

MINISTRY'S CHANGES TO THE COURT REPORTING MODEL IN ONTARIO



The Ministry of the Attorney General is planning to make significant changes to the current model of Court Reporting. These changes will, by design, be detrimental to the integrity of the record and will not in any way serve the administration of justice.

The Ministry's new model for the delivery of Court Reporting and transcript production services consists of three different positions. The first position is the "Electronic Court Monitor". That person will be sitting in court taking the record either on a digital system or on the old analogue system until the digital is fully implemented.

The second position is that of "transeditor", which is nothing more than a typist who will be located in one of eight "Regional Transcript Centres" across the province. They will never sit in a courtroom but will take the records that the Electronic Court Monitors produce and attempt to produce a transcript.

The third position is a "Voice-Writer". These people will be trained by the Ministry on the use of steno-mask reporting equipment, connected to a computer, which will be outfitted with voice-recognition software. These positions will be very limited across the province and will only be used in cases where the bench or the bar has requested overnight transcripts. They will apparently be regionally based and will be required to travel to wherever they are requested for the duration of the matter they are assigned to.

There will no longer be any direct connection between the bench, the bar, the court proceedings and the individual producing your transcripts. There will be no local accountability for the production of transcripts and the person producing them will never set foot in a courtroom. This disconnect clearly will result in a lower standard of transcripts; the transcripts upon which you rely every day as an accurate record.

The Ministry of the Attorney General indicates that their position on this new model is "non-negotiable". The Ministry has indicated that this change is "good news". If this new model is not something you want to see implemented within the next 18 months please speak up now. Contact Minister Bentley, your Regional Director, your Senior Regional Justice, the Chief Justice and anyone else who may be able to make a difference.