

## **Ontario Crown Attorneys' Association**

180 Dundas St. West  
Suite 1015, Box #30  
Toronto, Ontario M5G 1Z8  
Tel: (416) 977-4517  
Fax: (416) 977-1460



Mr. Frank Addario  
President - CLA  
1100-20 Dundas St W  
PO Box 180  
Toronto Ontario  
M5G 2G8

July 23, 2009

Dear Mr. Addario

Re: Funding of Legal Aid Ontario

I am writing to you on behalf of the Ontario Crown Attorneys' Association in order to express our Association's concern regarding the current level of funding for Ontario's legal aid programme and to support the initiative by various parties in the legal profession to increase legal aid rates.

As you know the OCAA represents this Province's front-line Crown Attorneys. Our members are responsible for conducting a variety of duties, many of which place them in close contact with members of the criminal defence bar on a daily basis. Although our respective members may frequently appear on opposite sides of a courtroom we are all members of the same profession, striving to serve the interests of all Ontarians in a climate of mutual respect.

It is the view of the OCAA that for our criminal justice system to work both effectively and fairly it is essential that there is balance in our adversarial system. Experienced and well-prepared Crown counsel and a professional and impartial judiciary are two of the necessary pillars in order to achieve this balance. The defence bar represents the third key pillar.

It is the position of the OCAA that the present funding of the legal aid tariff undermines the ability of the defence bar to perform their vital role. Notwithstanding the professionalism of individual counsel, it is inevitable that an inadequately funded and under-resourced criminal defence bar will struggle to attract and retain counsel with the necessary abilities to properly represent accused persons in criminal cases.

It is the position of the OCAA that a fair and reasonable legal aid tariff is essential in retaining experienced and professional defence counsel and in attracting the next generation of the defence bar. Our Association is fully in support of a fair and properly-funded legal aid system in Ontario and firmly hope that the necessary changes are implemented at the earliest opportunity.

Yours Truly

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Hewitt', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Thomas A. Hewitt  
President  
Ontario Crown Attorneys' Association