



FEDERATION OF ONTARIO
LAW ASSOCIATIONS

FÉDÉRATION DES ASSOCIATIONS
DU BARREAU DE L'ONTARIO

16 February 2021

This afternoon in the Ontario Legislature, the Attorney General introduced [The Accelerating Access to Justice Act, 2021](#).

If passed, the Accelerating Access to Justice Act, 2021 would:

- Help fill judicial vacancies faster so people will be able to have their matters heard by a judge more quickly and with fewer delays. These changes would maintain current legislated qualifications to become a judge, as announced in February 2020, and reflect feedback received from justice partners and lawyers. Changes will also support broader efforts to encourage more lawyers to apply by moving the applications process online.
- Permanently allow the virtual witnessing of wills and powers of attorney to make it easier for people to get these important affairs in order, without the limitations of travelling to access these services in-person.
- Promote the interests of children by giving them a greater voice in the court process, and better focus resources of the Office of the Children's Lawyer.
- Increase access to justice in French by expanding and guaranteeing the ability of Francophones to file documents in French at all Ontario courthouses and for all matters, including civil and family law.

The province is also proposing to consolidate Ontario's Land Tribunals by merging the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal, Environmental Review Tribunal, Board of Negotiation, Conservation Review Board and the Mining and Lands Tribunal into a new single tribunal called the Ontario Land Tribunal. The new Ontario Land Tribunal would make the land dispute resolution process more efficient by creating a single forum to resolve disputes faster by eliminating unnecessary overlap between cases.

A Backgrounder can be found [here](#).