

Closing the Justice Gap with Technology: Discover free tech tools to support advocates and pro bono volunteers

#LSCITC

The logo for the Innovations in Technology Conference 2025. It features a stylized icon of vertical lines with small circles at the top and bottom, resembling a circuit board or a series of connected nodes. To the right of the icon, the words "INNOVATIONS IN TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE" are written in a bold, sans-serif font. The word "CONFERENCE" is in red, while the rest of the text is in blue.

Closing the Justice Gap with Technology:

Discover free tech tools to support advocates
and pro bono volunteers



Panelists:



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“We are stuck with technology when what we really want is just stuff that works.”

— *Douglas Adams*



What does Legal Research Look Like Today?

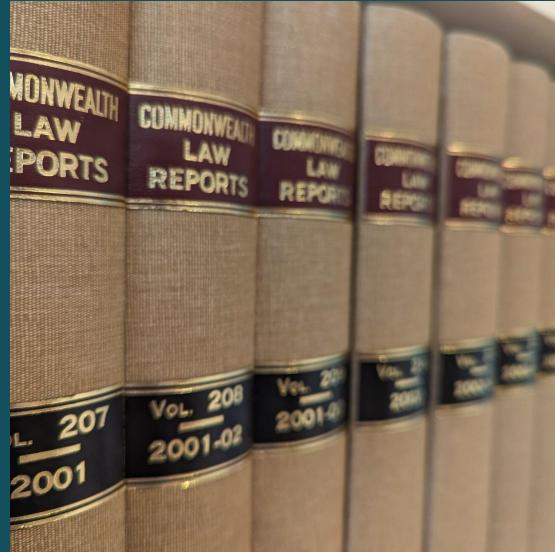


Options:



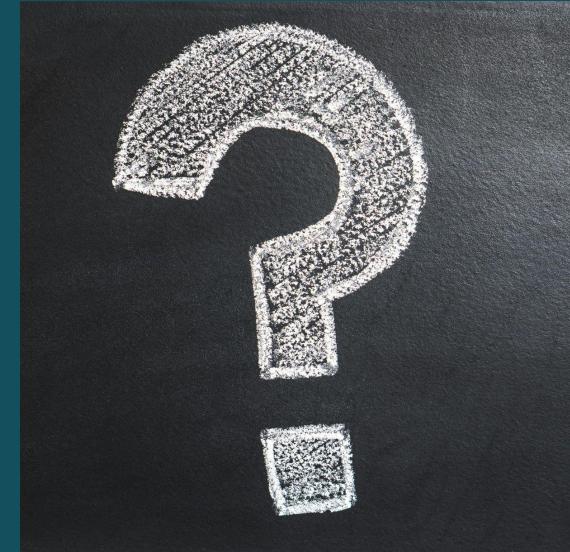
Online Legal Platforms:

- Expensive
- Not accessible to everyone
- Requires understanding of legal language



Legal Reporters:

- Delay in updating
- Not accessible to everyone
- Being phased out in many offices



What else is there?

- ChatGPT
- Google Scholar
- Harvard Caselaw Access Project

What do we need to do to make research easier and more accessible?

- Lower cost
- Easier/Natural Language Search
 - Easier to read
 - Hyperlinks
 - Ease of translation to other languages





FREE LAW PROJECT

COURT LISTENER • RECAP • BOTS.LAW

FREE LAW
PROJECT



What is Free Law Project?

CourtListener

- 9M opinions from over a thousand jurisdictions
- Nearly complete SCOTUS record
- More opinions scraped from court websites daily (about 300/day)
- Search and docket alerts for journalists, lawyers, and the public

Bots.law

- Our bots will send case updates to Slack, Discord, MS Teams, Google Chat, Twitter or BlueSky.
- Our big cases bot follows the biggest federal cases in the country
- Little cases bots follow cases in specific areas of law - AI Cases, Anti-Trust, Free Speech, Sealing, and more

RECAP

Turning PACER Around Since 2009

- Browser extensions that save you money while you use PACER.
- Everything you purchase gets added to our public archive and gets a permalink.
- Everything anybody else purchased you get for free.

Advocacy

We work to make the legal system better by changing it from within.

- Judicial FOIA
- Neutral Citations
- Free PACER
- Court eFiling systems



How do we do it?

- Scraping court websites
- AI & ML
- Open-Source
- Working with journalists, researchers, legal tech startups, and other non-profits
 - Civil Rights Litigation Clearinghouse, Citing Slavery
 - ProPublica, Wall Street Journal
 - descrybe, Law Droid

Where does CourtListener fit into the legal tech ecosystem?



- Continually enhancing our data
 - All the caselaw
 - Citations
- Making the space more competitive
- Building new tools
 - Citator, summarization, categorization & semantic search
 - More Alerts
 - APIs



Advanced Case Law Search

Search millions of opinions across hundreds of jurisdictions. Updated constantly.

[Learn More](#)

sealing records for a minor's transgender name change in NYS|

[Search](#)

Select Jurisdictions

Search Results Order:

Relevance

Precedential Status

Published (8,257,367)

Unpublished (902,084)

Errata (945)

[Show All Statuses...](#)

Case Name:

Judge:

Filed After:

MM/DD/YY

Filed Before:

MM/DD/YY

Min Cites:

Max Cites:

Citation:

Neutral Citation:

Docket Number:

Look up a specific citation

Operators

AND - Intersection

OR - Union

-- Negation

" " - Phrase search

() - Grouped queries

: - Fielded search

*, ? - Wildcard

~ - Fuzzy and proximity

[x TO y] - Ranges

[More details...](#)

[Search](#)

Jump To

- [Top](#)
- [Caption](#)
- [Combined Opinion](#)

Feb. 22, 2024

Get Citation Alerts

Add Note

sealing records for a minor's transgender name change in NYS



Query Help

2 Opinions

Matter of Cody VV. (Brandi VV.) (N.Y. App. Div. 2024)

Date Filed: February 22nd, 2024 Status: Published Citations: 2024 NY Slip Op 00961
 Docket Number: CV-23-0596

... Matter of Cody VV. (Brandi VV.) (2024 NY Slip Op 00961) Matter of Cody VV. (Brandi VV.) 2024 ...

Curtis, Graham & Blatchford v. Leavitt (NY 1857)

Date Filed: July 1st, 1857 Status: Published Citations: 1 N.Y. 9

Lead Opinion

... It will be convenient to approach the questions in this case, having first an accurate notion of the ...

Quick Tip! CourtListener serves more than 200 million requests per year, but has a lean staff of only a handful of developers. Please [donate](#) to support our work making the judiciary more equitable. ❤️

Filed Before:

MM/DD/YYYY

COURT LISTENER
BY FREE.LAW

[Case Law](#) ▾ [RECAP Archive](#) ▾ [Oral Arguments](#) ▾ [Judges](#) ▾ [Financial Disclosures](#) ▾

Refine Your Query

Select Jurisdictions

Search Results Order: Relevance

Case Name:

Judge:

Precedential Status: Published (0) Unpublished (0) Errata (0) Separate (0) In-chambers (0) Relating-to (0) Unknown (0)

Filed After: Filed Before:

If you expected more results than this, please let us know. We value your feedback.

Quick Tip! We partnered with University of Baltimore to make a system of visualizing Supreme Court Cases.

Create an Alert

Get regular notifications about this query by creating an alert. Learn more

Courts: All ▾ Query: dics (9943100) Published: True

Give the alert a name:

How often should we notify you? Daily

Some jurisdictions do not yet support alerts. Check our list to be sure your query is supported.

0 hits in the last 100 days

Matter of Cody VV. (Brandi VV.)

Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of the State of New York

Citations: 2024 NY Slip Op 00961

Full Case Name:

Docket Number: CV-23-0596

Judges: Garry, P.J.

[OPINION](#) [AUTHORITIES \(1\)](#) [RELATED CASES](#)

Combined Opinion

Matter of Cody VV. (Brandi VV.) (2024 NY Slip Op 00961)

Matter of Cody VV. (Brandi VV.)
2024 NY Slip Op 00961
Decided on February 22, 2024
Appellate Division, Third Department
Garry, P.J.
Published by New York State Law Reporting Bureau pursuant to Judiciary Law § 431.
This opinion is uncorrected and subject to revision before publication in the Official Reports.

Decided and Entered: February 22, 2024

CV-23-0596

[*1]In the Matter of Cody VV., an Infant. Brandi VV. et al., Appellants.

Calendar Date: January 8, 2024

Before: Garry, P.J., Pritzker, Lynch, Fisher and Powers, JJ.



Advanced RECAP Search

Search our database of millions of PACER documents and docket.

Install the free [RECAP extensions for Firefox, Chrome and Safari](#) to contribute to this archive.

[Learn More](#)[Search](#)

Search Results Order: Relevance Docket Number:

Select Jurisdictions 0 Document Description: Case Name:

Operators
AND - Intersection
OR - Union
-- Negation
''' - Phrase search
() - Grouped queries
: - Fielded search
*, ? - Wildcard
~- Fuzzy and proximity
[x TO y] - Ranges
[More details...](#)

Filed After: Filed Before: Document #: Attachment #:

Assigned To Judge: Referred To Judge: Nature of Suit:

Party Name: Attorney Name: Only show results with PDFs

[Search](#)

About CourtListener's RECAP Archive

Background

The RECAP Archive is a searchable collection of millions of PACER documents and docket that were gathered using our RECAP Extensions for Firefox, Chrome and Safari. PACER is the government-run system where nearly every legal document is filed from federal cases. The archive also

Learn More About PACER

We've written many articles about PACER:

- [What is the PACER Problem?](#)
- [How Much Money Does PACER Make?](#)
- [What Should be Done About the PACER Problem?](#)

Get Involved — Install the Extensions

This archive of data was created by users of the RECAP Extensions. Learn more and install them at the RECAP homepage.

[Install the Extensions](#)

RECAP:

- Federal opinions and documents
- If you use PACER, you should use RECAP
- Install the extension:
<https://free.law/recap>

Ethical use of AI:

Check your citations!

- Citation API
- Citation Lookup Tool

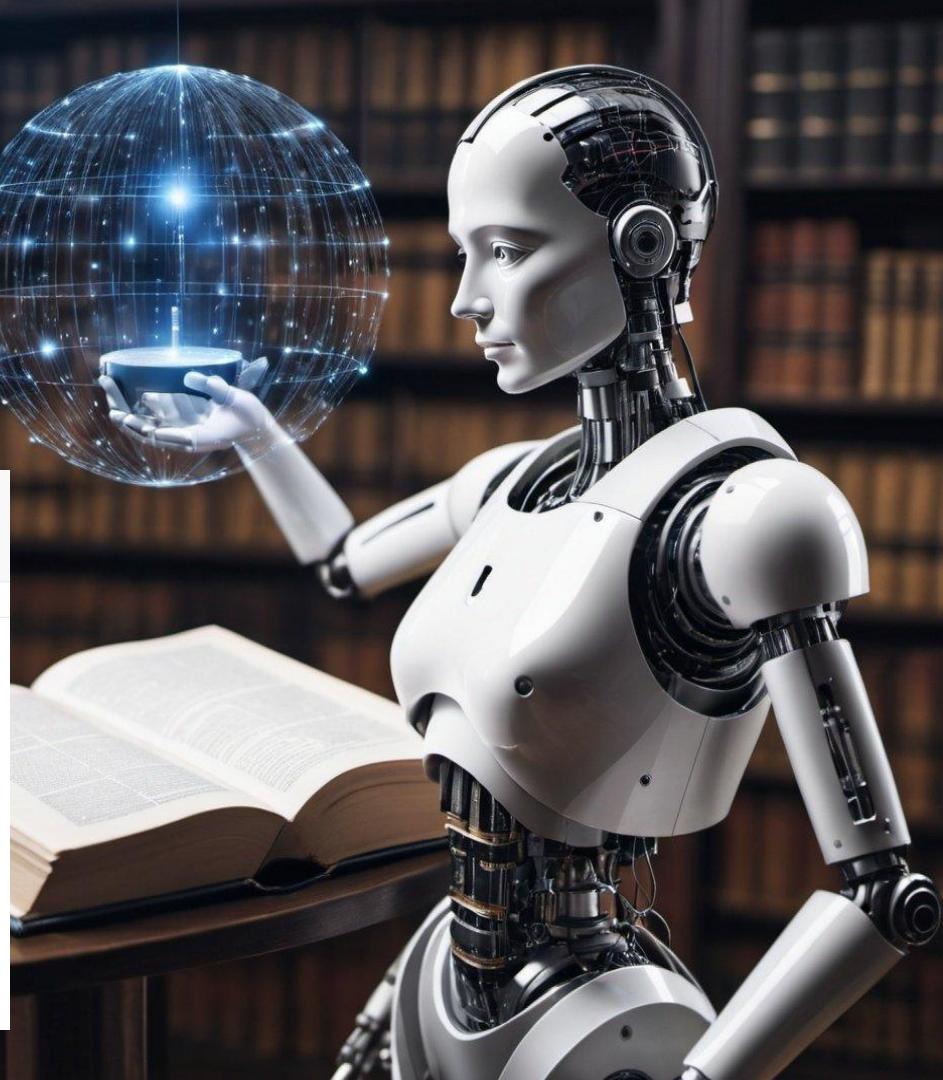
The screenshot shows the CourtListener website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for 'About', 'FAQ', 'Profile', 'Donate', and a search icon. Below the navigation is a main menu with 'Case Law' (selected), 'RECAP Archive', 'Oral Arguments', 'Judges', and 'Financial Disclosures'. A red banner at the top of the page reads 'COURT LISTENER' with the tagline 'BY FREE.LAW'. The main content area features a heading 'Citation Lookup Tool' with the sub-instruction 'If you have a citation you want to look up, put it in here, and we'll look it up.' Below this is a search input field containing the citation '214 A.D.3d 1204, 186 N.Y.S.3d 358 (3d Dep't 2024)' and a blue button labeled 'Look It Up' with a magnifying glass icon. At the bottom of the page, there's a section titled 'About this Tool' with explanatory text and a note about the citation lookup API.

About this Tool

This tool generates URLs so that you can easily look up a citation that you know. If you're a person that prefers to just hack URLs, you can do that too, using a URL like [/c/U.S./410/113/](#), which will take you straight to *Roe v. Wade*. Or you can always just come here and type in a citation that you know.

This tool is limited by the citations that we have in our system. As we improve our collection and add citations to records that we have, this tool will automatically work for those records as well.

This page is also available as a powerful [citation lookup API](#).



descri^ybe.ai

Changing legal search for good



Demo:

The screenshot shows the homepage of descrybe.ai. The background features a warm-to-cool color gradient from yellow on the left to purple on the right. At the top left is the logo 'descrybe.ai' with a red checkmark over the 'e'. To its right is a button labeled 'Try our completely new search >'. Along the top right are links for 'About', 'Support Us', 'FAQ', 'News', and 'Search'. The main title 'Changing legal search for good' is displayed in large, bold, black font in the center-left area. Below it is a paragraph of text: 'Meet descrybe.ai, the generative AI legal search engine available in English and Spanish. Built in Boston. Free for everyone.' At the bottom left is a search bar with the placeholder 'Search for legal terms, concepts, or case facts' and a 'Search' button with a magnifying glass icon.

descrybe.ai Try our completely new search >

About Support Us FAQ News Search

Changing legal search for good

Meet descrybe.ai, the generative AI legal search engine available in English and Spanish. Built in Boston. Free for everyone.

Instantly search more than 3.6 million summarized judicial opinions.

Search for legal terms, concepts, or case facts

Legal Research in a Non-Profit Practice



Legal Aid
Society

NORTHEASTERN NEW YORK



Gaps and Pain Points: The Non-Profit Perspective



UNDERFUNDDED



UNDERSTAFFED

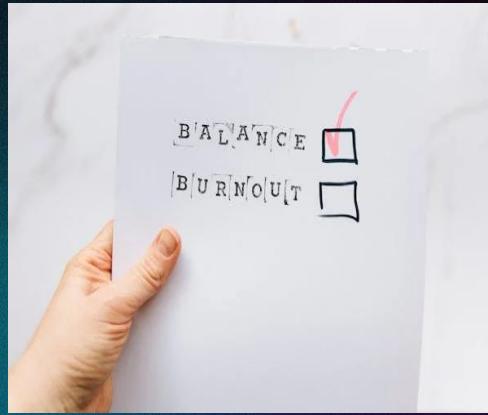


TIME?
(NEVER HEARD OF HER)

Free Tech Tools: The Non-Profit Perspective



FREE!



EFFICIENT!

- Natural language
 - In search and results
 - No “ ” / + / () needed
- Case Summaries
 - With full opinion accessible
- NOTE: no citator - YET



OVERSIGHT*

- Know your AI policy
- Double check the work!

Free Tech Tools: The Pro Bono Perspective

- Gaps & Pain points
 - Access to traditional research tools
 - Time
 - Skill / Knowledge
- How Free Tech Tools can help
 - Natural language summaries for quicker review
 - Hyperlinks to cases
 - Cut down time to figure out which cases to read
 - Attorney recruitment
 - Recruit through supporting pro bono work outside usual wheelhouse / practice



Free Tech Tools: The Pro Se Litigant Perspective



Access to Justice

Full access to research tools provides the knowledge necessary to participate meaningfully in the justice system

No ‘Legalese’

Natural language / easy to interpret context

Advice Only

Inability to Fully Serve / Advice Only only cases

In-house research by staff using natural language to help find cases to read that are applicable to the case.

Alternatives

Tools could reduce pro se use of ChatGPT

Minimize risk of pro se litigant using AI ‘hallucinations’ as basis for legal position

Hands On & Questions:



THANK YOU



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Find the link to the **Session Survey** at the bottom of the session description.

If you don't see the survey link in your app, make sure you have added the session to "**My Schedule**" in the app.

2025 Innovations in Technology Conference



Session Name

Overall, how would you rate the information presented at this session?

Poor Excellent

What information in this session was most useful to you?

What could have made this session better?

Done