



Kensington-Bellwoods Community Legal Services

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Communique #1

Provincial Cuts to Legal Aid Threaten Access to Justice

The Provincial budget of April 11, 2019 calls for a 30% cut to Legal Aid Ontario's budget, which includes funding to community legal clinics. This cut is not limited to services for immigrant and refugee cases, though that would be appalling enough if it was. Kensington-Bellwoods Community Legal Services has been providing legal advice and representation for over 30 years in our community, which includes a significant population of newcomers. Funding cuts of this magnitude also threaten access to justice for low-income tenants, seniors, low-wage workers, people with disabilities, and victims of crime, whether or not they are newcomers.

"We are calling on the Attorney General, Caroline Mulroney to make a commitment to access to justice, and to respect the commitment of her government to not decrease front line services, and to confirm that funding for community clinics will not be decreased" said Lenny Abramowicz, the Executive Director of the Association of Community Legal Clinics of Ontario.

While some have promoted the idea of "self-representation", studies have shown that this is not fiscally responsible, as it adds unanticipated costs elsewhere and puts an unreasonable and unnecessary burden on the persons seeking justice. As well, our clients and community members are facing so many other cuts to important services they depend on, that many of them do not have the capacity to adequately represent themselves. As for services being made available online or over the phone rather than in-person, many of our clients and community members do not have sufficient access to the Internet nor adequate phone minutes during government business hours.

We call on our community members and partners to help preserve access to justice, by calling Premier Doug Ford and Attorney General Caroline Mulroney personally. You will probably get their voicemail - if you do, you can leave a message calling on them to reverse the cuts to Legal Aid Ontario!

Doug Ford: 416-325-1941

Caroline Mulroney: 416-326-2220

You can also call Prime Minister Trudeau's office and demand he intervene and remind the Premier of his duties to preserve access to justice.

Justin Trudeau: 1-613-992-4211.

Please Like and Follow us on Facebook to keep up-to-date at <https://www.facebook.com/kbcls/>
Also, please sign and share the petition we have posted on Facebook.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

The Board and Staff of Kensington-Bellwoods Community Legal Services