

SENT VIA EMAIL

March 8, 2021

Convocation
Law Society of Ontario
130 Queen Street West
Toronto, Ontario M5H 2N6

Dear Treasurer Donnelly, Members of Convocation and the Audit and Finance Committee,

Re: Motion dated November 26, 2020 made by Bencher Lewis

Happy International Women's Day! The Women's Law Association of Ontario ("WLAO") is an association dedicated to empowering women in the legal profession by providing a collective voice and advocating for equality, diversity and change. Since 1919, WLAO has been providing leadership and support to advance the status of women in the legal profession.

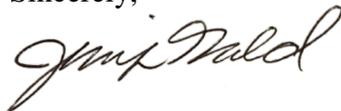
We have reviewed the motion dated November 26, 2020 made by Bencher Lewis, that we understand will be reviewed by the Audit and Finance Committee before proceeding.

The WLAO supports this motion. We have historically seen women leaving the practice of law for many reasons but as a profession, we must consider the barriers that discourage the retention and advancement of women in the legal profession. Regarding paragraph 2 of the notice of motion, the fee reduction proposed would assist many people in private practice who do not have the benefit of an employer who pays their membership fees while on parental leave. The fee reduction would also help alleviate the burden of women who are sole practitioners and must contend with payment of the overhead of their practice while on parental leave. In such circumstances, women often take significantly less parental leave than their counterparts who are employed by firms, government and other organizations. The pandemic has exacerbated the challenges facing new lawyers entering the profession and women who are sole practitioners or partners in small firms.

While this motion won't solve the larger issue of the glass ceiling faced by women, it is certainly a step in the right direction.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Gold
President

