



# NCLA NEWSLETTER



## Definitions

Teresa Williams, *Paralegal, NCLC*

Definitions: The reason legal research is so important.

When the definition of the word definition varies, shaping arguments using jurisprudence has become more and more important. It is important to refer to statutes, jurisprudence and dictionaries when shaping arguments and drafting documents.

Dictionary.com states that definition means “a statement of the exact meaning of a word, especially in a dictionary.” Yet Black’s Law Dictionary (8th Ed.) states that the meaning of definition is “the meaning of a term as explicitly stated in a drafted document such as a contract, a corporate bylaw, an ordinance, or a statute.” Lexical definition “A dictionary-style definition of a word, purporting to give the full meaning of a term.” (emphasis added)

It has been my experience that many contracts, corporate by-laws, ordinance and statutes use words such as reasonable, regular, fair, cause, expeditious, forthwith. What do they mean? What is it the document is trying to convey?

When reviewing and drafting contracts and legal arguments it is important to review them with a critical eye. Where possible, establish definitions prior to drafting. Maybe, just maybe, there is a statutory definition.

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## Bill 118 – An Act to Amend the Occupier’s Liability Act *(and take away your rights)*



Warren Whiteknight, *Bergeron Clifford*

Despite much opposition, Bill 118 received Royal Assent in December 2020 and was proclaimed by the Lieutenant Governor on January 29, 2021 and is now law. Bill 118 will prevent many injured people and their families from pursuing otherwise legitimate injury claims. Bill 118 amends the Occupiers Liability Act, the primary liability legislation in Ontario for injuries on private property. Bill 118 reduces the amount of time a person has to give notice of a slip and fall claim arising from snow and ice on private property from 2 years down to just 60 days. The stated goal of this Bill is to reduce insurance premiums for snowplow operators (a good goal), by preventing injured people from bringing legitimate insurance claims (a highly questionable method).

MPP Jamie West from Sudbury commented that during the consultations it was unfortunate they hadn’t heard from injured people or families. “I didn’t get to hear from anybody who was a plaintiff. I would have liked to. There just wasn’t an opportunity for them to be there with the timelines that were there.”

It was hard to tell from the transcript if given the context that MPP West saw the irony of there not being enough time for injured people?

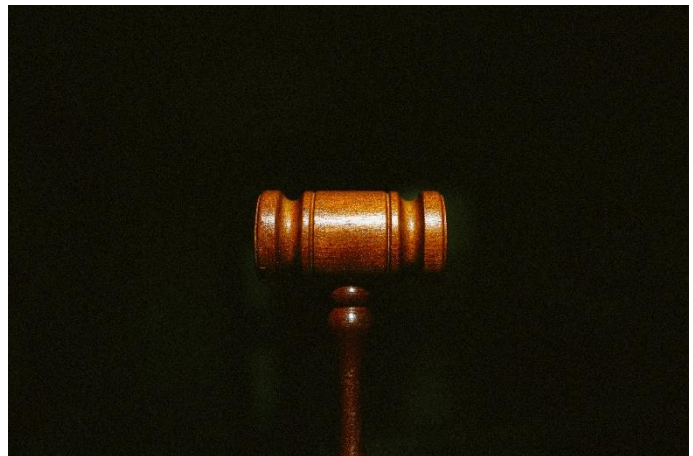
As an injury lawyer I’m very concerned that the goal of Bill 118 is to reduce insurance premiums, yet the legislation says nothing about insurance premiums - not even one single word. Does Parliament expect insurers to reduce their premiums out of the goodness of their hearts? We’ve seen auto insurance benefits for injured people slashed repeatedly over the past 10 years with the stated aim of reducing premiums, and meanwhile we now pay more than we used to, but get less insurance for it. Does Parliament think Bill 118 will be different?

MPP West highlighted this concern during debate: “The goal of this bill is to limit the amount of time that you have to put in a lawsuit with the hopes that it will bring the

insurance down. If it doesn’t bring the insurance down, we’re back to square one. Frankly, when I asked some of the insurance brokers, ‘Will this bring insurance down?’ the answer was basically, ‘Maybe. Maybe it will.’ They’re going to watch over two or three years. If the claims go down, then insurance might go down. But my history with insurance is that your rates never go down. I’ve never heard insurance say, ‘Let me pick up the cheque for that.’”

A little legal context is important, and crucially Bill 118 does not change the duty of the occupier or maintenance contractor - all that is required of them is to ensure that the premises are reasonably safe (not perfectly safe).

In contrast, an injured person (and many of these folks will be elderly people laid up with fractures this winter) are expected and in fact presumed to know that the law is that they must give notice of a claim within 60 days, or risk forever losing their rights.



Another aspect of Bill 118 is that the notice must be in writing, and not just any writing, but either by personal service, or registered mail. The notice must include the date, time, and location of the injury. I can tell you it is unreasonable to expect an injured person to be able to figure out who owns a property, or who maintains it, within 60 days. As an example, when I am consulted by a potential client it requires land deed and title searches by my office, investigating corporate registries, and other such inquiries, to figure out who owns or is responsible for a property - this is all quite time consuming. Ultimately, many of the notice letters we send are ignored. Personal service is a whole different animal and you’d be amazed how talented people can be at evading service. When someone is injured their focus should be on healing, not jumping straight into a claim and all the complications of effecting notice.

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Jeff Burch, MPP for Welland said it like this: “If we talk about victim impacts, insurance gouging is a real problem. The insurance industry has been running amok in the province for years now. However, the solution to that problem is not and cannot be short-changing victims. When someone gets hurt, the last thing on their mind should be, ‘How fast can I get a lawyer?’ It should be getting the medical care they need and taking the time to recover. If this bill passes, it will mean even more pain and suffering for those who have been hurt because of someone else’s negligence.”

Bill 118 also forces people to bring a claim before they know whether or not they will heal. What if someone doesn’t want to bring a claim unless they are permanently injured? Or doesn’t want to bring a claim unless they are off work for a period of time in excess of their sick leave or short or long term disability benefits or EI? Few people want to be involved in an insurance claim, and many people would be happy to wait for months to see how they heal. Unfortunately, Bill 118 doesn’t give you that luxury. I suggest that Bill 118 is a short-sighted mistake and that we do not want a system that forces people to bring claims in the short term when they might decide over the following year or two that they don’t want to. Unfortunately, that’s what Bill 118 does.

The long and short of it is that now if you are injured in a slip and fall because of winter maintenance issues in Ontario you either have 60 days to give notice (private property) or 10 days (municipal property). Firstly, please don’t get hurt, and secondly if you do, contact an injury lawyer immediately, or risk losing your rights. Finally, if you know a snow contractor - ask them if their insurer has offered to reduce their rates- I doubt it.

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All quotes - (Provincial Parliament Hansard Transcript December 2, 2020 - [https://www.ola.org/sites/default/files/node-files/hansard/document/pdf/2020/2020-12/02-DEC-2020\\_L217A.pdf](https://www.ola.org/sites/default/files/node-files/hansard/document/pdf/2020/2020-12/02-DEC-2020_L217A.pdf))

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## Legal Aid Ontario 2020/2021 Update

Lisa Banerjee, LAO

Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) has spent the past year striving to make its services accessible to our clients during an unprecedented global pandemic. With all of office locations, including those in courthouses, closed until further notice, LAO has made a number of service changes to help people at high risk during this public health crisis.

For more information visit: [legalaid.on.ca/covid-19-legal-aid-services](https://legalaid.on.ca/covid-19-legal-aid-services)

### Legal and financial eligibility testing

Until further notice, eligibility requirements have been waived for legal aid applications for the following matters:

- Criminal defence certificates for in custody accused (excluding homicide)
- Urgent Child, Youth, and Family Services Act (CYFSA) matters
- Family court assistance, including initial and motion to change proceedings, for individuals experiencing domestic violence.
- Psychiatric patients seeking help with Consent and Capacity Board (CCB) and Ontario Review Board (ORB) matters

### Phone services

With the courts still operating virtually, LAO has made duty Counsel services available over the phone.

Until further notice, eligibility requirements will be waived for up to 20 minutes of summary legal advice over the phone for:

- A family law matter, including issues involving a Children’s Aid Society.
- In-custody accused people with an upcoming criminal court date (within four days) who do not have a lawyer. A lawyer will be called for the in-custody accused person at the police department.
- Out-of-custody accused people who do not have a lawyer.

### Services to people in jail/ prison

In recognition of the high risk that COVID-19 poses to detained people, the following service changes are now in place to help lower the number of people in jail or prison. Lawyers may now apply for a legal aid certificate those who are:

- Held on remand and detained in jail prior to trial
- Incarcerated and qualify for temporary absence permits (TAPs).
- Incarcerated and are eligible for emergency early release.

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## Relief for clients with contribution agreements

To help ease the financial burden that clients may be experiencing due to the COVID-19 emergency, LAO will provide temporary relief for clients with contribution agreements in place.

## Lawyer billing and supports

We acknowledge that during the pandemic, private bar lawyers are facing a wide range of difficulties. LAO has tried to ease the burden facing panel lawyers in the following ways:

- Extending billing deadlines for accounts
- Temporarily changing how block-eligible certificates are billed, allowing you to bill a certificate as a block fee, or by the hourly tariff.
- Reinstating the bail block authorization to be added to certificates.
- Waiving merit testing for bail review.
- Increasing compensation for bail hearings for block fee and tariff matters in recognition of longer bail hearings
- Covering Myers bail reviews as emergency bail responses during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Expanding the criteria for discretion in exceptional circumstances
- Treating teleconference and video appearances as physical appearances in court and billing accordingly.
- Reducing payment time from 28 to 14 days for submitted accounts.
- Exploring alternate payments.
- Providing an additional two hours of legal aid coverage for mandatory JPTs in both the Ontario Superior Court and the Court of Justice.
- Offering additional hours for preparation of refugee Basis of Claim certificates, representation before the Refugee Protection Division (RPD) and preparation for detention review hearings.

## New Legal Aid Services Act, 2020 receives royal assent

The new Legal Aid Services Act, 2020, part of Bill 161, the Smarter and Stronger Justice Act, 2020, has been passed by the Ontario legislature.

The new act establishes a new framework for Legal Aid Ontario to provide legal aid services to low-income Ontarians. At the same time, the organization will continue as an independent corporation, accountable to the government and people of Ontario. The new legislation will allow LAO to eliminate red tape and give it the flexibility to replace outdated systems and processes.

Work has begun to implement the new legislation, in consultation with the private bar, clinics, other service providers, stakeholders, and the Ministry of the Attorney General.

## Reminder: Family Law Rules Changes

A reminder that the forms under the Ontario Family Law Rules have been changed to align with recent significant legislative reforms affecting divorce, separation, and parenting.

The updated Family Law Rules Forms are available on the [Ontario Court Forms website](#), together with this notice:

*“Effective March 1, 2021, you must file using the correct family court form or your filing will be rejected and you will need to refile with the new version.”*

More information about the federal government’s [Bill C-78](#) and Ontario’s [Bill 207](#) can be found in the following resources:

[The Divorce Act Changes Explained](#)

[Introduction to Federal Family Law Amendments](#)

(the first course in a series of free training sessions for family law professionals is available online)

[Legislative Summary of Bill C-78: An Act to amend the Divorce Act, the Family Orders and Agreements Enforcement Assistance Act and the Garnishment, Attachment and Pension Diversion Act and to make consequential amendments to another Act](#)

[Ontario Introduces Legislation to Simplify Justice System for Families and Protect Children](#)

# CanLII Update: Noting Up

Sarah Sutherland, *CanLII*

Question: *Is anyone aware of a way to collect data on the number of times a specific paragraph in a case has been cited in subsequent cases?*

CanLII recently changed some of this functionality on CanLII, so I thought I would let everyone know.

If you want to note up a particular paragraph, you can now look for the text box to the right of the case paragraph as you can see below:

The screenshot shows the CanLII website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Home > Canada (Federal) > Supreme Court of Canada > 2008 SCC 9 (CanLII)' and language options for 'Français' and 'English'. A search bar is present with the text 'Find in document'. The main content area displays a legal document with two paragraphs. Paragraph [9] is highlighted, and a 'Paragraph tools' menu is open over it. The menu contains the following items: 'Copy text', 'Copy citation', 'Copy link', 'Français', 'Citing documents (11)', 'Save this paragraph', and 'Email this paragraph'. A small box with the number '11' is visible next to the paragraph. Paragraph [10] is also visible below paragraph [9].

The number in the box gives the number of citations.

You can then click on the box, and it will open up the different functionalities you can see in the screenshot. If you click on "citing cases" it will take you to the note up results.

We hope you find this functionality helpful.

## NoticeConnect

Cassi Lam, *NoticeConnect*

NoticeConnect is a Canadian legal software company based in Toronto and we were recently acquired by DoProcess. We operate the Canada Will Registry, a national registry with over 250,000 wills from across the country.

When lawyers and estate trustees search our registry, we also send out information about the missing wills to our partners (including the Toronto Lawyers Association, WillCheck and many others) who pass this information on to their members. This ensures that unregistered wills can also be found.

Would you like to be a part of this mailing list? You can opt to receive a weekly or monthly update.

Visit the website for more information, or to get in touch: <https://www.noticeconnect.com/>



Powerful tools to keep your will vault organized



Data is private, secure, and stored in Canada



Over 100,000 wills already registered by law firms and individual testators

# The Importance of Access to Legal Information

Nathan Baker, *Nathan Baker Law*

Death and taxes are certainties. A close third to those is the rising price of access to legal resources. The ability of lawyers to do their job is reliant on access to ongoing education as caselaw develops. Interpreting developments through scholarship and secondary resources allows clarity in the law which aids in the resolution of disputes. As costs to access the tools of the trade increase, the cost to the client increases. As costs increase, this becomes an access to justice issue.

Ongoing litigation in the USA between Thompson Reuters and ROSS Intelligence is bringing this issue forward. Thompson Reuters has alleged that ROSS Intelligence hired a third party to, effectively, download caselaw and other materials to build up their own legal research platform. Thompson Reuters asserts a copyright interest in the material which it has expended resources to build while ROSS Intelligence asserts that the material is obtained is covered under fair use as it is the texts of judicial decisions that has been obtained. The question of whether court decisions must be obtained from the source is the key issue. In April, the US Supreme Court decided [Georgia v. Public.Resource.Org, Inc., 140 S.Ct. 1498](#) which found that government authored annotations to laws were not copyrightable. Since court decisions would be similarly open to the public, the question of the manner in which they obtained will be at issue. ROSS Intelligence has responded by suggesting monopolistic actions by Thompson Reuters. Lawyers in Canada will recognize that here too, there are a limited number of companies catering to the Canadian legal market, which is admittedly small. The competing interests of ensuring access to legal information by both legal professionals and the public must be balanced against that of companies that expend significant resources to gather and organize legal works.

In December, Dye and Durham Ltd. acquired [DoProcess](#), the company which produces Conveyencer, the legal software which 90% of real estate lawyers in Ontario use. Upon doing so, they also increased the price charged per deal from \$25 to \$129. These cost increases will undoubtedly be passed on to consumers. In Ontario, where real estate agents regularly get paid 3-6% of the cost of a transaction and real estate lawyers are paid only a fraction of this, lawyers will again be in the unfortunate position of telling their clients of further fees they did not contemplate and which lawyers may be blamed for. The small legal market limits demand but when the cost of software shifts this much, it will hopefully lead to competition.

In the late 1800s, the legislature recognized the importance of access to legal information at the local level across the province. Over time, each county set up a local law association and library to serve its members and, through them, the public. Access to justice is hugely helped by local law libraries and their staff. Librarians perform thousands of research tasks every day and contribute directly to Ontarians access to justice. Lawyers can rely on this professional assistance to make their jobs easier and pass the time savings on to clients. Over time, the Law Society of Ontario recognized the importance of these libraries and began charging a library levy to help fund local libraries to ensure that all lawyers would have access to the legal resources needed to represent their clients. Libraries are a godsend to competency. However, this year, the benchers of the LSO have decided to institute a plethora of cuts to funding furnished through it. As a result, the budgets of law libraries were cut by 10%. This comes at a time when more lawyers need access to communal resources as access to legal information becomes more expensive. Legal information must remain accessible, both in cost and availability, for our justice system to function properly. Libraries are in the best position to fill this very important role. Each and every lawyer in Ontario should be letting their benchers know that this cut needs to be reversed in the next budget.



## From the Library

The NCLA Library is open to NCLA Members by appointment only – with the librarian available virtually during regular work hours. To book an in-person research appointment, please email the librarian at: [ncla@bellnet.ca](mailto:ncla@bellnet.ca).

Appointments will be first come, first served, with availability based on capacity limitations in accordance with local health unit guidelines. Please note that to attend the library you will have to pass through covid screening by MAG at the front doors, masks must be worn at all times inside the courthouse, and you will need to knock or phone to get into the library. Members' access cards remain suspended at this time.

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## Virtual Library Resources

With the budget cuts now in place the Librarian has been taking a look at our lists of annuals and database subscriptions. Since there is an obvious shift to digital resources, this is where the bulk of library spending is going to be.

I am pleased to announce that I have added online subscriptions to O'Brien's Division IV (Leases), and Division V (Wills and Trusts), to better serve our Solicitors. To refresh your memories, our digital subscriptions include:

- LexisNexis Advance
- Rangefindr
- DivorceMATE
- Westlaw Next
  - Law Source
  - Family Source
  - Criminal Source
  - O'Brien's Forms Division IV
  - O'Brien's Forms Division V

And, of course, as members of the LSO, you all have access to HeinOnline, free of charge. To gain access contact the Great Library for your login.

## Stay Connected, Remotely

Sandra Bekhor, *SlawTips*

Lawyers are becoming pretty practiced at working remotely. But just because meetings, emails and deadlines are all on track, doesn't necessarily mean that everything is under control. Despite everyone's best efforts to normalize life with video conferencing and other remote management tools, there may still be some looming issues.

While our collective online connection is tremendously valuable, these virtual business exchanges can sometimes feel transactional and be ineffective in creating meaningful human connections.

So, today's tip is to take the time to reach out to the people in your network that may benefit from a more personal interaction. A phone call, a video chat or even a physically distanced walk in nature that isn't strictly business.

Give some thought to:

- Speaking one-on-one with lawyers and staff that may need mentoring, coaching or even just a bit of encouragement.
- Recognizing your team for all they've been able to accomplish, despite the upheaval this year has presented.

- Catching up with clients, colleagues, classmates and others in your community who you used to run into at professional events and who may be feeling the strain of a long period of social isolation.

A well-timed conversation can help to reset someone's motivation and mindset. If you're in position to make that connection, reach out. Now is the time, before we all go into hibernation for the holidays. It may mean more than you realize.



**Her  
Worship  
Patricia  
McHenry**

**22 January 1943 – 21 February 2021**

It is with heavy hearts the family of Patricia Ellen McHenry announces her peaceful passing on Sunday February 21st, 2021 at the Brantford General Hospital, in her 79th year. Cherished and loved by her daughters Tammy O'Neill Foisey and husband Ken and Kelly Dafoe and husband Dave.

Patricia was born in Trenton, Ontario to James and Emma LaMorre McHenry the youngest of six siblings. Although times were hard, their faith and family gave them community, support and laughter. She married Carl and they raised their girls in Oakville, Ontario. She was appointed Justice Of The Peace For Our Province Of Ontario in 1993 and served with passion until her 75th birthday.

Patricia was grateful every day for her colleagues in the courts and the Police Officers she respected so much. Patricia loved to dance and she cried at the Humane Society commercials. She was proud and strong with a devilish wit. She loved an event and the chance to "get gussied up". Her friendships both new and lifelong were treasures and she missed the spontaneity of dinner out or a casino trip in these Covid times.

Patricia is pre-deceased by her parents, brothers John and Donald, sister Janet and brother-in-law Warren Stewart. She leaves behind her beloved sisters Margaret Stewart and Anne McHenry, her grand family Josh, Emily, Matt, Tristan and many nieces and nephews and their children.

Flowers were sent to her family on behalf of the NCLA Membership.

## Your New NCLA Board

On 22 February 2021 the NCLA Annual General Meeting was held, and a new Board of Directors was successfully voted in. Our new slate of directors is as follows:

<b>President</b> Morgan Payne	<b>Director</b> Nadim Kurji
<b>Vice President</b> Kady McCourt	<b>Director</b> Teresa Williams
<b>Past President</b> Meaghan Adams	<b>Director</b> Sharee Bhaduri
<b>Secretary</b> Jessica Vriend	<b>Director</b> Jim Hunt
<b>Treasurer</b> Scott McCracken	<b>Director</b> Phillip Crannell

Sincerest thanks to Past President Meaghan Adams for all her hard work on the Board these last few years, and for rising to the challenge of running a law association during a pandemic. And a big thank you to the members who took the time out of their days to attend yet another zoom meeting – virtual meeting fatigue is real!

## Get to Know Your New Board Members



**Sharee Bhaduri, NCLA Director**

Sharee presently practices law at the Northumberland Community Legal Centre, funded by Legal aid Ontario. Her passion is social justice. Sharee's main areas of practice include Labour and Employment law. Sharee advocates for those precariously employed with their workers' rights. In addition, she practices Administrative law and assists the vulnerable population with Social Assistance and Housing matters. Sharee is also a member of the Ontario College of Teachers' and as an educator, Sharee provides Public Legal Education Seminars to disadvantaged individuals in helping them learn about their basic employment rights. Sharee moved to Northumberland County in 2018, and has since developed a strong sense of community and is involved in many organizations. Sharee is always looking for ways to help her community and is excited to be part of the NCLA Board of Directors

**Jessica Vriend, NCLA Secretary**



Jessica Vriend received her law degree from Queen's University Belfast in 2013, and her Master of Laws from Osgoode Hall Law School (York University) in 2016.

She was called to the bar in Ontario in 2017 and is now an associate lawyer at Kinch Eddie Litigation in Campbellford, Ontario, with a practice focused on family law and civil litigation. Originally from Prince Edward Island, Jessica now calls Warkworth, Ontario home. In her spare time, she volunteers with the Northumberland United Way and enjoys reading, drawing, and spending time outdoors hiking with her husband. For more information about Jessica, please visit <http://www.kinchlitigation.com>.



**Scott McCracken, NCLA Treasurer**

Scott was born and raised in Northumberland County. Graduating from the University of Windsor in 2008 with his degree in Mechanical Engineering, Scott returned to Northumberland County to work with his family.

Scott attended Bond University in Australia in 2014 and obtained his Juris Doctor in December 2016, following which he worked at a local law firm. Scott is now an associate with Schmidt Law Legal Services with his main areas of focus being real estate law, wills/estate administration, employment law and business/ corporate law.

During his time in Northumberland County, Scott has developed a strong sense of community and is involved in many organizations in the area such as the Chamber of Commerce, Cobourg Rotary and the Northumberland United Way. Scott is always looking for ways to help his community and extend his network of contacts. Scott's hobbies and interests include all sports, computers and working with vehicles.



# Message from FOLA

Katie Robinette, *Executive Director FOLA*

Happy Spring 2021 Northumberland County lawyers!

With vaccines being rolled out as this article is being typed, focus is moving from reacting to the pandemic to longer term forward planning and adapting to new ways of practicing law. Many changes (like virtual conferencing and hearings, e-filing, and access to online documents) will be here to stay and FOLA continues to work with the Ministry of the Attorney General (MAG), the Courts, the Law Society, and other provincial law associations (the OBA, the Advocates' Society, the Ontario Trial Lawyers' Association, etc) to ensure the voice of small and sole practicing lawyers is heard as permanent protocols are drafted and implemented.

FOLA has also been working closely with MAG on a few issues that are unrelated to the pandemic. Changes to Family Law through amendments to Ontario's Children's Law Reform Act and amendments to adapt to the federal government's changes to the Divorce Act have been well received by the profession. To help assist lawyers understand the amendments (which came into effect on March 1st), both levels of government have been offering webinars and prepared documents which you can find [here](#).

MAG has also re-introduced, through [Bill 245](#) - The Accelerating Access to Justice Act, amendments to the way judicial appointments are selected. You may recall that the Attorney General first proposed these changes back at FOLA's Plenary in November 2019 and, since then, FOLA has been expressing our concerns (in the press, directly to the Minister, and in a Committee appearance) about the real or perceived politicization of the appointment process. While this legislation is likely to pass due to the government's majority, it is still FOLA's hope that the legislation will be further amended to ensure increased transparency in the appointment process.

On the "re-opening" front, the MAG's Recovery Secretariat is working closely with the Courts to resume in-person appearances. FOLA encourages you to visit our [Courts section](#) on our website for all information both from the Courts and important information from the Recovery Secretariat on what to expect (and how to be prepared) for visiting a Court.

Also, as you may have read in the government's [announcement](#) about vaccine rollout, essential frontline workers who cannot work from home are eligible to receive a vaccination in Phase 2 – this includes "courts and justice system workers (including probation and parole)." We know that you may have further questions about what this means for you and your staff and we suggest that if you are planning attending a workplace –

planning attending a workplace – whether that is a courthouse or other location – to support the administration of justice in any capacity, you may qualify to receive a Phase 2 vaccine. Decisions about the rollout and prioritization of vaccines are being made at the local level, by public health units, based on local circumstances and vaccine availability. As a result, we encourage you to continue to monitor the [Getting a COVID-19 vaccine in Ontario webpage](#) and to connect with your [local public health unit](#) for details about when and how you, or your staff, can get a vaccine.

Thanks to FOLA's ongoing weekly meetings with all stakeholders, any concerns and questions you have continue to be addressed in a timely manner and FOLA continues to send out weekly updates (which you can find [here](#)). If you have a question for us, please don't hesitate to email Katie at [katie.robinette@fola.ca](mailto:katie.robinette@fola.ca).

Likely the single most important issue facing FOLA right now is our advocacy campaign regarding law library funding. Thank you to all who took the time to complete our law library use survey. FOLA has created a [Law Library Action Centre](#). There, you can find suggested social media posts and a selection of images that you can use on your own social media accounts. Each stress the importance of Law Libraries and are based on your own comments from both LiRN's survey and early responses from the more recent FOLA Law Library Use Survey. FOLA encourages you to use these on your Association and personal social media accounts! Also available are FOLA's letter to Benchers regarding their recent LiRN cuts as well as all Regional letters.

You may want to bookmark our [Law Library Action Centre](#) page as we are still reviewing our Law Library Use Survey findings and will be uploading a White Paper on our findings in the coming weeks. In the meantime, FOLA and Law Association members continue to work the phones, write letters, and send emails as we work to convince all Benchers of the critical role Ontario's Law Libraries play in the lives of the practicing bar.

We're also keeping busy planning for our [Spring 2021 Plenary](#) which, once again, due to COVID-19, it will be held virtually on May 13th. We've got a great line-up of speakers on topics ranging from stress management & mental health, to disaster planning & preparedness, to (hopefully) a speech from our Attorney General! Plus, we've been able to secure CaseLines as a sponsor -so stay tuned for a special announcement about CaseLines training just for Law Association members!

Don't forget to visit our [Member Rewards](#) page to take advantage of deals! One of our partners, Hilton Hotels, is eager for business and are offering extra points for the next couple of months.

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If you're planning a vacation – even just in Ontario – be sure to use the link on our website. Your librarian has our code (but you can always email Katie to get that too).

And finally, we are currently accepting nominations for our [2021 FOLA Awards](#). Please do take a moment to access our [forms](#) and nominate someone today. Remember – if you never want to miss our submissions, initiatives, and news please remember to sign up for our [newsletter!](#)

## From the President

In the past year, the practice of law has changed immensely. Almost overnight, the court system came grinding to a halt, court dates were cancelled, mediation sessions were put on hold, and juries were excused. Law offices closed to the public and people began working remotely. Despite the closures, restrictions and limitations, clients still needed legal assistance. But how were lawyers to provide legal assistance in a world where nothing is open, nothing is accessible, no one is available? It has been a very uncertain time.

Despite the setbacks, the lawyers, paralegals, law clerks, judges, court administration staff and law librarians of Northumberland County and the greater Tri-County, have come together in some really cool ways in order to make things work. Court dates were held over the phone and then, more recently, over Zoom. Law clerks worked from home and helped their children with online learning while closing real estate deals. Court administrative staff set to rescheduling every court event that had been cancelled or delayed by the pandemic and continued to serve the public on the front lines. Lawyers provided legal advice to their clients over zoom while their children and dogs fought in the background. Lawyers and paralegals worked together to resolve cases rather than overburdening the already overburdened court system. In Northumberland County, everyone involved in the legal system went that extra mile to make the process work, in a time when nothing worked.

Now, let's be honest for one moment. Did anyone ever think they would give legal advice while wearing pajamas? No. Did you ever think you would attend court in a bathrobe? No! Are we all still wearing suit coats and dress shirts from the waist up and yogapants and fuzzy slippers from the waist down on court days Absolutely. But we are doing what we can to keep the process moving forward. We are doing our best. I am so proud of the commitment and perseverance the legal community in Northumberland County has demonstrated since the start of this pandemic. The NCLA Board of Directors will continue to do whatever possible to ensure the legal practitioners and legal support staff of Northumberland County remain connected and have what they need to see this pandemic through to the end.



In the coming months, the NCLA Board of Directors is going to need the support and assistance of the entire legal community in Northumberland County to protect our law library. There have been recent proposals by the Law Society of Ontario to make serious funding cuts to law libraries across the province of Ontario and to potentially close the smaller libraries entirely. Imagine court days without being able to sit in the library. Imagine trying to find legal references without Ciara's help! Imagine having to fight with the photocopier yourself!? I know, I know. It's too much to process. But if the last year has taught us anything, it is that if we all work together and focus on a common goal, we will overcome any obstacle. I looking forward to the next two years serving you as President. Take care and stay safe!

Morgan Payne  
NCLA President

## THE NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY LAW ASSOCIATION Board of Directors

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