

13.4: Purposes of Law

Learning Objectives

- Explain the purposes of law

As alluded to in the prior section, there are four primary purposes of law:

1. maintaining order
2. establishing standards
3. resolving disputes
4. protecting individual rights and liberties.

These purposes are not separate but entwined.

In a civil society, law is required to maintain order and to establish what personal behavior and business practices are right or wrong based on a society's values and circumstances. For example, the Bill of Rights, which constitutes the first 10 amendments to the Constitution, guarantees a number of individual rights and liberties including freedom of speech, freedom of the press and freedom of religion. Businesses are held accountable for a range of employee actions; the Department of Labor alone administers 180 federal laws.

As citizens, we also have an obligation to comply with laws and expectations regarding the development and enforcement of those laws—points we'll expand on in the next section. Law is also, somewhat paradoxically, a requirement for freedom. To quote former President Ronald Reagan: "Law and freedom must be indivisible partners. For without law, there can be no freedom, only chaos and disorder; and without freedom, law is but a cynical veneer for injustice and oppression." Former Supreme Court Associate Justice Benjamin Cardozo's statement is an apt summary: "the final cause of law is the welfare of society."

Practice Question

<https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/14330>

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