

Kasecrafter Testimonials

VOL. I · NO. 5

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2026

KASECRAFTPORTAL.COM

CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

Due Process in Plain English: Notice and a Chance to Be Heard

The Constitution says government may not take your life, liberty, or property without due process of law. In practice, that usually means two things: fair notice and a meaningful hearing.



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KASECRAFT JOURNALIST

Sunday, October 4, 2026

The Fifth Amendment limits the federal government, and the Fourteenth Amendment limits the states, with the same promise: no person shall be deprived of "life, liberty, or property, without due process of law." Courts have spent more than a century working out what that promise requires.

Notice

In *Mullane v. Central Hanover Bank & Trust Co.*, 339 U.S. 306 (1950), the Supreme Court explained that notice must be "reasonably calculated, under all the circumstances," to tell interested people about a case and give them a chance to respond. That is why court rules spell out how papers must be served, and why proof of service matters so much.

A meaningful hearing

In *Goldberg v. Kelly*, 397 U.S. 254 (1970), the Court held that a state must provide a hearing before cutting off welfare benefits, because people who depend on those benefits could be left without the means to live while they wait.

Not every situation requires the same kind of hearing. In *Mathews v. Eldridge*, 424 U.S. 319 (1976), the Court set out a balancing test that courts still use. It weighs:

- the private interest at stake,
- the risk of a mistaken decision under the current procedures, and the value of extra safeguards, and
- the government's interest, including the cost and burden of more process.

What this means for you

Due process does not guarantee that you will win. It guarantees a fair chance to be heard. That makes the procedural parts of a case, the parts that feel like paperwork, some of the most important:

- **Read every notice carefully** and write down every deadline.
- **Serve your papers the way the rules require**, and keep proof that you did.
- **Ask the clerk** about how hearings are scheduled and what to bring.
- **If you were not properly notified** of something that went against you, ask the court's self-help center or a legal aid office whether there is a way to raise it.

Food for Thought

- Courts increasingly allow notice by email, text, or online posting. Is that "reasonably calculated" to reach people, or does it leave behind those without steady internet access?
- The *Mathews* test weighs the government's costs against your rights. Should cost ever count when someone's livelihood is at stake?
- Is a hearing truly "meaningful" if one side has a lawyer and the other does not?

How Kasecraft can help

Kasecraft's free **deadline calculator** counts court days and calendar days, and the **Drafting Studio** includes a court-formatted Certificate of Service so you can document that the other side was notified.

KASECRAFT FEATURE SPOTLIGHT

Court Deadline Calculator

When legal fees are out of reach, you do not have to walk into court alone and unprepared. Each edition, we look at one Kasecraft tool and how it helps self-represented litigants present their case with confidence.

WHAT IT DOES

Counts court days and calendar days from the date a clock starts, with a list of common rules and custom day counts, so you can see and save your due dates.

AN EXAMPLE

Keisha was served with a motion and has a set number of days to respond. She enters the service date and the rule, and the calculator shows the due date, skipping weekends. She saves it and plans her response a week early.

WHY IT PUTS YOU IN A STRONGER POSITION

- A missed deadline can end a case before it starts, no matter how strong the facts are.
- Counting court days versus calendar days is easy to get wrong without a tool.
- Knowing your dates early turns a scramble into a plan.

Cost: Free. kasecraftportal.com/deadlines

MORE TOOLS IN YOUR CORNER

Peer Sessions (Services): Book time with members who have been through court for practical, peer-to-peer support.

Moot Court: Rehearse your hearing with a volunteer judge and opposing side before it counts.

Community Notice Board: Find study groups, events, and people offering or asking for help.

Kasecraft tools are self-help resources, not legal advice or representation.

SOURCES AND CITATIONS

1. Fourteenth Amendment, Constitution Annotated (Congress.gov)
<https://constitution.congress.gov/constitution/amendment-14/>
2. Mullane v. Central Hanover Bank & Trust Co., 339 U.S. 306 (1950), Justia
<https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/339/306/>
3. Goldberg v. Kelly, 397 U.S. 254 (1970), Justia <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/397/254/>
4. Mathews v. Eldridge, 424 U.S. 319 (1976), Justia <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/424/319/>

This article is general information, not legal advice. Laws change and differ by place. For advice about your situation, contact a licensed attorney, legal aid, or your court's self-help center.

Sandra Jenkins is the Kasecraft Journalist byline for Kasecrafter Testimonials, and her portrait is digitally created. Articles are researched from public sources and drafted with AI assistance, then published automatically every Monday and Thursday. They are general information, not legal advice. Spot an error? Write to kasecraftportal@aol.com.

ADVERTISE WITH US · COMMUNITY NOTICE BOARD

Your Notice Could Be Here

Businesses, individuals, schools, and organizations are invited to reach self-represented litigants, families, and students on the Kasecraft Community Notice Board: a trusted place to share announcements, request or offer assistance, and promote events and resources. Every listing is posted by a registered member and held to our community policy.

- **Six categories:** Announcement, Seeking help, Offering help, Event, Resource, and Other.
- **Simple to write:** a clear headline, a category, up to 500 characters, and an optional image link.
- **Flexible terms:** 30 days for \$5, 60 days for \$9, or 90 days for \$12 (best value, save 20%). Secure checkout through Stripe; Kasecrafter Dollars and member rewards apply automatically.
- **Private replies:** members respond through on-site messages. Your email and phone number are never displayed.
- **Published fast:** your notice goes live as soon as payment is confirmed, and readers can save it to come back later.

Get started: create your free account or log in at kasecraftportal.com/notices, then click Post a Notice.

Signing up is free. Listings start at \$5 for 30 days.

SAMPLE LISTINGS

EVENT

Free Legal Forms Clinic

Library volunteers help you find the right court forms. Saturdays, 10 to 1.

OFFERING HELP

Exhibit Lists Reviewed

Two-time pro se plaintiff offering to review exhibit lists. Message me on the site.

RESOURCE

Fee Waiver Guide

A plain-language walkthrough of court fee waiver forms and where to file them.