

2008 LAW DAY
ESSAY CONTEST

SECOND PLACE

The Rule of Law:
Foundation for Communities
of Opportunity and Equity

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In order to gauge the importance of the “rule of law”, one must first evaluate its relevancy in the current state of American society. This relevancy is tied to the rule of law’s overall effectiveness in promoting equality, opportunity, and freedom throughout the community and compared to the poverty-stricken, ignorant society in which individuals would have resided in if the rule of law didn’t exist. The relationship between the “rule of law” and different aspects of a community can be referred to as a sort of drainage effect in which the “rule of law” serves as the basis on which fundamental rights are protected and established by the government officials, then flows onto the law enforcement officials, lawyers, and judges (who enforce/instill the rule of law in citizen’s minds), and after that flows to the citizens of the community, in which “opportunity and equity are created and sustained” (Bar Association).

The scope of the “rule of law” is not only pertinent to government officials and those with careers in law. A majority of the aspects of American culture can serve as testimonies of the wide-ranging effects of the “rule of law”. In this day and age, women and minorities are running for President of the United States and other high-stature positions, cultures are integrated throughout, women/minorities are receiving high salaries, and all individuals are provided with the opportunity and freedom to pursue their dreams/goals, experience happiness, and enjoy their unalienable rights all as a direct result of the “rule of law”.

Seeing as how the “rule of law” has instituted its everlasting effects on the communities, it is pertinent that we [as citizens] begin to strengthen and build on the scope of the “rule of law”. To do so denotes the citizens “truly caring about the rule of law and aspiring to be actively engaged in the civic life of their community. (William Neukom) Also, the local, state, and federal governments must continue to be educated, sincere, and logical in their appointing/hiring of law enforcement officials, judges, lawyers, and other advocates of the people and proponents

of the “rule of law”. However, at the same time, the people of the community must assure that this occurs by continuously engaging in political participation (participating in all local, state, and national elections), being a responsible citizen and voter whom adheres to the law and makes enlightened decisions pertaining to their choice of vote of local, state, and government officials.

The saying, “you never know what good you have until its gone” will resonate deeply with the citizens of the United States if we do not continue to strengthen and maintain our regard for the “rule of law”. The Civil Rights Act of 1964, the amendments of the Constitution, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 are all prime examples of how valuable and instrumental the citizens’ regard for the “rule of law” and the established “rule of law” has been in the progression of the United States as a democracy, “the land of opportunity”, and the “melting pot of the world”. On the contrary, Jim Crowe laws, slavery, minorities being forbidden the right to vote, lynching, and even the wrongful murders of many African Americans all blatantly show the resultant society when people don’t adhere to the “rule of law” or not effective “rule of law” has been established. “A free people can assure the blessings of liberty for themselves only if they recognize the necessity that the rule of law shall be supreme and that all...shall be equal before the law.” (President Dwight D. Eisenhower)

Surely it is accurate to say that no one aspires to experience a society in which the “rule of law” is not the governing body of self-government, thus signifying the importance associated with maintaining and strengthening the scope of the “rule of law” in American society.