

Raj Anand discusses eradicating systemic racism in the legal profession with The Toronto Star

September 21, 2016

WeirFoulds Partner Raj Anand is co-chair of The Challenges Faced by Racialized Licensees Working Group, a Law Society of Upper Canada working group that is proposing steps to eradicate systemic racism in the legal profession.

After four years of studying the issue and holding consultations the working group will present its final report and recommendations on Thursday, September 22, 2016.

An excerpt from the report states, “It is clear from the working group’s engagement and consultation processes that discrimination based on race is a daily reality for many racialized licensees; however, many participants stated that they would not file a discrimination complaint with the Law Society for various reasons, including fear of losing their job, fear of being labeled as a troublemaker, and other reprisal-related concerns.”

The number of racialized lawyers in Ontario has doubled from nine per cent in 2001, to 18 per cent in 2014. The increase shows that steps need to be taken towards creating a more inclusive profession.

“The overall goal is to change the culture of the legal profession,” Raj said.

“We had a very important issue that has not been addressed ☐ certainly not to this extent by any law society in Canada . . . I don’t think there’s any law society that has gone to the point of mandatory measures in order to effect culture change.”

Raj is a long-time advocate for human rights. In addition to co-chairing this working group, he has also sat on a number of boards for not-for-profit organizations and won a variety of awards during his fight for equality.

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