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Law Library Newsletters/Blog

Law Library

1-2020

Law Library Blog (January 2020): Legal Beagle's Blog Archive

Roger Williams University School of Law

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January 2020 Library Blogs

Legal Beagle's Post

January 3, 2020

Welcome Back!



January 3, 2020

It is a new year and a new decade, [at least according to some](#), but the library is still here to help you with your study and research needs.

Some highlights of what's coming this semester:

- [Classes](#) for LP, clinics, and other courses
- Hot cocoa and tabling in the bistro
- [National Library Week](#), April 19-25
- A new person at the reference desk, an RWU alum is returning to RWU Law to help us out. Come back to the blog next week to learn more about him.

Stay tuned for more information about these and other library events.

As always, the library staff offers a variety of resources

- Look to our [RWU LawGuides](#) on a variety of topics to jumpstart your research.
- Turn to our [Study Aids Guides](#) to help you identify titles for your classes.

- If you need other library assistance, remember that the librarians offer legal and non-legal research assistance in-person, by appointment, via Ask a Librarian, by email, or by phone. Find our contact information at the [Ask A Librarian](#) page.

Remember that the library is a great place to research and study. It is also a great place to chill out and de-stress. If you have any questions or just need a helping hand in the first few weeks of the semester, stop by and say hi!!

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the reference librarians at lawlibraryhelp@rwu.edu.

January 10, 2020

Renewable Energy? I'm a big FAN!



January 10, 2020

Did you know that wind energy provides [over 20%](#) of the electricity in some states? The [National Park Service website](#) briefly describes the process by which this energy is made as, “onshore wind turbines capture energy from the wind and produce electricity using long, rotating blades that drive a generator located at the top of the tower behind the blades.”

Did you also know that wind turbines can be located onshore AND offshore? According to the [American Wind Energy Association's website](#), “the U.S. has a vast offshore wind energy resource. Our shores possess a power potential of more than 2,000 gigawatts (GW), nearly double the nation's current electricity use.”

According to [Energy.gov's](#) Top 10 Things You Didn't Know About Wind Power, "Offshore wind represents a major opportunity to provide power to highly populated coastal cities, and the nation's first offshore wind facility was installed off the coast of Rhode Island in 2016."

According to [RI's Office of Energy Resources](#), "As of December 2016, the Ocean State had an estimated installed wind capacity of approximately 23 megawatts (MW), with 21 systems 100 kilowatts (kW) and greater. In 2016, Deepwater Wind LLC completed construction on the nation's first offshore wind installation, a five-turbine, 30 MW wind farm in state waters off the coast of Block Island. A much larger offshore wind project—up to 1,000 MW—is planned for development in federal waters off of Rhode Island and Massachusetts."

If you are interested in learning more about wind energy, offshore or onshore, there is a collection of resources on this topic on display in the library [and online](#).

January 17, 2020

Current Events and Current Awareness



January 17, 2020

As an attorney, an important skill or practice is staying abreast of legal and non-legal trends, news, and current events. It is critical to be aware of changes in the law, new ways in which laws are being interpreted, and new cases on the horizon. It is also important to learn about how your clients may be perceived in the media, how your own firm is discussed in the news, and major changes to your area of law nationwide. Staying updated on current events is a good skill to hone while you are in law school so it becomes a regular part of your arsenal of tools in practice.

The library has some technologies, databases and time-saving suggestions to help with this. For example, check out Law 360. [Law 360](#) (available on campus only) is an easy to use site which delivers legal news updates on its site [within 24 hours](#) of the event happening. It covers a wide variety of topic areas and even covers the practice of law itself. Want to find out reliable information about other firms or read more about #metoo in the legal industry? Law 360 is a great platform for doing so.

Another favorite publication is the [ABA Journal](#). While this available several places [online](#), one of the best places to find it is in the ABA Law Library Collection Periodicals in HeinOnline. This collection contains not only the ABA Journal but [a variety of ABA publications](#) like the *Entertainment and Sports Lawyer* and *Oyez! Oyez! Bulletin of the Section of Judicial Administration*.

Still another way to stay up to date on legal news is by reading legal blogs. While these can be searched online, generally, if you are looking to search for blogs on particular subjects, [check out Fastcase](#) which allows you to search the LexBlog library of curated analytical materials. The blogs available in Fastcase are from the (15,000!) legal bloggers in the [LexBlog](#) network.

The aforementioned are just three ways to broaden your current awareness in law. There are almost endless ways to keep current that we didn't cover above, like setting up alerts in Westlaw, Lexis, Bloomberg Law, and many other digital resources. If you have questions or would like us to talk to you more in depth about these services, stop by the law library's reference desk or email us at lawlibraryhelp@rwu.edu.

January 24, 2020

What is the Electoral College?



January 24, 2020

Welcome to a US Presidential Election Year! Between now and November 3rd we will hear some words and phrases repeated over and over like “Electoral College” and “grassroots campaign” and “FiveThirtyEight.” Today we are going to take a look at the Electoral College and try to understand what all the talk is about!

For starters, “[the Electoral College is a process, not a place.](#)” It is a process of [indirectly electing the president of the United States](#) as established by Article II, Section 1, Clause 2 of the U.S. Constitution and modified by the 12th and 23rd Amendments. The process consists of three parts: the selection of the electors, the meeting of the electors, and the counting of the electoral votes.

Step 1: Selecting the Electors

The process by which the electors are chosen varies from state to state. “[The U.S. Constitution does not specify procedures for the nomination of candidates for presidential elector. The two most common methods the states have adopted are nomination by state party convention and by state party committee.](#)” For more information on the process of selecting electors, check out this [NARA webpage](#).

Step 2: The Meeting of the Electors

On the first Monday after the second week in December, the [electors meet](#) in their home states. [Most states](#) require that all electoral votes go to the candidate who receives the most votes in that state. This is sometimes referred to as “winner take all.” [Maine and Nebraska](#) use something called the district system. The electors [meet and cast their votes](#) for President and Vice President on separate ballots. However, “[there is no federal law or constitutional provision requiring electors to vote for the party that nominated them, and over the years a number of electors have voted against the instructions of the voters.](#)” [college.aspx](#)) Electors who vote against the popular vote in their state are called faithless electors. “In 2016, [there were seven faithless electors](#), the most since 1972—three Democratic electors from Washington state cast their votes for Republican Colin Powell, instead of Democrat Hillary Clinton; one Democratic elector from Washington state cast his vote for Faith Spotted Eagle, a woman who is a member of the Yankton Sioux Nation; one Democratic elector from Hawaii cast his vote for Bernie Sanders, instead of Hillary Clinton; one Republican elector from Texas cast his vote for John Kasich, instead of Donald Trump; and one Republican elector from Texas cast his vote for Libertarian Ron Paul.”

Step 3: The Counting of the Electoral Votes

The votes of the electors of each state are counted in a joint session of Congress. For more information about the process, check out this very detailed [CRS Report](#) called *Counting Electoral Votes: An Overview of Procedures at the Joint Session, Including Objections by Members of Congress*. C-SPAN even [has a recording](#) of the count from 1/6/2017. An

example of what the ballot box looks like can be found [here](#). For a fun fictional political thriller about the Electoral College see Roy Neel's *The Electors*.

Now that we have covered the Electoral College, maybe we will discuss “grassroots campaign” and “FiveThirtyEight” in other blog posts!

Weather and the Law?



January 30, 2020

This time of year there tends to be a lot of talk about weather. Students and faculty and librarians talk about how cold it is or how much snow we are having or how cold it is AND how much snow we are getting. In honor of the typically coldest and snowiest time of year, here are some interesting intersections between weather and the law that do not involve you shoveling to go to law school!

One of the first intersections between law and weather I found with a random Google search was [this statute](#): “whoever knowingly issues or publishes any counterfeit weather forecast or warning of weather conditions falsely representing such forecast or warning to have been issued or published by the Weather Bureau, United States Signal Service, or other branch of the Government service, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than ninety days, or both.” This statute is at least a bit humorous and makes you wonder what happened that made this an imprisonable offense! For some backstory on this statute, see this [Time article](#). For more information about researching federal legislation, check out the RWU Law Library’s LawGuide on [U.S. Research!](#)

Another intersection between weather and law is this [local ordinance in Provo, Utah](#), which states, “Every person who shall willfully or carelessly within the limits of this City throw any...snowball... whereby any person shall be hit, or any window broken or other property injured or destroyed or in such manner as to render travel upon the public streets and places of the City dangerous, or in such a manner as to frighten or annoy any traveler, is guilty of a misdemeanor.” Surprisingly, this offense is still on the books, unlike the Severance, Colorado ordinance, where a young boy got the ordinance overturned according to this [news article](#). The Severance snowball ordinance appears to also intersect with libraries, as it was recently made [into a book](#). If you are interested in seeing if any Rhode Island municipalities have any snowball ordinances, you can see the RWU Law Library’s LawGuide called [Rhode Island Research](#) which has a page dedicated to researching Rhode Island municipal law.

The last intersection of law and weather that we are going to discuss in this post is this cool old book from the library called [Weather Modification and the Law](#). It is a book that contains information from a two-day lecture-workshop program scheduled by the Institute of Aerospace Law of the S.M.U. Law School for Dec. 7-8, 1967. [Weather modification](#), according to at least one consultant to attorneys from Massachusetts named Dr. Ronald B. Standler, is the effort by humans “to change naturally occurring weather, for the benefit of someone. The best-known kind of weather modification is cloud seeding, with the goal of producing rain or snow, suppressing hail (which can ruin crops), or weakening hurricanes.” One example of a “weather modification” case for your consideration is [Slutsky v. City of New York, 97 N.Y.S.2d 238 \(Sup.Ct. 1950\)](#).

We hope you enjoyed this post and that you stay safe and warm this cold and snowy winter! If you have any questions, please stop by the reference desk or email us at lawlibraryhelp@rwu.edu.