

## Jason Bloom in Texas Lawbook: Did Dallas Court of Appeals Err by Using Wikipedia'

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December 1, 2016 Jason Bloom

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PRACTICES Appellate

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An appeals court's use of Wikipedia to define the term "welfare queen" is under review by the Texas Supreme Court in a closely watched libel case.

Media groups and a law professor are urging the court to be cautious in embracing online sources, particularly an open-source website like Wikipedia. The online "encyclopedia" allows users to make and edit entries, which may heighten the potential for inaccurate and biased information...

"Here, neither party submitted the Wikipedia entry or any definition of 'welfare queen' or even contended that 'welfare queen' had any particular relevance to the gist of the article," said [Jason Bloom](#), a Dallas partner at Haynes Boone.

Chief Justice Nathan Hecht remarked that courts commonly consult dictionaries to define words.

Yes, Bloom said, but there is a difference in looking up a statutory term as opposed to an "amorphous" term like welfare queen. And, he added, Wikipedia may be "perfectly good for resolving disputes around the dinner table, but is a terrible source for resolving judicial disputes."

**Excerpted from *The Texas Lawbook*. To read the full article, please [click here](#) (subscription required).**