

April 17, 2024

Community Legal Clinics have been providing access to justice for Ontarians for over 50 years. A significant part of our work includes representing low income residents and small landlords before tribunals such as the Social Benefits Tribunal, the Landlord and Tenant Board, Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario, and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Appeals Tribunal.

Tribunals constitute Ontario's most active legal bodies, adjudicating issues of paramount significance to Ontarians. This includes guaranteeing access to adequate housing, safeguarding investments to enhance or sustain quality of life, addressing income sufficiency for those grappling with food insecurity, promoting freedom from discrimination to allow individuals to express their true selves authentically, and ensuring injured workers receive essential support to uphold their dignity. By fulfilling these roles, these tribunals play a crucial role in reducing the strain on crisis services that are often overburdened due to homelessness or inadequate housing. They serve as the primary avenue for Ontarians to access our justice system, surpassing traditional courts in their accessibility and impact. Strengthening our tribunal system is essential to uphold Ontario's commitment to health equity and alleviating the strain on crisis health and social services. Strengthening this system alone will ensure a healthier and more equitable Ontario for all.

Over the past several years there has been an erosion of public confidence in our tribunals. With media reports that highlight concerns regarding the quality of the adjudication at our tribunals, the lengthy delays to having a matter heard, and - most troublesome - the removal of almost all in-person services creating a significant access to justice challenge experienced by the majority of low income Ontarians who are trying to engage in their services.

[Bill 179](#), *the Fewer Backlogs and Less Partisan Tribunals Act*, is a step forward in returning public confidence to our tribunal system. It was inspired by the late Ron Ellis who was a legal scholar and an advocate in the courts for the integrity and independence of adjudicative tribunals. It promises to fortify tribunal adjudicators from partisan attacks on its independence and to improve access to justice for all Ontarians.

As community legal clinics, we care very deeply of the independence of our tribunals and strongly support this Bill.

Sincerely,

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**DCLC**  
 Durham Community Legal Clinic

  
**IWC**  
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 COMMUNITY LEGAL CLINIC

  
**Chatham-Kent  
 Legal Clinic**

  
  
**ALGOMA COMMUNITY  
 LEGAL CLINIC INC.**  
 Helping low income individuals since 1984  
 Funded by Legal Aid Ontario

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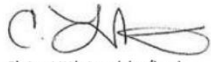
*"Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced." (James Baldwin)*

*[Signature]*



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