

Pro Bono Ontario's #InvestinJustice campaign kicks off with \$125,000 gift from Gowling WLG

October 23, 2019 – Pro Bono Ontario (PBO)'s 2019 #InvestinJustice fundraising campaign is off to a strong start, with international law firm Gowling WLG making a five-year commitment totalling \$125,000.

The campaign is the backbone of PBO's ongoing effort to ensure it has the resources it needs to provide direct legal services to low-income Ontarians who have nowhere else to turn. In 2018 alone, PBO served nearly **30,000** clients.

Funds raised through the #InvestinJustice campaign will support the provision of direct legal services to low-income Ontarians through programs like the Free Legal Advice Hotline, court-based Law Help Centres and medical-legal partnerships with hospitals across Ontario.

"PBO's vital role in protecting and promoting access to justice cannot be overstated. Its province-wide services make an absolutely critical difference in the lives of people who lack the means to pay for legal advice," said Peter Lukasiewicz, CEO of Gowling WLG Canada. "We are hopeful that our five-year financial commitment will help PBO continue to advance its important mission – and that other large law firms will follow our lead and make similar contributions."

Gowling WLG has consistently participated in PBO programs since 2004. Through the firm's national pro bono program, legal professionals give their time, expertise and resources to a diverse range of cases and causes. Last year, the firm donated approximately 5,400 hours of pro bono time equivalent to more than \$2 million in legal fees.

PBO's focus on civil, non-family law represents 60% of unmet legal needs in Ontario. Among others, the many at-risk groups the access to justice charity helps include:

- Unrepresented litigants;
- Seniors victimized by consumer scams;
- Precariously employed workers afraid of losing their livelihood;
- Tenants who are scraping by and facing eviction;
- Parents who are not getting the income support they need while caring for a sick child; and
- Children who are being relentlessly bullied at school.

Despite generous support from the Law Foundation of Ontario, the growing demand for services continues to outstrip PBO's resources. Over the past decade that demand increased by nearly 300%.

"PBO cannot survive without leadership from the profession," added Lynn Burns, executive director of PBO. "Through its generous gift of time and money, Gowling WLG exemplifies the commitment all law firms should have to access to justice. We are grateful for their support."

To donate to the #InvestinJustice campaign, visit <https://probonoontario.org/voices-for-pro-bono/>

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