

Benjamin Smillie

Please vote against passing Bill 161 for the following reasons:

- Bill 161 removes access to justice from LAO's core mandate: The purpose of the Legal Aid Services Act is changed from "promot[ing] access to justice throughout Ontario for low-income individuals" to "facilitat[ing] the establishment of a flexible and sustainable legal aid system that provides effective and high quality legal aid services throughout Ontario in a client-focused and accountable manner while ensuring value for money."
- Bill 161 removes mandatory language around the provision of legal aid services: While the current Legal Aid Services Act states that the Corporation "shall provide legal aid services in the areas of criminal law, family law, clinic law and mental health law," Bill 161 changes this to "may."