

THURGOOD MARSHALL SCHOOL OF LAW LIBRARY

Pathfinder Series

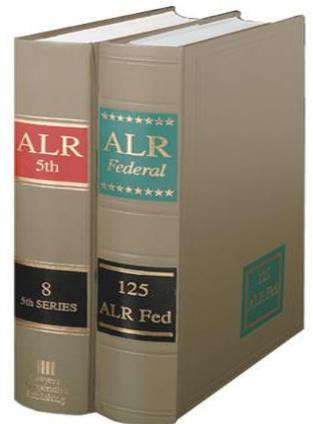
Nanette Collins, Reference Librarian

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American Law Reports (A.L.R.)

I. WHAT ARE THE AMERICAN LAW REPORTS?

The **American Law Reports (A.L.R.)**, published by West, are a multi-volume set of articles called Annotations written by attorneys. **Annotations** cover a topic through cases that focus on a *particular* point of law in depth. The Annotations cite, summarize, analyze and critique a legal issue in *great detail*. Accompanying each Annotation is a case, selected by the publisher as a leading case on the topic discussed in the Annotation. The articles discuss unresolved points of law, changes in the law, and emerging trends in legal thinking. The A.L.R. Annotation gives the researcher citations of many of the reported cases on the issue being researched.



II. WHY IS A.L.R. USEFUL?

First, it describes in general terms and then analyzes in detail the case law on covered topics. An Annotation thus provides a good overview of a topic. Because the case descriptions are organized by rule or outcome, it also permits the user to see the different approaches taken by various courts and the importance of key facts. Second, an A.L.R. Annotation also provides references to primary authority. Cases are cited and described. In addition, an Annotation provides references to other secondary sources. Furthermore, A.L.R. is a timely source. An Annotation on a new legal topic may appear before other secondary sources.

However, A.L.R. has its limits. There may be no Annotation on your subject. The research and writing may be accurate but the writer may not be a recognized scholar or expert in the area because Annotations are written by staff lawyers. Thus the Annotation is not as credible a source as some other secondary sources written by legal scholars.

III. WHERE IS A.L.R. LOCATED IN THE TMSL LIBRARY?

The entire A.L.R. series is located on Aisles 105 & 106 near the Circulation Desk.



IV. HOW DO YOU RESEARCH IN A.L.R.?

1. Consult the A.L.R. Index.

- This is a multivolume set encompassing the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, federal and federal second series of A.L.R.
- Check the pocket part and main volume of the index.
- Look for the term or descriptive word that most closely identifies your problem.
- If you already know of a key primary authority, check the tables covering federal statutes, federal regulations, federal court rules and state statutes in the last volume of the A.L.R. index or tables covering federal matter in the A.L.R. Federal Tables volumes.

2. Consult the A.L.R. Digest.

- This is a multivolume set that covers unsuperceded annotations and decisions in all A.L.R. Series. This set is classified according to the West Key Number System.

3. Once you have located a pertinent Annotation:

- Skim the opening section for an overview of the topic.
- Consult the article outline, index and jurisdictional table.
- Read the text of the Annotation. Look for patterns in the case law from other jurisdictions and look for cases with factual parallels to your client's situation.
- Skim the accompanying case.
- Consult the references section for cross-references to other secondary sources.

4. Update the Annotation.

- Sometimes, after an *Annotation* has been published, the law changes. This may result in an earlier *Annotation* being rendered wholly or partially inaccurate. When this happens either a new *Annotation* is written to replace or **supersede** the earlier one or a second *Annotation* is written to amend or **supplement** the earlier one. There is no way to tell from the *Annotation* itself whether it has been **supplemented or superseded**.
- To know whether an *Annotation* has been **supplemented or superseded**, you must consult the "*Annotation History Table*," in the end of the *A.L.R. General Index* (currently in seven (7) volumes). If your *Annotation* is not listed, then it has **not been superseded or supplemented**. If it is listed it will have a reference to the supplementing or superseding *Annotation*.
- The original series of A.L.R. covers 1919-1948. A.L.R 2d covers 1948-1965. Due to the date of these publications, please note that many of the annotations in these two series have been superseded by later annotations.
- *A.L.R. 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, Federal* and *Federal, 2d* are updated by pocket parts.

5. A.L.R. in Lexis Advance

- Contains the full text of the annotations included in the Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Federal and Federal Second Series.

6. A.L.R. in WestlawNext

- *WestlawNext* provides full text of A.L.R. Annotations.

V. HOW DO YOU CITE A.L.R.?

Cite Annotations by the author's full name (if available), followed by the word Annotation, the Annotation title in italics, the volume, series, beginning page number and date. This example follows the **The Bluebook, 19th ed.**, Rule 16.7.6.

Theresa L. Chuck, Annotation, *Right to Discharge Allegedly "At-Will" Employee as Affected by Employer's Promulgation of Employment Policies as to Discharge*, 33 A.L.R. 4th 120 (1984 & Supp. 2014).

VI. HOW ARE THE A.L.R. SERIES ORGANIZED?

A.L.R. SERIES	Coverage & Volumes	To find an Annotation	Updated
A.L.R. First Series	1919-1948 (State & Federal topics) <i>175 Volumes</i>	A.L.R. Quick Index, 1st Ed. A.L.R. Digest	Annotation History Table
A.L.R. 2d. Second Series	1948-1965 (State and Federal topics) <i>100 Volumes</i>	A.L.R. Index 2d•3d•4th•5th•Fed. A.L.R. 2d Word Index A.L.R. Digest A.L.R. Quick Index, 2d & 3d Ed. ALR Table of Laws, Rules & Regs	Annotation History Table
A.L.R. 3d Third Series	1965-1980 (State & Federal topics to 1969; State topics only from 1969) <i>100 volumes</i>	A.L.R. Index 2d•3d•4th•5th•Fed. A.L.R. Quick Index, 2d & 3d Ed. A.L.R. Digest A.L.R. Quick Index, 3rd and 4th ALR Table of Laws, Rules & Regs	Pocket parts Annotation History Table
A.L.R. 4th Fourth Series	1980-1992 (State topics only) <i>90 volumes</i>	A.L.R. Index 2d•3d•4th•5th•Fed. A.L.R. Quick Index A.L.R. Digest ALR Table of Laws, Rules & Regs	Pocket parts Annotation History Table
A.L.R. 5th Fifth Series	1992 to Jan. 2005 (State topics only) 125 volumes	A.L.R. Index 2d•3d•4th•5th•Fed. A.L.R. Quick Index A.L.R. Digest ALR Table of Laws, Rules & Regs	Pocket parts Annotation History Table
A.L.R. 6th Sixth Series	Mar. 2005 to date (State topics only) <i>103 volumes</i>	A.L.R. Index A.L.R. Quick Index A.L.R. Digest	Pocket parts Annotation History Table
A.L.R. FED Federal	1969 to Feb. 2005 (Federal topics only) <i>200 volumes</i>	A.L.R. Index A.L.R. Federal Quick Index A.L.R. Federal Tables A.L.R. Digest	Pocket parts Annotation History Table
A.L.R. FED 2d Federal, Second Series	Mar. 2005 to date (Federal topics only) <i>92 volumes</i>	A.L.R. Index A.L.R. Federal Quick Index A.L.R. Federal Tables A.L.R. Digest	Pocket parts Annotation History Table