

# M. ANNE VESPRY

anne@vespry.ca

Region	Incumbency	Slate or Coalition Affiliation	Law Association Membership
East	Bencher Pre-2019	Unaffiliated	Carleton

## LiRN Funding and Libraries

**Will you support the Law Society maintaining its current level of funding for LiRN, adjusted annually for inflation?** Yes

**Do you recognize the importance of the Law Society's support for the LiRN budget in maintaining licensee competence across Ontario?** Yes

*The Law Society sets standards of competence for practicing lawyers. The CPD materials, books, and computer research tools provided by our County libraries help soles, smalls, new lawyers and articling students gain and maintain those standards.*

**If you are an incumbent, do you regret voting to cut the LiRN budget by 10% in November 2020?** N/A

*N/A - not an incumbent.*

**Do you support offloading funding for LiRN/law libraries to the Law Foundation of Ontario?** No

*The Law Foundation is a project-based grant giving organization, not a provider of stable, ongoing funding. LiRN/law libraries need to know that their basic operating costs will be consistently covered so that they can budget realistically and continue to provide services that help lawyers and paralegals maintain and increase our competence.*

*That said, I don't oppose individual county Law Associations applying to the Law Foundation for special funding. It might make sense for a particular Law Library to seek a grant from the Law Foundation for a one-time purpose or event. Seeking that sort of funding is, and should remain, an option.*

## Legal Aid Funding

**Will you advocate for Legal Aid Ontario funding improvement and sustainability to ensure that being a Legal Aid-empowered lawyer remains a viable area of practice for the private bar?** Yes

**If you answered "yes", how?**

*Within the Law Society, advocating for Legal Aid Ontario funding improvement and sustainability is a long-term effort that requires persistence and collaboration. The LSO needs to build relationships with organizations that do anti-poverty work to educate the public and craft a compelling message that will mobilize public support. Access to Justice in general, and Legal Aid in particular, are not seen by the government as topics of interest to the voting public. Until that changes, Legal Aid will remain underfunded.*

*To encourage that change, I would urge the LSO to include information about Legal Aid in public education materials about access to justice to build awareness of the need for Legal Aid funding.*

**Please describe efforts that you believe should be undertaken by the Law Society to advocate for investment in LAO and increased financial allocation to LAO from the provincial and federal governments' budgets.**

*While I strongly believe that the LSO has role to play in public education, I am less eager to see the Law Society acting as a lobby group. Advocating for the interests of lawyers is the role of the CBA/OBA, or, indeed of FOLA and its members. The LSO can and should educate the public to demand investment in LAO, but I do not believe that, as an administrative/regulatory body, it should be any more directly involved in political advocacy.*

## Paralegal Scope of Practice

**On December 1, 2022, Convocation approved the Family Legal Service Provider (FLSP) license to allow paralegals who complete specified training to assist clients with certain family law services. The FLSP is to be reviewed in 3 years. Should paralegals' scope of practice be expanded?**

*Yes, it should be expanded.*

**If you answered "yes", in what ways, why, and what additional training (if any) should be required of paralegals?**

*The Provincial amendment to the Law Society Act (ss. 1(5)-(7)) that gave the LSO the power to regulate paralegals envisioned paralegals working in a much broader scope than they currently do. It is the task of an administrative body to make regulations or By-Laws that support and conform to the legislation that empowers that administrative body. Instead the LSO used the By-Laws to throttle and carve away a significant part of the paralegal scope as proposed in the Act.*

*The LSO regulates in the interest of the public. Not to protect lawyers from potential competition. Yet protectionism appears to be the most likely explanation for the cut-back in scope.*

*If the LSO were to honour the scope set out in the Act, it would likely be best to follow the model of creating separate qualifications, with rigorous education and a separate licensing exam, for each new area of law added to the scope.*

**Lawyer licensees pay an annual competency levy as part of their annual fees that contributes towards LiRN, which funds courthouse libraries. Would you support a requirement for paralegals to also pay an annual competency levy?** Yes

*The Rules of Paralegal Conduct require competence of paralegals the same way the Rules of Professional Conduct require it of lawyers. Given that courthouse libraries and practice resource centres are crucial supports to lawyers' ability to maintain and advance our competence it makes no sense at all to exclude paralegals from those resources. Yet as long as lawyers pay a levy that paralegals do not, there will be those who argue finances as a reason for exclusion. The simplest solution is for all to pay, and all to have access.*

## Law Association Involvement

**When did you become a member of each of the associations you selected above? Which board or executive roles, if any, have you served in as part of these associations? Please list relevant dates and roles.**

*I have been a member of the CCLA since I was in Law School in the late 1990's*

**Why are you a member of each of the associations you selected above?**

*I am a member of the CCLA in part because of the essential services it provides to lawyers, paralegals, and legal students. First and foremost the library is an excellent source of relevant legal materials, the library staff are expert at answering research questions, and the computer and software provided help level the playing field in the profession by encouraging smalls and soles to use tools that would otherwise be beyond our financial reach.*

*In addition to the library services, the CCLA organizes annual CLE Conferences that are events not to be missed (and I don't say that merely because I have presented at both the Family Law Summit and the East Region Solicitors' Conference).*

*As a law student, my student membership gave me the first inklings what collegiality might mean, and it has remained an ongoing reminder that even in the most adversarial areas of the law there is room for community.*