went above and beyond the services for which Section 1 was formally invoiced.