

# News Release Communiqué



Ministry of the  
Attorney General

Ministère du  
Procureur général

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## **MCGUINITY GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES CIVIL JUSTICE REFORM**

*Coulter Osborne To Recommend Ways To Improve Access To Civil Justice System*

TORONTO — The McGuinty government has asked former Associate Chief Justice of Ontario Coulter Osborne to propose options to reform the civil justice system to make it more accessible and affordable, Attorney General Michael Bryant announced today.

“We are committed to enhancing access to justice for Ontarians,” said Bryant. “That’s why we have asked Mr. Osborne, who has over 45 years of legal experience, to examine the civil justice system to look for ways we can improve.”

Mr. Osborne has been asked to deliver recommendations for action that are easily implementable and provide tangible results. Recommended reforms could include streamlining litigation processes to decrease cost and delay, and addressing the issue of unrepresented litigants.

“I am pleased to take on this challenging new opportunity,” said Osborne. “Through the reform project, I look forward to exploring a range of options to help improve Ontario’s civil justice system.”

“I am pleased that the government is launching this important initiative to improve the civil justice system,” said Orm Murphy, Chair of the County and District Law Presidents Association. “This is one of many ways the government and the legal community can work together to make changes that will benefit all Ontarians.”

“Coulter Osborne’s leadership on this project is proof the government is serious about taking concrete steps to reform civil justice in this province,” said Linda Rothstein, outgoing President of the Advocates’ Society. “I applaud the Attorney General for moving forward in this significant way.”

“This reform project will support the steady progress we’ve been making in this important area of the justice system,” said Heather McGee, President of the Ontario Bar

Association. “There is always more to be done and we look forward to considering Mr. Osborne’s recommendations.”

Osborne will consult with judicial partners and stakeholders and consider initiatives from other jurisdictions.

Coulter Osborne was called to the Bar in 1959. He was appointed to the then-named Supreme Court of Ontario in 1978, served on the Ontario Court of Appeal beginning in 1990, and was appointed the Associate Chief Justice for Ontario in 1999. He was appointed Integrity Commissioner in 2001.

The McGuinty government’s commitment to improving access to justice for Ontarians also includes:

- Enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of Toronto civil courts by moving operations to a new location at 330 University Avenue and expanding the capacity of the civil court system
- Introducing the Access to Justice Act, 2005 that would, if passed, reform the justice of the peace system and regulate paralegals
- Increasing funding to Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) by \$13 million in 2006/07. Since October 2003, the McGuinty government has increased base funding for LAO by 10 per cent, or \$25 million.

- 30 -

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