

TANYA WALKER

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Region	Incumbency	Slate or Coalition Affiliation	Law Association Membership
Toronto	Incumbent	Good Governance Coalition	Durham, Hamilton, 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

The Law Society should support an increase in the funding for the Legal Information and Resource Network, not just support its maintenance.

This is because the LiRN’s annual increase in costs exceed the inflation rate. LiRN Funding should reflect the cost increases the LiRN faces, such as being able to provide to employees (like librarians) with salary increases that are in line with industry standards. The resources and support the LiRN provides are especially important for sole practitioners and those practicing in smaller firms, who aren’t otherwise able to afford the information they need to become and remain competent lawyers.

If you are an incumbent, do you regret voting to cut the LiRN budget by 10% in November 2020?

Yes

The reduction of the LiRN budget by 10% in 2020 was a result of numerous factors - including the fact that Courts were closed or operating at a very limited capacity as a result of the pandemic and the fact that members of the Slate were pushing for a “defunding” of the LSO.

However, funding for the LiRN is critical to support licensees, especially those in smaller firms and those who are sole practitioners, and recognition of this fact is why the Benchers returned and increased funding to LiRN in 2021.

Do you support offloading funding for LiRN/law libraries to the Law Foundation of Ontario?

No

The LiRN and law libraries provide an invaluable service to lawyers. Access to privately provided resources are cost-prohibitive to many practitioners, and the provision of comprehensive, up-to-date legal resources is critical to ensuring lawyer competency and providing continuing legal education. Funding LiRN is within the mandate of the Law Society and should continue, and funding should not be offloaded to the Law Foundation.

Resisting the reduction of funding for LiRN/law libraries also plays an important role in promoting access to justice, because it gives lawyers the resources they need to serve clients competently, regardless of the financial restrictions of the lawyer or their client.

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?

I would find ways to raise awareness of the current situation of the funding of Legal Aid, and how it fails to serve large groups of people seeking access to justice. This can include asking news outlets to report on how the Legal Aid system works currently, and highlighting the limitations the system has.

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.

In addition to the work the Law Society already does in supporting the Alliance for Sustainable Legal Aid and implementing the 2018 Abiding Interest Report, another way the Law Society could advocate for more funding in LAO is to advocate for more lenient eligibility criteria, including allowing persons from higher income brackets to access Legal Aid, as the current income eligibility cutoff points are below the poverty line.

The Law Society should continue to help the Government appreciate that an insufficient legal aid system has negative repercussions that affect the legal system on a larger scale. People who cannot afford legal aid, for example, may choose to represent themselves, causing inefficiencies and increased costs throughout the Court system.

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

Currently, paralegals are not required to pay an annual competency fee which contributes towards courthouse libraries/resource centres. Paralegals are allowed to use some of the resources (but not all) that are funded by the competency levies. The LSO should consider allowing paralegals to access all library/resource centres that lawyers have access to, and also to require paralegals to contribute proportionately to the funding of these resources.

The LSO has a responsibility to ensure that all licensees have access to the resources they need to become and remain competent in their fields. This should include having resources in place that both lawyers and paralegals can access.

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.


Durham Region Law Association - 2023

Hamilton Law Association - 2023

Toronto Law Association - 2014

Why are you a member of each of the associations you selected above?

To meet fellow colleagues, stay connected to the legal community, and attend events and educational programs.

 Federation of Ontario  
Law Associations