

Letter from the President, Bud Melnyk, KC

The 2026 Benchers Election will be held from Nov. 10 to 17, 2026, and those elected will serve a three-year term beginning on Mar. 4, 2027. As the election approaches, I encourage all active lawyers in Alberta to participate in the election. [Nominations for the 2026 Benchers Election open Sept. 29, 2026](#) and close on Oct. 13.

Serving as a Benchers is an important opportunity to uphold the Law Society's mandate to regulate the legal profession in the public interest. Specifically, the Law Society's purpose is set out in the *Legal Profession Act* as follows:

To uphold and protect the public interest in the administration of justice by:

- ensuring the independence, integrity, competence and ethical conduct of lawyers;
- establishing standards, programs and education and training with respect to the competence, ethical conduct and professional responsibility of lawyers and students-at-law;
- regulating the practice of law; and,
- supporting and assisting lawyers and students-at-law in fulfilling their duties in the practice of law.

The Law Society is a statutory body but operates independently of the government. To exercise their fiduciary duty, Benchers should not advance personal, political or practice-specific agendas. Their role is to bring sound judgment, thoughtful analysis and a clear understanding of the Law Society's statutory mandate to the Board table while overseeing the advancement of the Benchers-approved strategic priorities.

In 2027, the Benchers will approve a new Strategic Plan to take effect on Jan. 1, 2028. The new Strategic Plan will set the Law Society's priorities for the years ahead. For the Law Society to be successful in achieving these priorities, the Board table will require Benchers who understand the distinction between governance and operations, who can consider complex issues through the lens of the public interest and who are prepared to make decisions that protect the public interest. At its best, a successful Board brings together people with varied experience who work together in the best interests of the organization. That means having Benchers who can look beyond individual perspectives and focus on the Law Society's mandate to protect the public interest, which in turn supports a strong, vibrant justice system. The next Board will play an important role in shaping how the Law Society continues to modernize, strengthen its regulatory processes and maintain public confidence in independent regulation.

The past nine years as a Benchers have been some of the most rewarding experiences of my career. The work is interesting and I have worked with some amazing people. I would encourage anyone with an interest in being a Benchers to put their name forward.

To support prospective candidates in understanding the role of Benchers, the Law Society has [published information about the competencies](#) that are valuable at the Board table, including governance and oversight, strategic planning, risk management, adjudication, regulatory knowledge and effective communication. I encourage anyone considering candidacy to review these materials thoughtfully and to reflect on the role of the Benchers and the Law Society.

If you are not planning to run, your participation is still essential. Voting is one of the most direct ways lawyers can help ensure the Law Society has a Board with the knowledge, skills and

judgment needed to provide strategic leadership over the next three years. I encourage every eligible voter to review the candidate information when it becomes available on Oct. 20, 2026 and to cast a ballot during the voting period.

The strength of the Law Society's governance depends on the profession's engagement. Whether by putting your name forward, encouraging a qualified colleague to consider running or taking the time to vote, each of you have an important role to play in supporting the regulation of the profession in the public interest.

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President, Law Society of Alberta