



**Federation of Ontario
Law Associations**

**Fédération des associations
de barreau de l'Ontario**

LSO BENCHER ELECTIONS 2023

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW IF YOU CHOSE TO RUN!

If you are thinking about running for the 2023 Benchers elections, there are a few things you might want to know about the life of a Benchers.

The LSO notes “through their committee work and Convocation meetings, Benchers set policy and determine other matters related to the governance of Ontario’s lawyers and paralegals. Benchers also sit on panels as adjudicators to hear discipline cases concerning lawyer and paralegal conduct, licensing, competence and capacity”.

Here are some things to consider about the role:

1. Benchers must be vigilant in ensuring they are acting in the public interest, which is not necessarily the same as acting in the interest of lawyers;
2. Serving requires a significant time commitment (a minimum of 600-700 hours per year), and may require travel across the province;
3. Sole practitioners or those in small firms may find they will need to reduce their case-loads, which is likely to reduce their income;

Things you should do to run an effective campaign:

1. Build a plan and a timeline - make sure your plan integrates organizing, communications, and fundraising (if needed) and set goals to keep yourself on track;
2. Leverage name recognition as a result of other roles in the legal community;
3. Leverage the support of law large firms;
4. Send letters or emails to lawyers across the province (don’t forget to put some work and thought into the design and content of these materials!);
5. Ensure you have a presence online – build a website or create a page on your firm’s website where people can learn more about you;

6. Attend local law association events across the province (and be open about your candidacy!);
7. Ask for, and use, endorsements;
8. Use social media and tagging legal influencers;
9. Be able to demonstrate prior history of involvement in the legal community;
10. Seek out advice – but not from everyone. Surround yourself with people who are going to give you good, honest advice;
11. Don't be shy: Tell everyone in your legal network that you are running! AND ask them to vote for you.
12. And – of course – don't forget to file! Do your paperwork!

If you are thinking about running for Bencher elections in 2023, you may also want to reach out to a current Bencher who does not reside in Toronto to ask them about their experience.

Contact information for current Benchers from outside of Toronto

If you decide not to run for Bencher elections this time, FOLA encourages you to read the profiles of those who are running, take the time to seriously consider which candidates will be devoted to the role and do a good job, and vote accordingly.

FOLA will be adding candidate campaign materials that may be useful. If you have anything to share, please email Katie Robinette at katie.robinette@fol.ca.