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MISSION

To support and promote diligence and excellence in advocacy and jurisprudence on behalf of consumers in British Columbia. Together, we strive to: protect the rights of individuals, preserve the jury system, enhance trial practice, ensure access to the courts, advance the interests of innocent parties, and maintain judicial integrity and independence.

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June 3, 2011

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Cuts to Court Staffing of Sheriffs Creates Far Bigger Problems Ahead for BC Courts and the BC Government

This is the Latest in a Series of Setbacks Forced Upon the Justice System throughout the Province

(Vancouver) – Decreased staffing of court sheriffs means the BC Government has increased the pressure on a justice system already hampered by a shortage of judges and a lack of available court time.

Cuts to courthouse staff have a dire ripple effect on the entire system.

“Recent courtroom closures were caused by a shortage of sheriffs, and this will only get worse as staffing cuts cause harm throughout the province,” explained Azool Jaffer-Jeraj, president of the Trial Lawyers Association of BC (TLABC). “The lack of resources will have an overall negative impact on the public’s regard toward the administration of justice. It erodes justice.” Jaffer-Jeraj added: “Courtrooms should not be empty when there is a backlog of cases to be processed. Just like judges, lawyers and court clerks, sheriffs are a very important part of the system. Justice cannot be achieved without them.”

The current dreadful scenario also has a negative effect on victims and witnesses, as many of them will sit idle when courtrooms are closed simply due to courthouse staff not being available.

“Society loses when the legal system is short of sheriffs and not enough judges can preside over trials,” said TLABC communications director Bentley Doyle. “Justice should not be shortchanged. Leaving courtrooms empty puts justice in jeopardy, day in and day out.”

Doyle added: “If your car needs repair, it’s wise to understand that the scenario equates to: pay now or pay more later. The BC Government should heed this warning immediately, rather than continue to put more pressure on a system that cannot handle any more hits, and is left reeling from the underfunding of legal aid, a shortage of staff and the now-common occurrence of cases being thrown out due to a lack of resources and court time.”

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