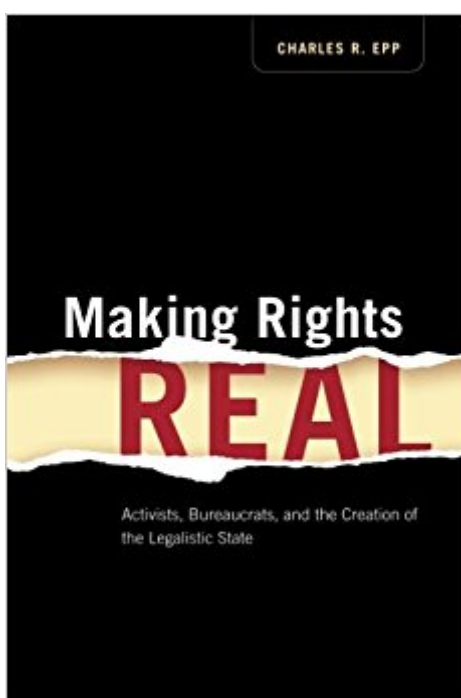


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# Making Rights Real: Activists, Bureaucrats, And The Creation Of The Legalistic State (Chicago Series In Law And Society)



## Synopsis

It's a common complaint: the United States is overrun by rules and procedures that shackle professional judgment, have no valid purpose, and serve only to appease courts and lawyers. Charles R. Epp argues, however, that few Americans would want to return to an era without these legalistic policies, which in the 1970s helped bring recalcitrant bureaucracies into line with a growing national commitment to civil rights and individual dignity. Focusing on three disparate policy areas—workplace sexual harassment, playground safety, and police brutality in both the United States and the United Kingdom—Epp explains how activists and professionals used legal liability, lawsuit-generated publicity, and innovative managerial ideas to pursue the implementation of new rights. Together, these strategies resulted in frameworks designed to make institutions accountable through intricate rules, employee training, and managerial oversight. Explaining how these practices became ubiquitous across bureaucratic organizations, Epp casts today's legalistic state in an entirely new light.

## Book Information

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"An elegant study that combines historical, comparative, and at times even ethnographic learning, *Making Rights Real* reveals how fervor for professionalism and fears of lawsuits together shaped police policies and practices in the United States and in Britain as well as responses to sexual harassment and the safety of playgrounds. It will be indispensable for scholars of the law." - William Haltom, coauthor of *Distorting the Law*

Charles R. Epp is associate professor in the Department of Public Administration at the University of Kansas.

Like Epp's "Rights Revolution," "Making Rights Real" once again shows the importance of public interest litigation in motivating policymakers. In this book, Epp argues that the combination of legal liability arising from litigation and professional managers led to a revolution in public management. Using examples from police, parks, and sexual harassment, he shows that the threat of embarrassment from litigation induced agencies to adopt more stringent rules governing public officials. Perhaps even more surprisingly, Epp finds that many public officials credit litigation with stimulating beneficial reforms within their agencies. Definitely recommended for students of social movements, bureaucracies, and legal reform.

An excellent researcher and a great teacher. Thank Dr. Epp.

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