



2021-2023
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 24, 2022

Toronto, ON – On February 23, 2022, the Federation of Ontario Law Associations (**FOLA**) hosted a Virtual Lobby Day to discuss a wide variety of justice issues with Ministers' staff, MPPs (both government and opposition), and the Attorney General.

Our Lobby Day attracted over 40 practicing lawyers from every region in Ontario. You can learn more about our Lobby Day [here](#).

Participants heard from the Attorney General and both the Liberal and NDP Critics for the AG. We also held Roundtable discussions with Ministers' staff on Criminal Law, Family Law, Legal Aid, Real Estate Law, and Courthouse issues.

Main themes included the need to address delays, re-open Small Claims Courts and Provincial Offensive Act Courts, tackle inconsistencies in e-filing protocols and procedures, access to technology (especially for Ontario's vulnerable populations), funding for legal aid and continuing modernization.

FOLA's Committee Chairs would be more than happy to speak with members of the Press to discuss issues and practice areas noted above.

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ABOUT FOLA

FOLA is a non-profit organization that represents Ontario's 46 Law Associations (plus the Toronto Law Association) and, through them, 12,000 practicing lawyers from all regions of the province. Most of FOLA's members are sole practitioners who run their own firms or practice in small firms. All serve on the front lines of Ontario's justice system.

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Notable Post Lobby Day Quotes

Courthouse Issues

"FOLA congratulates the government on their great progress in modernizing our courts and looks forward to working together to create consistency across all jurisdictions, improve efficiencies, and enhance user experience" says Allen Wynperle, FOLA's Central South Regional Representative. "We also look forward to continued cooperation in addressing the widespread backlogs".

Criminal Law

"While FOLA recognizes some recent improvements (largely due to the pandemic), Ontario's jails are still not sufficiently resourced to facilitate virtual court appearances and virtual meetings between inmates and their counsel" says Nathan Baker, FOLA Chair and Criminal Lawyer. "Following our productive meeting with Christine Hogarth, PA to the Solicitor General and Minister's staff, we look forward to continuing to work together to find solutions".

Legal Aid

"FOLA welcomed this opportunity to meet with the Attorney General's staff to reiterate the need for government intervention to control LAO financing stability" commented Terry Brandon, FOLA's Legal Aid Chair. Terry further noted that Legal Aid Ontario's hourly rates have not changed since 2015 - making it an unattractive and unviable option for both new and older established lawyers at a time when demand for legal aid is high.

Family Law

"We appreciate that necessary measures taken by the Attorney General and the Courts due to the pandemic have led to an increase in delays, but there are some improvements that we hope to see (like improved Courthouse staff training and efficiencies in e-filing) that should help speed up the processing of matters before the Courts" noted Sam Misheal, FOLA's Family Law Chair. "We also encourage the Attorney General to expand Dispute Resolution Offices throughout the province and accelerate their expansion of the Unified Family Court".

Real Estate

"The past few years have seen extraordinary growth in the price of residential real estate, and to some degree agricultural land and commercial properties. This growth in the volume of registrations in Ontario has led to increased revenues for the government and FOLA looks forward to working with the government to explore options to use these revenues to make improvements to the system that will be designed to reduce delays" said Mark Giavedoni, FOLA's Real Estate Co-Chair. Mark added that FOLA would also like to see the government introduce legislation to reverse the common law on positive covenants and looks forward to continuing our discussions.

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