Guidelines for outside readers

The Macdonald-Laurier Institute is a public policy think tank interested in the full range of issues falling under the responsibility of the Canadian federal government. As part of our quality control, we ask a minimum of two outside experts to review all major draft publications to give us their candid opinions on any and all of the following matters:

- Is the topic interesting and important?

- Is the argument credible and well supported by evidence? (This does not imply that reviewers must *agree* with the argument, only that it be credible and well-reasoned, and our standards for thoroughness in documenting evidence are those of think tanks rather than academic journals.)

- Are there errors or issues of logic or fact? If so, what are they?

- Is the paper written in a way that is accessible to an intelligent lay reader?

- Has the author overlooked any important arguments or facts?

- Would you recommend this paper for publication? Why?

- Is there anything else that you think we as the potential publishers of this paper should be aware of?

Comments should be brief. Normally a page to a page and a half is sufficient for a review. Reviewers' comments are provided to authors but their identities are not disclosed.

We appreciate your assistance and your frankness; it is very important to us to identify and correct weaknesses in draft papers at this stage.