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## FEDERATION OF ONTARIO LAW ASSOCIATIONS PROPOSED 2023 BENCHER ELECTION QUESTIONS

*The below questionnaire has been developed by the FOLA board for bencher candidates in the upcoming election. Feedback can be directed to our executive director, at [katie.robinette@fola.ca](mailto:katie.robinette@fola.ca).*

*When finalized, the questionnaire will be distributed to nominated candidates electronically. FOLA will review the responses and use them to identify “FOLA Friendly” candidates whose views on libraries and Legal Aid funding align with our priorities. FOLA Friendly candidates will be identified on our website during the election.*

*The below questionnaire is subject to change and responses from candidates are not being accepted at this time.*

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### Are you a “FOLA Friendly” Candidate?

The Federation of Ontario Law Associations (FOLA) represents approximately 12,000 lawyers who belong to 46 local law associations across Ontario.

In advance of the bencher election set for April 28, 2023, we are working to provide our members with an easy way to identify “FOLA Friendly” candidates who champion:

1. a properly funded courthouse library system to assist lawyers in servicing their clients; and
2. a properly funded Legal Aid system to ensure access to justice for low-income Ontarians.

Are you running to become a bencher in the upcoming election? If so, please complete our short questionnaire on your views and commitment to investing in courthouse libraries and Legal Aid Ontario (LAO). You will also be asked to share your insights on paralegal scope of practice.

Your completed questionnaire will help us identify who is a FOLA Friendly candidate. We will feature a summary profile of FOLA Friendly candidates on our website. This will be a way for you to reach members of the profession who can vote in the upcoming election.

Please note that being designated a “FOLA Friendly” candidate is not an endorsement and should not be described as such on any campaign materials or literature.

Here are FOLA’s questions for candidates:

#### **LiRN Funding**

1. If elected bencher, I will support the Law Society of Ontario maintaining its current level of funding for the Legal Information and Resource Network (LIRN), adjusted annually for inflation.

*[Yes or No]*

2. I recognize the importance of supporting the LIRN budget, given the impact on regional law association libraries that play a critical role in maintaining legal competence.

*[Yes or No]*

3. Please explain the previous response (maximum 100 words).

*[Comment Box]*

4. If you are an incumbent bencher, did you vote to cut the LIRN budget by 10% at the November 2020 meeting of Convocation?

*[Yes, No, or Not an Incumbent]*

5. If you are an incumbent bencher, please explain the previous response (maximum 100 words).

*[Comment Box]*

### **Legal Aid Ontario Funding**

6. If elected bencher, I will advocate for LAO sustainability and viability.

*[Yes or No]*

7. If elected bencher, I will support Law Foundation of Ontario funding for LAO.

*[Yes or No]*

### **Additional Insights**

8. Please describe efforts that you believe can and should be undertaken by the Law Society of Ontario to advocate for investment in LAO and increased financial allocation to LAO from the provincial government's budget. Please explain (maximum 300 words).

*[Comment Box]*

9. Please describe your view on the appropriate scope of practice for paralegals. Should their scope of practice be expanded from the current services they can provide? If yes, in what ways, why, and what additional training (if any) should be required? (max. 300 words). Please explain (maximum 300 words).

*[Comment Box]*

**END OF QUESTIONNAIRE**