

# Newsletter

PREPARING YOU FOR A FUTURE IN LAW

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## IMPORTANT CASES THIS WEEK



Buck v. Bell



Commonwealth of  
Massachusetts v. Mellon



Munn v. Illinois

## Buck v. Bell

The fight for reproductive rights continues.



Photo from Study.com

After being raped by her foster parent's nephew, Buck was subsequently committed to a state institution where she was diagnosed with "feeble-mindedness." Following this

diagnosis, she was scheduled to be sterilized in accordance with the 1924 Virginia Eugenic Sterilization Act, which demanded that all women unfit to procreate be sterilized. Buck's guardian sued on her behalf claiming that the Virginia law was unconstitutional. In an 8-1 decision, the Court ruled against Buck, stating that nothing in the 4th or 8th Amendments prevented Buck's sterilization. This case was never overturned. Read the full decision [here](#).

## Commonwealth of Massachusetts v. Mellon

Defining taxpayer standing.

When Congress enacted the 1921 Maternity Act that created a financial aid program dedicated to assisting women with infants, Mellon sued because she thought she would have to pay more taxes. The Court accepted the case to determine and expressly define the requirements of taxpayer standing. In a unanimous decision, the Court ultimately held that an increase in taxes does not constitute an injury substantial enough to be worth the Court's time. Read the full decision [here](#).



Photo from West Central Tribune

## Munn v. Illinois

The regulation of private enterprises.

In 1871, Illinois passed an act restricting the rate companies could charge the public for storing and transporting agricultural goods. When Munn was charged with violating the law after charging above the maximum rate, he sued and claimed the regulation was unconstitutional. The Court ruled against him and held that the law was constitutional and that the state may regulate private industries if their actions affect the public. Read the full decision [here](#).



Photo from the Guardian