

First Amendment Law

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Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Religion

FIFTH EDITION

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CAROLINA ACADEMIC PRESS

Durham, North Carolina

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LCCN: 2021953133
ISBN: 978-1-5310-2426-0
eISBN: 978-1-5310-2427-7

Carolina Academic Press
700 Kent Street
Durham, North Carolina 27701
(919) 489-7486
www.cap-press.com

Printed in the United States of America

To Bonnie, Jerry, Roberta and Walter, ADH

To Stephen, WDA

To Jane Marie, TEB

To Shannon, Uma and Declan, AAB

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Preface to the Fifth Edition

The First Edition of our Casebook was published in 2006. As we explained in the Preface to that work (reprinted immediately following), the book's content and organization were shaped by our belief that, from a lawyer's perspective, the First Amendment is above all else *law* — albeit a special kind of law. One thing that is special is that First Amendment law is found primarily in the decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States. Close analysis of those precedents is thus the principal tool that lawyers must rely on when seeking to persuade a judge or when negotiating with an adversary on behalf of a client. One purpose of our book was to help students learn how to best deploy that tool. To that end, we provided versions of the opinions that were relatively complete; we also organized the cases in accordance with the Court's own categories and the temporal development of the doctrines within those categories.

The Second, Third, and Fourth Editions of the book were published in 2010, 2014, and 2018, respectively. While the Third Edition added a new section highlighting the sequence of decisions in which the Court steadfastly refused to expand the universe of unprotected speech, the Second and Third Editions otherwise hewed closely to the organization of the First Edition. The Fourth Edition was different. In addition to other changes, that edition altered the sequence of some chapters, placing earlier in the book the material considering both the rule against content discrimination and doctrines, such as the time, place, and manner doctrine, that follow from the content-neutrality rule. We moved this material up primarily to reflect the increased emphasis the Court has placed on that rule, especially in the now-leading case of *Reed v. Town of Gilbert* (2015).

Developments since 2014 have confirmed the soundness of these choices. The Court's embrace of a historical approach to identifying unprotected categories of speech, which the Third Edition highlighted in a new section in Chapter 3, has remained a stable part of the Court's First Amendment doctrine. So has its emphasis on the content-neutrality rule. Indeed, a case that receives note treatment in three different chapters of this edition, *National Institute for Family and Life Advocates v. Becerra* (2018) (*NIFLA*), suggests that the content-neutrality rule may eventually expand into the Court's compelled speech jurisprudence, much as it began to influence the Court's commercial speech jurisprudence a decade ago in *Sorrell v. IMS Health* (2011).

Despite the stability of those core concepts, the Fifth Edition's freedom of expression materials contain substantial new content. First, cases such as *NIFLA*

point toward the expansion of the content-neutrality rule's domain. Second, areas implicating rules beyond the unprotected speech/content-neutrality core have witnessed significant development in recent years. The same year as *NIFLA*, the Court issued an important decision addressing compelled speech subsidies, overruling, in *Janus v. American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees* (2018), a 40-year-old precedent that had allowed government to require non-union members in a government workplace to defray a union's expenses in representing that workplace's employees. In 2021, in *Americans for Prosperity Foundation v. Bonta*, the Court applied 60-year-old precedents from the Civil Rights Era to strike down a state law requiring charities to disclose to the government their leading funders. In that same year, in *Mahanoy Area School District v. B.L.*, the Court ruled in favor of a student who claimed that her First Amendment rights were violated when she was disciplined for her expression, made off-campus on a social media platform, about a school matter. The Court's concern for vindicating First Amendment interests in these disparate contexts suggests that the Roberts Court's earlier establishment of strong rules protecting First Amendment interests in core doctrinal areas has not extinguished its interest in exploring—and arguably expanding—the boundaries of the First Amendment's guarantees of free expression.

The Freedom of Religion chapters have also continued to evolve. In creating this new edition, every effort was made to preserve the canonical cases while capturing the thinking of the current Justices. Chapter 16 presents the history and values of the Religion Clauses considered together; no significant changes have been made to that chapter. Chapter 17 breaks down Establishment Clause doctrine into the familiar categories that organized earlier editions: financial aid, school prayer, school curriculum, legislative prayer, and religious displays in public places. The meta-theory of the chapter is to trace the arc of the *Lemon* test to examine how it is applied and sometimes not applied in those settings.

Chapter 18, which covers the Free Exercise Clause and other statutory and regulatory protections of religious exercise, highlights the paradigm-shifting approach to religious freedom taken in *Employment Division v. Smith* (1990) and the developments since. *Smith* has been under pressure in recent cases highlighted in this edition. Most recently, in *Fulton v. City of Philadelphia* (2021), the Court went right up to the edge of overruling *Smith* before pulling up short. Chapter 18 ends with a new section rehearsing that near-overruling and speculating on whether five Justices will coalesce in a future overruling. Chapter 19 puts the two Religion Clauses back together to examine the tensions between them and how the Free Speech Clause overlays them.

In addition to these organizational and structural changes, the Fifth Edition, like those before it, features smaller-scale alterations to reflect recent developments and also to ensure that material is presented as compactly as possible. We also continue to include Problems as a key pedagogical tool. These Problems have been carefully designed to require students to analyze the cases and use them as lawyers do to make or respond to arguments. For this edition, we reviewed all the Problems in the

Fourth Edition. Most of them have worked well in the classroom, and we have kept them, sometimes with minor updating or tweaking. But we have dropped Problems that did not work well or that seemed outdated and have added some new ones.

As always, the authors welcome feedback and suggestions from readers.

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Preface to the First Edition

The title of our new First Amendment casebook is “First Amendment Law.” The emphasis on “law” is not simply a matter of nomenclature. The First Amendment can be viewed as history, as policy, and as theory, but from a lawyer’s perspective, it is above all *law* — albeit a special kind of law. One thing that is special is that the governing texts have receded into the background. *The law is the cases, and the cases are the law.* Close analysis of precedent is therefore the principal tool of argumentation and adjudication. The purpose of this book is to help students to learn the law in a way that will enable them to use it in the service of clients. This process entails skills as well as knowledge.

Constitutional topics like the First Amendment are not often thought of as vehicles for skills training, but they can be, and we hope that in our book they will be. Moreover, the skills we seek to impart will be valuable to students not just in the realm of the First Amendment, but in any area where lawyers must rely on close analysis of precedent when seeking to persuade a judge or an adversary on behalf of a client. Four principal features of the book will help students to master these skills.

First, the cases have been edited with a relatively light hand. If students read cases in severely abridged versions that include only the essential passages, they will be greatly handicapped when they are required to use cases in their sprawling unabridged original form. Supreme Court opinions are so long today that some abridgement is necessary, but our versions are generally more complete than those of other casebooks.

Second, the structure of the book has been designed to reinforce the students’ understanding of what the cases establish and what they leave open. Commentators — and sometimes casebook authors — attempt to impose their own structure on the law of the First Amendment. But for a lawyer seeking to persuade a judge or an adversary, the structure that matters is the structure that the Supreme Court has created. Using that structure as the starting point (while raising questions about it in the note material) enables students to see how the cases build upon one another — or move in new directions.

Third, the book concentrates on the main lines of development and their implications for future disputes rather than traveling down every byway of doctrinal refinement. Each year, the Supreme Court adds as many as 10 new decisions to the already-voluminous body of precedent interpreting the First Amendment. No one can possibly master all of that law through a single law school course. Nor is there any

need to do so; if the student is familiar with the principal lines of doctrine, the refinements can easily be fitted into the mental picture that those lines delineate.

Finally, in editing the cases we have acted upon the premise that the Justices' own treatment of precedent can provide a uniquely valuable perspective for gaining an understanding of First Amendment doctrines — their content, their evolution, and their interrelationships. This is so, in part, because not all precedents are equal. While the total number of Supreme Court decisions is large, the body of precedents that the Justices invoke outside their immediate context for more than platitudes or abstractions is relatively small. Most of those cases are included in this Casebook. And in editing the Justices' opinions, we have retained all references to those cases (other than string cites and the like). This enables students to see how the Justices use precedent to build their arguments; it also reinforces students' understanding of the doctrines and ideas covered in previous chapters. As students encounter the landmark precedents again and again, each time approaching them from a different direction, they will come to appreciate the First Amendment landscape as a whole as well as the contours of its individual features.

Supporting materials. As the preceding account suggests, our overriding principle in designing the casebook has been to give primacy to the Justices' own words and the Court's own doctrinal structure. But we have also provided guidance in working with the opinions. Ultimately students will have to learn to work with lengthy cases entirely on their own, but a casebook can help. The notes and questions in this book direct students' attention to critical language in Court opinions, to apparent inconsistencies between decisions addressing similar issues, and to point-counterpoint face-offs between majorities and dissents.

The notes and questions make use of a variety of sources. For example, we have drawn on the rich material now available in the archives from the private papers of the Justices — preliminary drafts of opinions, memorandum exchanges between Justices, and even notes of the Justices' private conferences. These shed light on what was established by existing precedents and how a new decision changes (or does not change) the law.

We also exploit another of the characteristics that makes First Amendment law special: the law is made by a small number of individuals — the Justices of the Supreme Court — and bears the imprint of their individual philosophies as well as their collective judgments. Tracing the views of individual Justices can contribute to an understanding of the larger issues that the members of the Court address in different contexts over a period of years. This provides a vehicle for seeing the connections between doctrines that is internal rather than external.

To assist in that endeavor, Appendix B lists the Justices serving on the Court in every Term starting with 1946. Knowing the volume of the United States Reports in which an opinion is published, you can find who was on the Court at that time. And by seeing who dissented or concurred, you can see which Justices joined in the majority.

Finally, the book includes some problems. These problems have been designed from the overall perspective of the book; their primary purpose is to encourage a close reading of precedent and an understanding of what that precedent stands for. Most of the problems are based on actual cases.

As is evident, we have cast our net widely in writing and compiling the non-case material in this casebook. In part, this is because different approaches work better for different topics. But we also believe that the variety itself makes the course more interesting for the teacher as well as the student. However, the goal remains the same: to enhance the student's understanding of — and ability to use — the law of the First Amendment.

Legal eloquence. There are special rewards in studying the First Amendment. No other area of law has so often inspired the Justices of the Supreme Court to write opinions marked by eloquence and passion. And because words are the lawyer's stock in trade, study of these opinions is a profitable enterprise even for the student who will never litigate a First Amendment case.

Most of the great opinions have been written in defense of First Amendment rights; here you will find memorable language from Holmes, Brandeis, Hughes, Jackson, Harlan, and Brennan — to name only some of the Justices of the past. But there is eloquence on the other side as well, perhaps best illustrated by the writings of Frankfurter and (again) Jackson.

Editing of cases. Although we have gone further than most casebooks in retaining the content of the Justices' opinions, we have not hesitated to adjust matters of format in the interest of readability. (Thus, the cases should not be used for research purposes.) In this, we have followed familiar conventions. Specifically: Omissions are indicated by brackets or ellipses; alterations are indicated by brackets. Most footnotes have been omitted; however, footnotes in opinions and other quoted material retain their original numbers. Citations to cases other than those in the Casebook have generally been deleted. Brackets and internal quotation marks have been omitted from quoted material within cases. Lengthy paragraphs have sometimes been broken up to promote readability.

Acknowledgments

Professor Araiza thanks his research assistants: Parker Brown, Ru Hochen, Derek Knight, Thu Nguyen, Thomas Pearce, Maya Sparks, and Michael Wozniak.

Professor Baker appreciates the dedicated efforts of his research assistants: Cooper Eisinger — who performed yeoman service with the copyright permissions — along with Robert Kemper and Benjamin Zavelsky. He also thanks Connie Giffuni for her staff support. Finally, he does not take for granted the research support of the Florida International University College of Law with the encouragement of Dean Antony Page.

Professor Bhagwat thanks his research assistant Christine Hanon.

The authors express appreciation for the support provided by LuAnn Driscoll, Karen Knochel, and Vicki DiDomenico of Pitt Law Administrative Services at the University of Pittsburgh School of Law.

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William P. Marshall, *Truth and the Religion Clauses*, 43 DEPAUL L. REV. 243, 244–56 & 260–68 (1994). Copyright DEPAUL LAW REVIEW. Reprinted with permission.

The First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

