

KEY POINTS

Raise Your Search Productivity By Carefully Cultivating Fields

Natural Selection?

“Error of opinion may be tolerated where reason is left free to combat it.”

Thomas Jefferson

This summer as you fly over the nation’s heartland, look out the window. You’ll notice a colorful patchwork of crops. Corn grows in some fields, alfalfa grows in others, while wheat grows in yet others. There’s evidence of a well-thought-out plan, which helps to maximize agricultural productivity.

When searching case law databases on Westlaw®, you can often harvest a better result—more wheat and less chaff—by restricting your search to one or more fields.

What Are Fields?

Almost all documents on Westlaw are composed of several parts, which are called *fields*. Like fields on a farm, which contain specific crops, fields in Westlaw documents contain specific types of information. Knowing what information is found in each field allows you to construct searches that are designed to harvest just the crop of material you need.

What Field Should I Use?

The fields available for you to search depend upon the types of documents in the database. At the Search page for a particular database, you can view the fields available in the *Fields* drop-down list.

Editor’s note: Restricting your search by field may not be effective when searching multiple databases or when searching databases that contain various types of materials, such as a database that contains cases, statutes, administrative materials, and treatises.

Tips for Searching Fields in Case Law Databases

The Topic Field: Each legal issue in a case published in West’s® National Reporter System® is identified, summarized in a headnote, and assigned a West topic and key number. To retrieve cases containing headnotes classified under a

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specific topic, restrict your search to the topic field (to). The topic field contains the topic name and number, the key number and text of the key line, and the complete hierarchy of concepts the West attorney-editors used to classify the point of law to that key number. For example, to retrieve cases containing headnotes classified under topic 81, Colleges and Universities, type **to(81)**. You can also include terms that describe your issue in a topic field search. For example, to retrieve federal cases involving student residency in a state as a factor in the tuition or fees charged by a college or university, access the Federal Education–Cases database (FED-CS) and type

to(81 /p residen! /p tuition fee)

To view a list of West digest topics and their numerical equivalents, click **Key Numbers** at the top of any Westlaw page. Then click **West Key Number Digest Outline** under *Browse Key Numbers*.

Editor’s note: To eliminate certain categories of material from your search result, use the BUT NOT connector (%) along with a topic field restriction. For example, to retrieve cases discussing carpal tunnel syndrome while excluding cases with headnotes classified under topic 413, Workers’ Compensation, type

carp*1-tunnel % to(413)

The Headnote Field: Each West headnote includes a reference to the statute or rule when applicable. You can retrieve cases that cite nonunique statute or rule numbers by searching for the numbers in the headnote field (he).

For example, to retrieve federal cases discussing the inquiry notice under section 9(e) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, access the Federal Securities–Cases database (FSEC-CS) and formulate a query such as the following:

he(9(e) /p “inquiry notice”)

The Synopsis and Digest Fields: The synopsis field (sy) contains a summary of the case; the digest field (di) contains the information in the topic field plus the text of all headnotes in a case. Because important terms typically appear in these editorially created enhancements, a search restricted to the synopsis and digest fields will limit the result to cases in which your terms play a prominent role. In addition, West attorney-editors often add common legal terms that the court may not have used in its discussion.

For example, to retrieve cases in which the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit discussed punitive damages, access the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit Cases database (CTA2-CS) and use a query like the following:

sy,di(punitive /s damages)

When you want the highest productivity in case law research on Westlaw, consider cultivating your knowledge of field restrictions.

Fields in Cases

Citation (ci)	252 F.3d 316, 52 ERC 1818, 31 Env'tl. L. Rep. 20,753
Prelim (pr)	United States Court of Appeals, Fourth Circuit.
Title (ti)	WASTE MANAGEMENT HOLDINGS, INCORPORATED; Hale Intermodal Marine Company; Weanack Land Limited Partners; Charles City County; Brunswick Waste Management Facility, Plaintiffs-Appellees, v. James S. GILMORE, III, in his official capacity as Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia; John Paul Woodley, Jr., in his official capacity as Secretary of Natural Resources. . .
Prelim (pr)	No. 00-1185. Docket-Number (dn) Argued Dec. 7, 2000. Decided June 4, 2001.
Synopsis (sy)	Landfill operators and transporters of municipal solid waste (MSW) commenced §1983 action against Virginia state officials, seeking declaratory and injunctive relief, challenging five Virginia statutory provisions on the transportation and disposal of MSW under, inter alia, the dormant Commerce Clause and the Supremacy Clause. The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, James R. Spencer, J., 87 F.Supp.2d 536, held that the provisions violated the Commerce Clause and that two of them also violated the Supremacy Clause. Plaintiffs appealed. The Court of Appeals, Hamilton, Senior Circuit Judge, held. . . West Headnotes
Digest (di)	Topic (to) [23] KeyCite Notes o= 83 Commerce o= 83II Application to Particular Subjects and Methods of Regulation o= 83II(B) Conduct of Business in General o= 83k60 Manufacture and Sale of Goods o= 83k60(1) k. In General. Most Cited Cases Words-Phrases (wp) Headnote (he) Under the "market participant doctrine," a state acting in its proprietary capacity as a purchaser or seller may favor its own citizens over others, but if there is no direct state involvement in the market, the strictures of the dormant Commerce Clause apply with full force. U.S.C.A. Const. Art. 1, § 8, cl. 3. West Codenotes
West-codenotes (wcn)	Held Unconstitutional Va. Code 1950, § 10.1-1408.1, subd. Q; Va. Code 1950, § 10.1-1408.3; Va. Code 1950, § 10.1-1454.3, subds. A, D
Attorney (at)	*322 ARGUED: Stewart Todd Leath, Assistant Attorney General, Richmond, VA, for Appellants; Evan Mark Tager, Mayer, Brown & Platt, Washington, DC; Timothy George Hayes, Hunton & Williams, Richmond, VA, for Appellees. ON BRIEF: Mark L. Earley, Attorney General of Virginia; William H. Hurt, Solicitor General; Roger L. Chaffe, Senior Assistant Attorney General. . .
Panel (pa) (The panel field is part of the prelim field.)	Before WIDENER and KING, Circuit Judges, and HAMILTON, Senior Circuit Judge. OPINION
Opinions (op)	Judge (ju) HAMILTON, Senior Circuit Judge: Lead (le) In March and April 1999, the Commonwealth of Virginia's (Virginia) General Assembly, its legislative body, enacted and the Governor of Virginia signed into law five statutory provisions, which, collectively, cap the amount of municipal solid waste (MSW) that may be accepted by landfills. . . Finally, we vacate the district court's entry of judgment against Governor Gilmore and remand with instructions that the district court dismiss him as a party in this action. AFFIRMED IN PART, VACATED IN PART, AND REMANDED. Concurring (con) and/or Dissenting (dis) WIDENER, Circuit Judge, concurring: I concur in all of the opinion of the court except Part IV.A, and I concur in the result that Part IV.A obtains. . .
Citation (ci)	252 F.3d 316, 31 Env'tl. L. Rep. 20,753, 52 ERC 1818

ADVANCED SEARCH TIP

What Does It Mean?

Sometimes you need to find a case that defines your term. To retrieve cases that define a particular term, search for the term in the words-phrases field (wp).

For example, to retrieve federal cases that define *trade libel*, access the Federal Intellectual Property–Cases database (FIP-CS) and type

wp(“trade libel”)

A legal encyclopedia is another good source of definitions. For example, to retrieve entries pertaining to the *law merchant*, access the Corpus Juris Secundum® database (CJS) and type

“law merchant”

You can also access the Black’s Law Dictionary®, 8th Edition database (BLACKS) and search for your term, e.g.,

“qui tam”

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