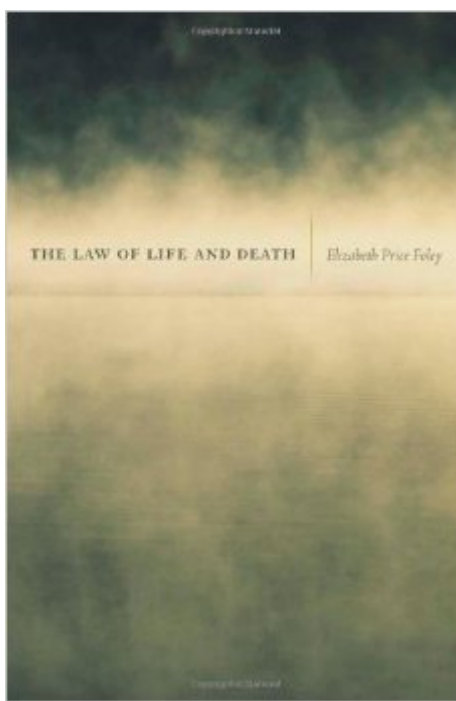


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# The Law Of Life And Death



## Synopsis

Are you alive? What makes you so sure? Most people believe this question has a clear answer—that some law defines our status as living (or not) for all purposes. But they are dead wrong. In this pioneering study, Elizabeth Price Foley examines the many, and surprisingly ambiguous, legal definitions of what counts as human life and death. Foley reveals that "not being dead" is not necessarily the same as being alive, in the eyes of the law. People, pre-viable fetuses, and post-viable fetuses have different sets of legal rights, which explains the law's seemingly inconsistent approach to stem cell research, in vitro fertilization, frozen embryos, in utero embryos, contraception, abortion, homicide, and wrongful death. In a detailed analysis that is sure to be controversial, Foley shows how the need for more organ transplants and the need to conserve health care resources are exerting steady pressure to expand the legal definition of death. As a result, death is being declared faster than ever before. The "right to die," Foley worries, may be morphing slowly into an obligation to die. Foley's balanced, accessible chapters explore the most contentious legal issues of our time—including cryogenics, feticide, abortion, physician-assisted suicide, brain death, vegetative and minimally conscious states, informed consent, and advance directives—across constitutional, contract, tort, property, and criminal law. Ultimately, she suggests, the inconsistencies and ambiguities in U.S. laws governing life and death may be culturally, and perhaps even psychologically, necessary for an enormous and diverse country like ours.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 304 pages

Publisher: Harvard University Press; 1 edition (April 1, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0674051041

ISBN-13: 978-0674051041

Product Dimensions: 6.4 x 1 x 9.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 2.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (2 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #847,192 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #13 in [Books > Law > Health & Medical Law > Right to Die](#) #15 in [Books > Law > Estate Planning > Living Wills](#) #130 in [Books > Law > Legal Theory & Systems > Science & Technology](#)

## Customer Reviews

The author is a law professor. She tackles a very difficult and emotional topic in our society. The

science and the law have been and still are changing in defining how to define when a person is alive and when they are dead. Issues like brain death, and cardiopulmonary death are addressed, as well as statutory and common law on life are addressed. This is a well done book about a difficult topic that we talk about very little in our society.

This book adds nothing new to coverage of debates about life and death. The cases of Karen Quinlan, Terri Shiavo, and others have already been extremely well-covered by excellent journalists writing for the New Yorker and Harpers. See "Harvesting the Dead," for example. Biopolitics has already been theorized by Giorgio Agamben in *Homo Sacer* (1995) *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Meridian: Crossing Aesthetics) and earlier by Michel Foucault *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction*. (The author is entirely ignorant of this work, btw). I returned my copy this book to .

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