

For Immediate Release
February 25, 2008

ATTORNEY GENERAL LAUNCHES COMPLEX CRIMINAL CASE PROCEDURE REVIEW

McGuinty Government Improving Effectiveness Of The Justice System

TORONTO — Attorney General Chris Bentley has asked the Honourable Patrick LeSage, Q.C., and Professor Michael Code to lead a review of large and complex criminal case procedures.

The review will identify issues and recommend solutions to move large, complex cases through the justice system faster and more effectively. These solutions may include recommendations for:

- New policies and procedures for Crown prosecutors
- Opportunities for more effective practices by justice system participants
- Maximizing the effective use of justice system resources
- Specific federal legislative and procedural reforms that would be beneficial.

Mr. LeSage and Professor Code will conduct the review on an accelerated basis and meet regularly with the Attorney General, culminating in written recommendations. The review will draw upon focused discussions with Defence and Crown Counsel, the Judiciary, Legal Aid Ontario, police agencies and others involved in large, complex criminal cases.

“My top priority as Attorney General is finding ways to make our system of justice more effective,” said Bentley. “Mr. LeSage and Professor Code’s experience with large, complex criminal cases will focus the advice already out there to quickly identify the core issues and solutions.”

The Honourable Patrick LeSage is the former Chief Justice of the Ontario Superior Court of Justice. During 29 years on the bench, he presided over some of Canada’s most publicized and complex cases.

Michael Code is among Ontario’s most distinguished criminal defence lawyers, a former Assistant Deputy Attorney General, and a Professor of Law at the University of Toronto. He has appeared as both prosecution and defence counsel in some of Canada’s largest and most complex cases.

“The Attorney General has asked us to examine and identify the exceptional challenges presented by the complex criminal case,” said LeSage. “Our work will begin right away and will conclude with recommendations by the end of the summer. We will draw from past experiences and provide both short and long-term proposals to more effectively move the complex case forward.”

“I look forward to reviewing how best to administer cases that are challenged by large volumes of evidence with multiple defendants,” said Code. “We expect to make useful recommendations, some of which can be easily implemented and will have immediate impact, as well as longer-term legislative proposals that will depend on federal cooperation.”

The Attorney General will also, on an ongoing basis, seek recommendations and advice within the ministry to promote best practices.

- 30 -

Contacts:
Sheamus Murphy
Ministry of the Attorney General
Minister’s Office
(416) 326-1785

Brendan Crawley
Ministry of the Attorney General
Communications Branch
(416) 326-2210

Disponible en français

www.ontario.ca/attorneygeneral
www.ontario.ca/procureurgeneral