

**Minister
Responsible for
Women's Issues**

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Letter from the Minister

February 15, 2006

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to inform you that the Ontario Legislature yesterday passed the Family Statute Law Amendment Act, 2005. The Act requires that family arbitrations be subject to the general rules of the family law of Ontario.

This legislation reinforces our government's commitment to equality principles and women's rights as guaranteed by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It includes a number of provisions designed to make sure that the rights of all women are protected. For example, the legislation makes independent legal advice mandatory for family arbitration agreements and provides for the training of family law arbitrators.

In addition to this legislation, we will be working in partnership with women's groups and community groups to develop new community outreach and education programs so that all people – especially vulnerable women – have the information they need to make the best choices offered to them under Canadian family law.

I am pleased with the support we have received from women's groups, and I look forward to continuing our work together to eradicate discrimination, protect the vulnerable, and promote equality.

The full text of the Act is available at:

www.ontla.on.ca/documents/Bills/38_Parliament/session2/b027rep_e.htm

A news release regarding the Act may be found at: www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Sandra Pupatello'.

Sandra Pupatello
Minister