

The Civil Rights Litigation Clearinghouse



M | LAW

I CREATED THE CIVIL RIGHTS LITIGATION CLEARINGHOUSE

to build an information infrastructure for civil rights advocates, policymakers, and scholars. The Clearinghouse contains the records and stories of important civil rights cases across topics, regions, and organizations, making them searchable and usable—for free, and for everyone.

Civil rights are not merely of historical interest; people and organizations continue to use the courts to amplify their voices and help change powerful institutions. For civil rights injunctive cases, court filings and decrees are often even more important than judicial rulings—but accessing them is incredibly challenging. A Michigan Law project powered by student volunteers who summarize the cases for the public, the Clearinghouse bridges the gap so anyone interested in civil rights advocacy or research can find, learn from, and build upon these important legal battles. And students sharpen their writing and their knowledge of litigation in general and civil rights in particular.

I hope you will consider making a gift to support the future of civil rights advocacy at Michigan Law and the transformative work of our students.

Sincerely,

Margo Schlanger

Margo Schlanger

Wade H. and Dores M. McCree Collegiate Professor of Law





What is the Civil Rights Litigation Clearinghouse?

The Civil Rights Litigation Clearinghouse is a website and research resource housed at the University of Michigan Law School. Founded in 2006 by Margo Schlanger, the Wade H. and Dores M. McCree Collegiate Professor of Law, the website provides comprehensive and detailed information about large-scale civil rights litigation in the US, focusing on injunctive cases and class actions. The Clearinghouse is a repository for court documents, case summaries, and metadata related to cases in a wide range of civil rights issues, including prison and jail conditions, child welfare, abortion, police misconduct, reproductive rights, voting rights, equal employment, housing and lending discrimination, and more.

The Clearinghouse offers an accessible and structured way for the public to explore and learn from the landscape of civil rights lawsuits. Case information and litigation documents that might otherwise be inaccessible are available on the website, enhancing public understanding of civil rights litigation; supporting the work of lawyers, advocates, and scholars; and contributing to the advancement of civil rights.

11,720+

Number of cases available
in the Clearinghouse

120,000+

Number of documents available
in the Clearinghouse

Why is the Clearinghouse good for the Law School?

The Civil Rights Litigation Clearinghouse supports a more transparent, informed, and equitable society by providing crucial resources for advocacy, education, research, and reform. Students:

- › **Work with case documents** on tasks that mirror real-world litigation processes
- › **Gain a deep understanding** of civil rights issues and the legal frameworks used to address them
- › **Make a tangible impact** on the national infrastructure for public interest law by contributing to a repository that supports legal practice, scholarship, and informed public discourse on civil rights
- › **Improve their legal writing and communication skills** by learning to summarize complex cases clearly and concisely for a broad audience
- › **Can explore many types of civil rights litigation** and refine their interests, making them more attractive to potential employers



“The Civil Rights Litigation Clearinghouse is a unique and indispensable resource, helping civil rights lawyers find and analyze prior court filings and settlements that can be models for our lawsuits. The Clearinghouse is not just a repository but a vital ally in the fight for justice.”

—DAVID FATHI

Director, American Civil Liberties Union National Prison Project

250,000+

Total visitors to the Clearinghouse website in the last year

37,000+

Total U-M student hours logged in support of the Clearinghouse since 2020

Why is the Clearinghouse good for the world?

Transparency

The Clearinghouse allows researchers, journalists, policymakers, and the general public to scrutinize and understand how civil rights cases are handled and resolved.

Advocacy and Reform

Civil rights organizations and advocates use the Clearinghouse's data and documents as models for their filings, to inform requests for relief, craft settlement agreements, assess trends, and glean lessons for promising paths forward on particular issues.

Legal Practice

Case details, court documents, and expert analyses can inform and enhance a lawyer's legal strategies. This sharing of knowledge contributes to a more effective and equitable legal system.

Scholarly Research

The Clearinghouse offers a wealth of information, serving as a research base for qualitative and quantitative studies.

Historical Documentation

The Clearinghouse's historical record is invaluable for understanding the progress and ongoing challenges in the fight for civil rights, preserving the legacy of civil rights movements for future generations.

508

Total number of U-M students since 2010
who have worked on the Clearinghouse



“I came into law school with only a vague notion of how litigation worked, so the Clearinghouse was my introduction to how cases proceed from start to finish, giving me a much fuller picture than my Civil Procedure class. Working on the Clearinghouse helped me learn about many different areas of civil rights law too. And now, at the beginning of my career in civil rights, I’m glad that I started with some understanding of how litigation can bring about change, which the Clearinghouse is unique in tracking at such a large scale.”

—LAUREN YU, '23

William J. Brennan Fellow, American Civil Liberties Union

- For more information about the Civil Rights Litigation Clearinghouse or to use it as a resource, please visit clearinghouse.net
- To make a gift to support the Clearinghouse, please visit giving.umich.edu/basket/fund/322041