

June 27, 2001

Honorable Paul Bégin
Minister of Justice
Ministère de la Justice
1200 route de l'Église
9th Floor
Sainte-Foy, Québec
G1V 4M1

Dear Mr. Bégin,

We are writing on behalf of the Canadian Bar Association to urge you to maintain your commitment to equal treatment of legal aid lawyers and Crown prosecutors in Quebec. The CBA is a national association representing over 37,000 jurists, including lawyers, notaries, law teachers and students across Canada. Our mandate includes both improvement in the law and the administration of justice and advancing the interests of the legal profession.

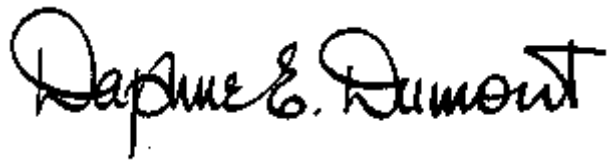
We congratulate your government on its recent ratification of the amended tariff for legal aid, and also for the significant salary increase recognizing the efforts of Crown Prosecutors. The CBA strongly believes that the invaluable role of Crown counsel in our justice system must be rewarded in a manner that acknowledges the importance of that role and makes a career with the Attorney General a viable career option for members of the profession.

However, our primary reason for writing is to ask you to continue to strive for parity and equality between Crown counsel and legal aid lawyers throughout Quebec. We understand that while your government's policy has been to lock-step remuneration between the two groups of lawyers, this is no longer the case.

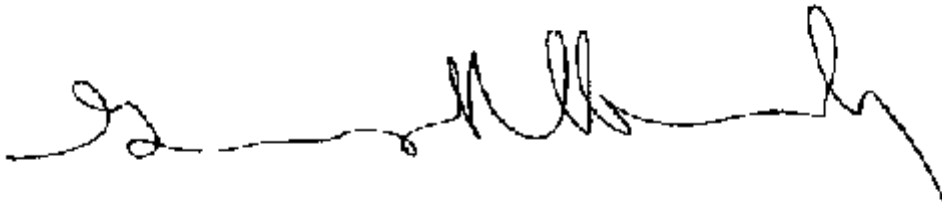
It is difficult to conceive of a level playing field in the courtroom when a government funded prosecutor is rewarded at a significantly higher level than a government funded legal aid counsel. This is not only true in criminal matters, where the injustice of the state being more adequately funded than an accused is perhaps most obvious, but it also impacts on the fairness of results in civil matters, such as in family law cases. Further, there seems no principled justification for this discrepancy in remuneration. Surely, saving money at the expense of the dedicated lawyers who practice in legal aid offices is simply unacceptable.

We again urge you to act to immediately remedy the situation and ensure fair and equitable treatment for both legal aid lawyers and Crown Prosecutors in Quebec. Thank you for considering the views of the Canadian Bar Association.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daphne E. Dumont". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

Daphne Dumont, Q.C.
President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George Hendy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'G'.

George Hendy
President, Quebec Branch