

February 21, 2024

VIA EMAIL: doug.downey@pc.ola.org

The Honourable Doug Downey
Ministry of the Attorney General
McMurtry-Scott Building
11th Floor
720 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 2S9

Honourable Mr. Downey,

RE: *Enhancing Access to Justice Act, 2023*

I am writing to you on behalf of the Toronto Lawyers Association (“TLA”). The TLA represents the interests of more than 3,700 members who practice law in all disciplines across the Greater Toronto Area. Our membership, and our Board of Directors, represents the full diversity of our profession in Ontario. Included among our members are many lawyers who practice regularly before the Ontario Court of Justice.

I write with respect to Bill 157 – the *Enhancing Access to Justice Act, 2023*, and specifically its proposed changes to the *Courts of Justice Act*, RSO 1990, c C-43 and the *Justices of the Peace Act*, RSO 1990, c J-4. Those changes would remove the requirement that the Judicial Appointments Committee report statistics on the cultural identity of candidates for appointment to the bench in its annual report.

It is the TLA’s understanding that this change is largely administrative in nature, intended to remove reference to outdated language that may not be compliant with current requirements. Despite the changes, we understand that the Judicial Appointments Advisory Committee and the Justices of the Peace Advisory Committee will continue to be required to collect and publish statistics in their annual reports about the diversity of candidates that come before them for consideration.

The TLA commends the Ministry for its ongoing recognition of the importance of transparency in candidate diversity, and its commitment to ensuring that transparency in the appointments process.

Thank you for considering these comments. Our Executive Committee would be pleased to discuss these comments at your convenience, should you find additional consultation beneficial.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Arduini', written over a horizontal line.

Jennifer Arduini
Chair, Advocacy Committee
Toronto Lawyers Association