

Dangwal, Shriya

From: Legislative Assembly of Ontario
Sent: June 12, 2020 10:08 AM
To: Standing Committee on Justice Policy
Cc: Ellis, Victoria
Subject: Webform submission: Submission of material 18391

Submitted on Fri, 06/12/2020 - 09:55

Application ID: 18391

Submitted values are:

Bill or item of business: **Bill 161, Smarter and Stronger Justice Act, 2020**

Choose a topic

Do you know the bill title or business (e.g., pre-budget consultations) you'd like to speak or submit material about?

Yes

Choose an application

Which application would you like to submit?

Submit material only

Which deadline would you like to submit your written material for?

[Written Submissions \(Deadline: Friday, June 12, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.\)](#)

Add your information

Are you submitting material as an individual or on behalf of an organization?

I am submitting material as an individual

Name

Liam Thompson

Contact phone number

[647-284-5226](#)

Email address

lk.m.thompson95@gmail.com

Paste submission

Dear Mr. Baber,

I am disappointed by the current changes to the Ontario Legal Aid system that are enshrined in Bill 161. I

recently graduated from law school, and had the opportunity and privilege to work in my school's legal aid clinic. The people who are served by legal aid (by virtue of the patently ridiculous income requirement of less than \$22,720 annually for a single person) are already on the fringes of society, and they need more legal aid services. Making these services more difficult to access and shrinking the scope of what legal aid does is not only mean spirited, it is bad policy. Given Minister Downey's commitment to modernizing Ontario's justice system and reducing court delays, it is incongruent that this Government is intent on forcing more people with legal issues to either forgo their claims or force them to proceed pro se, thus causing delay and prejudicing their cases.

Specifically, I advocate for these changes to the Bill as written:

1. Reinstate "access to justice" for low-income and disadvantaged communities to the Purpose of the legislation.
2. Community legal clinics must be recognized as the foundation for the provision of clinic law services.
3. Reinstate obligations to provide legal aid services across Ontario.
4. Define community legal clinics as:
"community legal clinic" means a community legal organization structured as an independent corporation without share capital:
 - (a) whose board of directors are members of the community or communities served, or who have a substantial association or interest in the community or communities served;
 - (b) that provides legal aid services for the community it serves on a basis other than fee for service; and,
 - (c) that determines the legal needs of the individuals and communities served by the community legal clinic.

This is important to me and my community. I expect that you will do the right thing and make these changes.

Sincerely,

Liam Thompson