

**CANADIAN
DEFENCE
LAWYERS**

November 9, 2018

The Honourable Jody Wilson-Raybould
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada
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The Honourable Caroline Mulroney
Attorney General of Ontario
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Canadian Defence Lawyers ("CDL") is a national organization that represents the interests of civil defence lawyers. Our organization supports the initiative for public funding of Pro Bono Ontario.

CDL recognizes that the cost of accessing the justice system is a barrier for a significant number of Canadians. There are few programs that bridge the gap between participation and exclusion. Pro Bono Ontario is one of those programs. CDL acknowledges Pro Bono Ontario, through its volunteers, allows less advantaged Canadians to have their disputes heard and resolved. The benefits to our system are two-fold. Not only does the program immediately facilitate our collective ability to access justice, but it gives an enviable long term benefit of conserving scarce public resources. It increases efficiency by providing advice to self-represented litigants who, without training, may bring meritless claims, or bog down courts simply by not knowing how to negotiate court processes.

Access to justice is a core Canadian value. The closure of the Pro Bono Ontario Law Help Centres will be a great loss to us all. CDL appeals to our governments to consider funding the modest operating costs to ensure that Pro Bono Ontario continues its worthy enterprise

Sincerely,



Laura Emmett
President 2018-2019
Canadian Defence Lawyers