

THE COUNTY & DISTRICT LAW PRESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION  
L'ASSOCIATION DES BÂTONNIERS DE COMTÉS ET DISTRICTS

Randall S. Boccock, Chair



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For Immediate Release

**Criminal Law Offices Cost Taxpayers Up To 85% More in Legal Aid Costs**

**Toronto** - Taxpayers money is being spent ineffectively on three Criminal Law Offices (CLOs) being operated by Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) in Barrie, Brampton and Ottawa, according to an analysis by the County and District Law Presidents' Association (CDLPA).

"CDLPA has conducted an analysis of the Legal Aid report that looked into the cost effectiveness of the CLOs. Our analysis shows that the average cost per case per CLO over the last two years is 65% to 85% more than commensurate costs charged by the private bar, which is significant," said Randall Boccock, Chair of CDLPA.

CDLPA's analysis found that the private bar could handle more cases for the same costs as the CLOs and still:

- Complete almost fifteen times as many cases as the Ottawa CLO;
- Complete almost thirty times as many cases as the Brampton CLO;
- Take on more than double the number of cases as the Barrie CLO.

"Essentially our analysis shows that the cost of CLO handling legal aid files has, in some cases, been more than doubled. Legal Aid Ontario's own independent report confirms that the CLOs do not provide good value for money on certificate based files," said Boccock.

"Our report has also demonstrated that the office overhead costs for the CLOs are excessively high and higher, in all cases, than the combined value of legal time spent by the CLOs on files. Quite simply, no private law firm could afford to incur such a high percentage of office overhead costs," said Ken Hall Co-Chair of CDLPA's legal aid committee.

CDLPA's report analyzed cases handled by the CLOs that cost less than \$2,500, including overhead expenditures and compared them to the costs of similar cases handled by the private bar. This method of comparison is validated by

LAO's own independently commissioned report which compared costs in the same fashion.

"It is our hope that the CLOs will not be expanded to other sites and that a more prudent way of spending tax dollars in the future will be considered in re-aiming the focus of the CLOs" said Bocock. "CDLPA envisions a legal aid system that increases access to justice for all Ontarians – operating the CLOs in such a duplicative and inefficient fashion just bogs the system down by not spending such limited resources wisely."

The Attorney-General of Ontario has received a copy of the CDLPA report and is reviewing it at this time. CDLPA representatives have met with Minister Bentley to deliver the CDLPA Report. The CDLPA Report is available at <http://www.cdlpa.org/CLOAnalysisNovember2008.pdf>

The County and District Law Presidents' Association, in association with the Toronto Lawyers Association, represents the 47 county and district law associations in Ontario with over 13,000 members of the practising bar.

For More Information:  
Nancy Daigneault  
705 220 0016