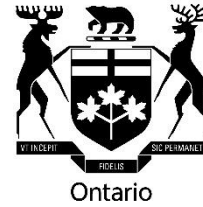


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Our Reference #: M-2019-7604

December 12, 2019

I am writing to invite you to share your views following the passage of Federal Bill C-78, which received Royal Assent on June 21, 2019. The changes to the federal *Divorce Act* are scheduled to come into force on July 1, 2020, which means we must act now to ensure that Ontario's laws are updated to reflect any relevant changes in the federal statute.

Ontario is committed to supporting families and protecting vulnerable children. Further to my remarks at the Family Dispute Resolution Institute of Ontario's 5<sup>th</sup> annual conference last month, the Ministry of the Attorney General is closely reviewing Bill C-78 to determine how it will impact Ontario's family justice system, and what changes may need to be made in preparation for Bill C-78 coming into force. It is my goal to avoid confusion as a result of different language being used in the federal *Divorce Act* than is currently used in the provincial *Children's Law Reform Act*. As a result, we are exploring replacing terminology in the *Children's Law Reform Act* related to "custody" and "access" with terminology related to "parenting".

I welcome your views on how Ontario should align with some of the recent amendments made in Bill C-78, such as:

- changing references to child "custody" and "access";
- adding new requirements in relation to family dispute resolution processes;
- amending/expanding the best interests of the child test;
- adding a new definition in relation to family violence; and/or
- adding a legislative test to apply in child relocation cases.

Bill C-78 may be viewed on the Parliament of Canada website at:

<https://www.parl.ca/legisinfo/BillDetails.aspx?billId=9868788&Language=E>.

As we also continue to consider broader reforms to the family justice system, we welcome any additional suggestions that you may wish to share regarding family reform ideas generally.

I would appreciate receiving your input on Bill C-78 in writing **no later than Friday, January 17, 2020**.

Please send your submissions to my Senior Policy and Legal Affairs Advisor, Amanda Iarusso, at [amanda.iarusso@ontario.ca](mailto:amanda.iarusso@ontario.ca). I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Doug Downey".

Doug Downey  
Attorney General