

November 13, 2008

Hon. Chris Bentley
Attorney General of Ontario
720 Bay Street, 11th Floor
Toronto, M5G 2K1

BY FAX

Dear Mr. Bentley:

Re: Fairness for court reporters

I'm writing to inform you of the union's strongest possible objection to your ministry's plans for court reporters.

As you know, Grievance Settlement Board Vice-Chair Randi Abramsky found in July 2006 that "the preparation and certification of transcripts was bargaining unit work of the court reporters."

On Oct. 17, your ministry disclosed its planned model for court reporters to the union.

Your ministry's proposals to split the work of court reporters into two jobs would take away their work and halve their income. Your ministry proposes to create what are essentially typing pools in eight locations around the province, staffed by shift-workers at an OAD8 classification.

In our view, your ministry's plans for court reporters amount to nothing more than a deskilling and devaluing of important work. Our union is, frankly, deeply offended by them.

We believe this radical redesign of court reporting could also have very serious and negative repercussions on preserving the integrity of the record.

The union put forward proposals including the creation of new Court Reporter and Voice-Writer positions that recognize the skill and responsibility intrinsic to taking the record and producing accurate transcripts.

Your ministry was not prepared to discuss our proposals and we were not prepared to agree to your harmful and disrespectful plans for court reporters.

As a result, we have no choice but to return to Vice-Chair Abramsky and ask her for assistance.

At our meeting in May, you spoke of your commitment to improving labour relations in your ministry. Your ministry's planned "business model" for court reporters is a giant step backwards for labour relations.

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I am asking to meet with you as soon as possible to discuss how we can rectify this situation.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Warren Thomas", written in a cursive style.

Warren (Smokey) Thomas
President

/mp

cc: MERC Team
Linda Fudge
Helen Haggith
Brian Gould,