

The Rule of Law

“The Rule Of Law” – a simple phrase and a common concept in the context of our courts, police, and legislative bodies. A simple concept, but also a cornerstone for an orderly democracy in which the ruling factor is the law itself and not an individual’s will ruling by force alone.

Laws and rulers have been a part of human history, with tyrannical rulers’ will has carried the force of law and that authority was passed down through his appointed leaders and magistrates. One step removed from this style of governing is rule by law; moving a ruler under the law while also granting the authority to rule through that law.

Probably the most recognized turning point in the application of the rule by law came from the Magna Carta. It signaled a point in English history that the monarch was then being forced to live under the rule of the law of the land.

Democracies embrace the concept of the rule of law, where the law protects political, business, and social rights. No individual - private citizen or political leader - is ultimately above the law. The writers of the U.S. Constitution recognized the benefits of not only self-rule, but one that limited power to any one person and made everyone liable under the law. As a way to avoid supreme rule, they made people and the government itself fall under the law’s authority. This should lead to protection for both individuals and the country as a whole.

How does this still affect us today? Laws and how they work affect every part of our lives. At every level of government, America uses the rule of law to allow people the chance to live free. Our country is not a perfect place and people have suffered throughout our history. But many things that have held people down in this country eventually must stand up under the rule of law.

The rights of individuals have always been important, but those rights are always changing through new laws and through the courts. Even fair laws can be used unfairly without access to a court system that will uphold the basics rights guaranteed under our constitution. The court system obviously also has two sides for those who break the law and anyone who is hurt by those who make the laws.

Living under the law touches most parts of our lives; but it helps to provide a chance to live in a free society at the same time. Countries where the rule of law is not found, the lack or abuse of human rights is often reported by the media. In the U.S., those who make our laws also places the responsibility on the government to provide certain things for its people such as protection from criminals, public education, and access to health care. Add these together and it can provide a path to the pursuit of happiness as our country's founders intended.