

News Release Communiqué



Ministry of the
Attorney General

Ministère du
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ONTARIO PASSES FAMILY STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT *Family Arbitrations To Be Based On Canadian Law Only*

TORONTO — The Ontario legislature has passed the Family Statute Law Amendment Act, 2005, which mandates that all family law arbitrations in Ontario are to be conducted only in accordance with Canadian law, Attorney General Michael Bryant announced today.

“This new law demonstrates the McGuinty government’s commitment to protecting those who choose to arbitrate their family law matters,” said Bryant. “It means when it comes to family law arbitrations in this province, there is only one law and that is Canadian law.”

Under this legislation, resolutions based on other laws and principles — including religious principles — will have no legal effect and will not be enforceable by the courts.

The Family Statute Law Amendment Act also requires that family arbitrations be subject to the general rules of the family law of Ontario. Integrating family arbitrations into the Family Law Act will improve legal protections for women and children.

“The act includes a number of provisions designed to ensure the rights of all women are protected,” said Minister Responsible for Women’s Issues Sandra Pupatello. “In addition to this legislation, we will be working to develop new community outreach and education programs so that all Ontarians have the information they need to make the best choices offered to them by Canadian law.”

Also, in an effort to further protect vulnerable people, the Children’s Law Reform Act (CLRA) has been amended to ensure that violence and abuse are considered when determining the best interests of a child in the context of custody and access.

The CLRA amendments will come into effect on Royal Assent. The family arbitration amendments will come into effect when the regulations are made. The ministry is working with interested individuals and groups to draft regulations, which are expected in the coming months.

Contacts:
Greg Crone
Minister's Office
(416) 326-1785

Brendan Crawley
Communications Branch
(416) 326-2210

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