

WILL MCDOWELL

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Region	Incumbency	Slate or Coalition Affiliation	Law Association Membership
Toronto	Benchers Pre-2019	Good Governance Coalition	Toronto

LiRN Funding and Libraries	
Will you support the Law Society maintaining its current level of funding for LiRN, adjusted annually for inflation?	Yes
Do you recognize the importance of the Law Society’s support for the LiRN budget in maintaining licensee competence across Ontario?	Yes
County law libraries are the nerve center of legal communities outside Toronto. They provide resources, such as access to electronic legal search engines (WestLaw, LexisNexis). Beyond that they provide meeting spaces and areas to work, and just meet other lawyers informally.	
If you are an incumbent, do you regret voting to cut the LiRN budget by 10% in November 2020?	N/A
N/A - not an incumbent.	
Do you support offloading funding for LiRN/law libraries to the Law Foundation of Ontario?	No
The present system works well provided adequate funding levels are maintained. The Law Foundation has many responsibilities, and its funding can fluctuate wildly depending on interest rates. It is better that Benchers maintain oversight over this vital resource.	

Legal Aid Funding	
Will you advocate for Legal Aid Ontario funding improvement and sustainability to ensure that being a Legal Aid-empanelled lawyer remains a viable area of practice for the private bar?	Yes
If you answered “yes”, how?	
Appropriate funding of LAO can only be achieved by effective advocacy with the Ontario Attorney General and the federal Minister of Justice, as well as with other Parliamentarians at each level. There is no silver bullet. I have seen this from both sides--meeting with legal aid delegations as Associate Deputy Minister of Justice, and meeting with the AGs as co-chair of the Government Relations Committee of Convocation.	
Please describe efforts that you believe should be undertaken by the Law Society to advocate for investment in LAO and increased financial allocation to LAO from the provincial and federal governments’ budgets.	
Governments must be made to understand that there are no savings to government spending by cutting Legal Aid. The court system becomes cluttered with unresolved cases. Trials involving unrepresented accused take far longer, and are vulnerable to challenge on appeal. But there are also impacts beyond the justice system, in child protection and in the treatment of mental illness. LAO funding is important to the human condition.	

Paralegal Scope of Practice	
On December 1, 2022, Convocation approved the Family Legal Service Provider (FLSP) license to allow paralegals who complete specified training to assist clients with certain family law services. The FLSP is to be reviewed in 3 years. Should paralegals’ scope of practice be expanded?	
It should be expanded no further than the FLSP	
If you answered “yes”, in what ways, why, and what additional training (if any) should be required of paralegals?	
No response was required.	
Lawyer licensees pay an annual competency levy as part of their annual fees that contributes towards LiRN, which funds courthouse libraries. Would you support a requirement for paralegals to also pay an annual competency levy?	Yes
There is a basic fairness in requiring this; paralegals enjoy an important place in the practice of law in Ontario.	

Law Association Involvement	
When did you become a member of each of the associations you selected above? Which board or executive roles, if any, have you served in as part of these associations? Please list relevant dates and roles.	
I have been a member of the Toronto Law Association (and its predecessor) intermittently since my call to the Bar in 1988.	
Why are you a member of each of the associations you selected above?	
The TLA has been an important part of the community for many years. It has been the custodian of an excellent law library and the adjacent lounge. I enjoy its annual events. But the size of the Bar in Toronto means that the TLA plays a somewhat different role than other county law associations.	