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February 11, 2021

Central East Benchers  
Law Society of Ontario  
Osgood Hall  
130 Queen Street West  
Toronto ON M5H 2N6

Dear Mr. Chiumminto, Mr. Cooper, Ms. Corbiere, Mr. Parry, and Mr.  
Wilkes

Re: LIRN BUDGET

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We are the presidents of the following law associations:

Durham Law Association  
Peterborough Law Association  
Muskoka Law Association  
Northumberland Law Association  
Simcoe County Law Association  
York Region Law Association  
Victoria-Haliburton Law Association

We are writing to you as you are the LSO Benchers that have some  
connection to the communities in which our association members practice.

The purpose of our letter is to express concern regarding the treatment of  
Legal Information and Resource Network (LIRN) budget that was voted on  
during the November 2020 convocation. LIRN runs the law libraries outside of  
Toronto and plays a vital role in equitable access to justice throughout the  
province. It was a surprise to learn of a reduction of 10% across the board  
was approved.

There is a clear correlation between access to legal resources and the  
competent provision of legal services to the public. It is for this reason that we  
are expressing our concerns regarding this budget reduction.

We recognize the need for budget review and trying to do more with less but  
the regional law libraries are faced with continuously climbing costs as they  
try to keep services in place for members. The access provided to various  
legal research databases, loose-leaf subscription services, and books are  
vital to those practitioners working at solo or small firms that cannot cover the  
overhead for these within their organization. Many of these costs continue to  
rise year after year.

The reduction in funding will impact the services our members receive and in turn the legal services the public receives. It is trite to point out that legal resources in a center like Toronto in which a majority of benchers practice are readily available through the Great Library (which is not part of LIRN). Our concern is that this abundance of resources in one location has resulted in benchers not attributing the proper importance of providing like resources elsewhere.

This in essence has the effect of downloading these additional costs to lawyers in the regions should their local associations increase fees to offset these reductions; or, alternatively, a reduction in the services and resources available in these areas.

It is our position that the reduction of the LIRN budget conflicts with the LSO's legislative mandate as set out in s. 4.1 and 4.2 *Law Society Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. L.8. It is on this basis that we are asking that the LSO and benchers restore the LIRN budget to the pre-reduction levels.

We thank you for taking the time to review our concerns and look forward to hearing from you regarding the response when this is presented to the other benchers on our behalf.

Yours truly,

Mark Jacula, President  
Durham Law Association

Abi Adeusi, President  
Peterborough Law Association

Robins Bellows, President  
Muskoka Law Association

Meaghan Adams, President  
Northumberland Law Association

Kathryn Whitehead, President  
Simcoe County Law Association

Shawn McNamara, President  
Victoria-Haliburton Law Association

Joan Cushon, President  
York Region Law Association