

MEGAN SHORTREED

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Region	Incumbency	Slate or Coalition Affiliation	Law Association Membership
Toronto	Incumbent	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
<i>I have voted in support of LiRN budgets at Convocation, and LSO budgets which provide it with funding in accordance with its budgetary needs. The "current level of funding" is not an absolute number, but rather based on a comprehensive budget from LiRN, which may go up or down (for the 2023 budget, there was an exceptional request related to electronic library resources). I recognize that the statutory mandate of the Law Society includes ensuring that the public is served by licensees who meet high standards of learning and competence and to facilitate access to justice across Ontario. The importance of practice resource centres includes access to legal information.</i>	
If you are an incumbent, do you regret voting to cut the LiRN budget by 10% in November 2020?	No
<i>We reduced LSO fees across the board by 10% in the 2021 budget, as a result of uncertainty related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Courts and courthouse libraries were essentially closed or working in a very restrictive way. There was legitimate concern about t</i>	
Do you support offloading funding for LiRN/law libraries to the Law Foundation of Ontario?	No
<i>The LiRN board will have to make a determination as to what application it can/should make for funding from the LFO, and LFO will have to determine if any application meets its criteria. Notably, LiRN has not done applied over the last decade. The LFO is not a sustainable source of funding at the level LiRN requires at the present time, and has its own important access to justice funding priorities. I wholeheartedly oppose the Full Stop suggestion that the LSO Board should interfere in the governance of either LiRN or LFO.</i>	

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
<i>👉 If you answered “yes”, how?</i>	
<i>The LSO does not fund Legal Aid Ontario directly. However, under the Law Society Act, money on trust accounts goes to the Law Foundation of Ontario which currently focuses 75% its funding on legal aid. I agree with the LSO's role as an advocate for legal aid as set out in the Abiding Interest report, and its involvement with the Association for Sustainable Legal Aid.</i>	
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.	
<i>The LSO should continue in its advocacy before the Federal and Provincial governments for funding and its support for ASLA. I am proud to be running with Coalition candidates who have served on the Board of Directors of LAO, and on ASLA. Notably, efforts by the Full Stop to dictate that LFO take over funding of county law libraries would have significant negative consequences for legal aid funding in the province - I oppose this short-sighted thinking.</i>	

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?	
<i>It should be expanded no further than the FLSP</i>	
<i>👉 If you answered “yes”, in what ways, why, and what additional training (if any) should be required of paralegals?</i>	
<i>No response was required, but the candidate wrote: The framing of the question above is difficult. The FLSP has only just been passed, and under the Family Law Action Plan, it is intended to be a first phase, followed by expansion only if it is a viable license and clients are well-served. Therefore, further study and broad consultation will be required at the end of the trial period. My approach is driven by ensuring competent legal services are provided to the public, and access to justice. It is not the Law Society's role to protect the "turf" of either lawyers or paralegals; but rather, to work with the government, the courts and licensees to meet the access to justice challenges in family law.</i>	
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
<i>Again, a yes/no answer is not appropriate. Courthouse libraries foster competence, and paralegals would benefit from access to library services across the province. If they have access, they should pay a levy accordingly. However, currently, only a few law associations permit paralegals access to libraries. This is an issue that FOLA may address with its membership, and I would be happy to consider their submissions to Convocation, if elected.</i>	

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>I have been a member of the TLA since at least 2013. While I have not served on the Board or Executive, I have contributed to TLA education sessions and was honoured to be the Inaugural Recipient of TLA's Honsberger Award.</i>	
Why are you a member of each of the associations you selected above?	
<i>I appreciate what County Law Associations do for their members, including library and courthouse services, information resources, advocacy, and fostering collegiality amongst the bar. I often attend their events and education programs. As a Benchler, I find FOLA and the TLA's contributions to the regulation of the professions in Ontario to be invaluable.</i>	