



ALLIANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE LEGAL AID

AN ALLIANCE OF ♦ACLCO♦FOLA♦CLA♦FLA♦LSO ♦OBA♦RLA♦TAS♦MHLC

April 29, 2019

Mr. Charles Harnick, Q.C.
Chair of the Board of Directors
Legal Aid Ontario
40 Dundas Street West, Suite 200
Toronto, ON M5G 2H1

Dear Mr. Harnick,

Re: Meeting with the Alliance for Sustainable Legal Aid

I am writing on behalf of the Alliance for Sustainable Legal Aid (ASLA) to offer our congratulations on your recent appointment as chair of the board of Legal Aid Ontario (LAO). Your background as the Attorney General who introduced the Legal Aid Services Act will serve LAO well, and more importantly, the vulnerable people who depend on LAO.

You come to this role at a difficult time. The provincial government budget's forecast of a \$133 million reduction in transfer payments is profound. It is anticipated this cut will be followed by a further reduction of \$31 million in the next fiscal year. I cannot overestimate the impact these changes will have on the administration of justice in Ontario. As key stakeholders in access to justice, and representing those delivering front line services to the poor, we would ask to meet with you urgently to discuss what might be done to ensure an appropriate level of sustainable legal aid services in the near and immediate future.

ASLA has worked for many years to ensure the sustainability and enhancement of legal aid services; all of us are now gravely challenged in achieving our mutual objectives.

We are anxious to meet with you as soon as possible to discuss how we can protect the province's most vulnerable people.

Sincerely,

Lenny Abramowicz
Chair
Association for Sustainable Legal Aid

On behalf of our member organizations:
Association of Community Legal Clinics of Ontario
Federation of Ontario Law Associations
Criminal Lawyers Association
Family Lawyers Association
Law Society of Ontario
Ontario Bar Association
Refugee Lawyers Association
The Advocates' Society
Mental Health Legal Committee