

Whose Law Is It Anyway: The Quiz Selected Answers & Explanations

The following *partial* list of answers and explanations is intended to stimulate your thinking about jurisdictional questions and to expand your understanding about the relationships between and among jurisdictions on legal issues.

You will notice that this document includes a small number of subjects from the Whose Law Is It Anyway Quiz. Now that you have a better understanding of the sources of law and jurisdictions that create law, take this opportunity to reinforce those lessons. You will also get practice in searching and navigating legal sources.

Use the examples below as a template for your own answers and explanations for other legal topics. Write a brief description of the jurisdiction(s) involved and provide selected links to the text of laws and other legal sources, websites, and books that a reference librarian might find useful in answering a legal reference question.

The web version of this document, with active links, will be available at <http://lib.law.washington.edu/ref/wla2010.html> on July 29.

Abortion **fed/state**

States are primarily responsible for abortion law, including provisions on late-term procedures, parental and spousal consent, public funding, targeted regulation of abortion providers, and waiting periods. But cases on the constitutionality of specific state laws often rise to the US Supreme Court. When the high court finds a state law unconstitutional, that law and similar laws in other states are no longer valid, even if they remain unchanged for a time.

- [RCW 9.02](#)
- NARAL, [Who Decides? The Status of Reproductive Rights in the United States](#)
- Cornell Legal Information Institute, Supreme Court, [Abortion](#)

Bankruptcy **fed/state**

Have you heard of someone filing for bankruptcy protection under Chapter 7 or 13? These numbers refer to chapters under [Title 11 of the U.S. Code](#). Individual and business bankruptcies are handled by federal bankruptcy courts. However, states can opt-out of federal exemptions and replace them with their own laws on exempt and protected assets (alimony, child support, homesteads, insurance benefits, pensions, etc.).

- Nolo, Legal Encyclopedia, [Bankruptcy](#)
- The Bankruptcy Site, [Bankruptcy Exemptions—What Do I Keep When I File for Bankruptcy?](#)

Building codes state/local

Cities and counties are primarily responsible for developing building codes. Interestingly, many municipalities rely on the building, fire, plumbing, and related codes developed by the [International Code Council](#). This arrangement is called “incorporation by reference.” State law specifically delegates the development of building codes to cities. [RCW 35.22.280](#) (24). The State Building Code addresses public buildings. [RCW 19.27](#).

- Seattle Municipal Code, [Title 22, Building and Construction Codes](#)
- Seattle Dep’t of Planning and Development, [Resource Center](#)

Child support fed/state

Like most family law topics, child support is essentially a state law issue. The feds get involved under the Social Security Act and to coordinate support enforcement among states.

- Washington Dep’t of Social and Health Services, [Division of Child Support](#)
- Washington Courts, [Washington State Court Forms](#) > Child Support
- WashingtonLawHelp, Family Law > [Child Support](#)
- US Dep’t of Health and Human Services, [Office of Child Support Enforcement](#)

Copyright fed

Copyrights and patents are exclusively under federal jurisdiction. [Article 1, section 8, clause 8](#) authorizes Congress to “promote the progress of science and useful arts, by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries.”

- [US Copyright Office](#)
- Nolo, Legal Encyclopedia, [Copyright Law](#)

Corporations fed/state

Corporations and other business entities are subject to extensive regulation by both federal and state governments. States require corporations to register in order to do business in the state and impose taxes and other restrictions. The US Securities and Exchange Commission, the Internal Revenue Service, and other federal agencies administer laws affecting corporations, in part because of their involvement in interstate commerce.

- Access Washington, [Doing Business in Washington](#)
- Cornell Legal Information Institute, Wex > [Corporations](#)
- [US Securities and Exchange Commission](#)

Currency fed

Again, the [US Constitution](#) authorizes Congress to enact laws on money, including counterfeiting. The [US Mint](#) produces coins and the [Bureau of Engraving and Printing](#) produces paper money.

- US Dep’t of Treasury, [Coins and Currency](#)
- 31 US Code, [Chapter 51, Coins and Currency](#)

Drivers' licenses **fed/state**

As with most other traffic laws, driver license laws are state laws. Provisions deal with subjects such as the age at which a minor may obtain a learner's permit, causes for license suspension or revocation, and renewal requirements for older drivers. In 2005, Congress enacted the REAL ID Act, which deals with minimum standards for drivers' licenses and identification cards acceptable to federal agencies. Public Law 109-13, [119 Stat. 231, 312](#).

- [RCW 46.20, Driver's License and Permit Requirements](#)
- Washington Dep't of Licensing, [Driver License](#)
- US Dep't of Homeland Security, [More Secure Driver's Licenses](#)
- Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, [Licensing Ages and Graduated Licensing Systems](#) and [Licensing Renewal Provisions for Older Drivers](#)

Drunk driving **state**

Criminal law careens into traffic law under state jurisdiction. Provisions include blood alcohol levels (BAC), breath and sobriety tests, homicide by vehicle, open containers in vehicles, and repeat offenders. [RCW 46.61.502](#)

- Governors Highway Safety Association, [Drunk Driving Laws](#)
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, [Digest of Impaired Driving and Selected Beverage Control Laws](#)

Education **fed/state**

Virtually every state constitution provides for free public schools. [Washington Constitution, Article IX, Education](#). Consequently, every state has an education department or superintendent of public instruction. Charter schools, compulsory attendance, corporal punishment, home schooling, sex education, teacher certification, and textbooks are a few of the education-related topics of state laws. What about the US Dep't of Education and the federal [No Child Left Behind Act](#)? The federal government influences state laws by using the power of the purse, offering grants to states that comply with federal standards.

- Education Commission of the States, [State Constitutions and Public Education Governance](#)
- [US Dep't of Education](#)
- [Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction](#)

Elections **fed/st/local**

Every level of government regulates the election of certain public officials. From age and other qualifications of candidates to campaign finance, from absentee ballots to voting procedures, election constitutional provisions, laws, and regulations address every step in the process.

- [US Federal Election Commission](#)
- US Senate, [Senate Election Law Guidebook](#)
- WA Secretary of State, [Elections and Voting](#)
- WA Secretary of State, [County Auditors/Election Departments in Washington State](#)

- [Seattle Elections Code](#)

Immigration **fed/state**

The [14th Amendment to the US Constitution](#) defines natural born and “naturalized” citizens and authorizes Congress to enact relevant legislation. [Title 8 of the U.S. Code](#) is where most of these federal laws are found. State laws affecting immigrants’ access to drivers’ licenses, employment, housing, and public benefits are increasingly prominent (see the [2010 Arizona law](#) designed to identify, prosecute, and deport illegal aliens).

Sources:

- US Dep’t of Homeland Security, [Citizenship and Immigration Services](#)
- Nolo, Legal Encyclopedia, [Immigration](#)
- American Immigration Lawyers Association, [Navigating the Immigration Debate: A Guide for State & Local Policymakers and Advocates](#)