



October 19, 2021

Teresa Donnelly
Treasurer
Law Society of Ontario
Osgoode Hall
130 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N6

Dear Treasurer Donnelly,

Thank you for the invitation to Ontario's sixth annual Access to Justice Week. As you know, this week is extremely important as it brings together a wide range of justice stakeholders to collaborate and develop solutions to outstanding challenges in the justice system. While discussions have always been important, this is a particularly opportune time for such gatherings in light of outstanding COVID-related challenges.

Unfortunately, I am not able to attend the plenary session for A2J week due to a conflict. However, I do want to take a moment to publicly recognize the importance of this week's events and commend you for an exceptional agenda. For example, the sessions on addressing outstanding challenges relating to accessing virtual courts and tribunals and improving access to justice for rural communities are timely.

Access to justice is incredibly important to the Ontario Superior Court of Justice. Over the past 18 months, we have made notable progress in making justice more accessible to our litigants. For example, we changed court procedures to encourage court attendees to share their pronouns if comfortable, as well as requesting them to rise if they are able.

The most significant change that we have adopted is the use of virtual and hybrid hearings and the introduction of digital hearing spaces for the review of court materials. These improvements have allowed the Court to continue to operate in times when in-person attendances were not safe and at the same time given us new tools to use going forward to increase access to justice. I look forward to hearing about the outcome of the session on increasing access to technology for vulnerable litigants to ensure that they are able to fully participate in court and tribunal processes.

Thank you for your efforts to continue to champion access to justice, as well as those of all of the participants in last week's events.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G. Morawetz', with a large, stylized initial 'G'.

Geoffrey B. Morawetz
Chief Justice.