

Law Society's governing board votes to change the regulator's name to "Law Society of Ontario"



NEWS PROVIDED BY

The Law Society of Upper Canada

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TORONTO, Nov. 2, 2017 /CNW/ - The Law Society of Upper Canada's governing body (Convocation) today voted to change the regulator's name from the Law Society of Upper Canada to the "Law Society of Ontario."

The vote follows a passionate discussion at September's Convocation where benchers requested further research into potential names and suggested testing them with Law Society licensees and the public. The name change motion was passed with a strong majority.

Four names were put forward by the Law Society's Strategic Communications Steering Group and tested: Law Society of Ontario, Ontario Law Society, Legal Regulator of Ontario, and Legal Professionals of Ontario. Over 17,000 licensees responded, with 83 per cent in favour of Law Society of Ontario. Of the nearly 1,000 members of the public who cast their preference, more members of the public (41 per cent) preferred Law Society of Ontario than the other options.

As part of its efforts to engage stakeholders and the public with responsive communications, the Law Society also commissioned independent research which shows that most members of the public are not familiar with the Law Society and its regulatory role, and that the name contributes to numerous communications challenges and barriers to inclusion.

"Our role at the Law Society is to act in the public interest and serve the public, which means we need to be more visible and establish ourselves as the place to turn for legal help and information," said Law Society Treasurer Paul Schabas. "It had become apparent that the 'Upper Canada' part of our name, while liked by many in the profession, was not only confusing for the public, but actually was a barrier to people contacting us, or knowing who we are and what we do," he said.

The name change is the first step of a robust communications initiative, Treasurer Schabas noted. A full public awareness campaign will be considered by Convocation in December.

The Law Society regulates lawyers and paralegals in Ontario in the public interest. The Law Society has a mandate to protect the public interest, to maintain and advance the cause of justice and the rule of law, to facilitate access to justice for the people of Ontario and act in a timely, open and efficient manner.

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SOURCE The Law Society of Upper Canada

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