

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

To Our Readers:

We would like to take this opportunity to share our enthusiasm as we launch this inaugural issue of the Criminal Law Brief at the American University Washington College of Law, and to thank all of the people whose contributions helped us transform the Brief from a mere vision to a reality.

The criminal justice system in this country developed out of a need to validate and protect the rights set forth in the United States Constitution; yet, it is constantly and necessarily evolving. These rights include those of both the victims of crime and the accused, as well as the general, inviolate rights of all individuals to be safe and secure in their person and property. The challenging task of the criminal justice system is to assess how these rights relate to each other in an effort to maintain social order and ensure that justice is served. Courts and legislatures are continuously revisiting important issues and revising or fine-tuning their decisions in order to adapt to the needs of modern society. Addressing these issues and gaining a deeper understanding of their impact is important to create a fully functional and effective criminal justice system. The Criminal Law Brief is dedicated to an open and balanced dialogue in exploring and further discussing the responses to this challenge.

Criminal law is a cornerstone of the legal system of the United States, and its influence is found in almost every aspect of society. Similarly, the study of criminal law is part of any complete legal education. The Washington College of Law has a tremendous criminal law faculty and a strong criminal law curriculum, which we would like to recognize and extol with this publication. Our faculty represents the best of scholar-practitioners, individuals who bring their passion for this discipline into the classroom every day.

As we noted above, it truly was a communal effort to bring the Brief to life. First, we would like to thank the administration and faculty at the Washington College of Law, particularly our faculty advisor Professor Elizabeth Boals, for their support and encouragement as we embarked on this adventure. Similar thanks must also be given to the Student Bar Association who attentively listened to our proposal and provided the necessary endorsement and funding. We must, however, bow our heads to our amazing editorial board and staff members, whose time and efforts have been invaluable. Last spring, less than one year ago, we sat at a table with the six founding members of our editorial board and a blank slate. As a result of weeks of brainstorming and collaboration, the Brief was created and we were then able to expand our staff to include fifteen additional student members. These students brought with them a variety of skills, experiences, personalities, and tireless efforts without which the Brief would not have made it to publication. To them, we are deeply indebted. Finally, we must thank the contributing authors, many of whom graciously responded to solicitations to submit articles to a first-time publication. These articles convey a genius and unique perspective that reflects the vision of the Brief. Our pride in this inaugural issue is second only to the deep gratitude we have to all of these people.

With the successful completion of this first issue, we now look to the future with great excitement. We believe the Brief addresses a very important, interesting, and complex area of the law, one that deserves much more attention. Therefore, we hope to watch the Brief grow and flourish through subsequent issues. With your continued support, we know it can happen!

*Laurita M. Denny & Larken S. Kade
Co-Founders and Editors-in-Chief*