



See What's New

MEET RAY CHOW

Snellings Law's First Point of Contact for New Clients

Our clients always come first! At Snellings Law, we truly value our team because they embody our core principle: ensuring our clients receive the best service and representation possible. Every member of our team is dedicated to putting the needs of those we represent at the forefront of everything we do. We recognize that our services' strength stems from our team members' passion and integrity.

Last year, we welcomed aboard our newest associate attorney, or intake attorney as we call him! Ray Chow is often the first point of contact for clients reaching out to our firm seeking guidance, support, and legal representation. He works to assess every client's needs to determine the most suitable legal assistance, ensuring they are matched with the right attorney in our firm or referred to a reliable external partner if necessary.

Ray has been a practicing attorney since earning his law degree from Texas Tech and passing the bar in 2017. Before joining our team, he worked as an intake attorney at Carpenter and Associates in Plano, TX.

When Ray was younger, he was always interested in health care but found that his strengths did not lie in math and science. Instead, he excelled in writing and had a passion for debating. This led him to consider a career in law. After some reflection, he decided to take the LSAT and apply to law school, a decision that naturally aligned with his talents and interests. "I knew what I wasn't great at and what I enjoyed, so logically, becoming an attorney made sense for me," Ray comments.

Ray's favorite aspect of the career lies in the opportunity to help others. Before joining our team at Snellings Law, he was practicing family law. "I remember that the ultimate joy I got from clients was when, even months after closing out a client's file, their child is now home with them, and the child is happy," Ray says. "It made me feel like I was making a difference. Here at Snellings, I feel complete any time I can sign up a new case or help benefit the firm. I don't get the 'Sunday scaries' because I truly love what I do."

Ray has already made such an impact at our firm. Even on the weekends, his work doesn't stop. He's dedicated to ensuring our clients get the best service possible. "Whether it be our clients or the firm, I'm here to help. That's my priority," Ray says. Even when he meets with a client who may not be the right fit for our firm, he prioritizes referring them to another attorney we trust to represent them successfully.



"Outside of law, my life is wedding planning," Ray says with a laugh as he plans his wedding for mid-October. Ray is actively involved in his church community and has recently started reading the Bible to unwind after busy days. Additionally, he enjoys weightlifting, hiking, and kayaking. He is excited about visiting Japan for his upcoming honeymoon, where he plans to cycle around Mount Fuji, as hiking trails will be closed during his visit.

At Snellings Law, we are delighted to have Ray on our team. His dedication to our clients and his expertise significantly impact their lives. Congratulations on nearly completing your first year with us, Ray!

We look forward to many more.



Driven To Help

- Scott Snellings



RENTAL RIDDLE

LANDLORDS RESIST SECURITY DEPOSIT RETURNS

Renters often worry (for good reason) about getting their security deposits back. Landlords hold all the cards and can devise countless reasons why they are entitled to keep your cash after you move out.

“When I was a renter, I never once received a security deposit back,” Green Bee Memphis, a Memphis Realtor, declared in a 2023 video on TikTok.

U.S. renters are among the nation’s most economically vulnerable people. According to the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University, nearly half of all renters spend more than 30% of their income on rent and utilities, a level that housing experts consider burdensome. A record-high 22.4 million renters fell into this category in 2022, up about 2% from three years earlier. No wonder the 1 in 3 Americans who rent are concerned about getting their security deposits back.

Landlords tend to occupy the opposite end of the economic spectrum, and all states have enacted at least some legal protections for renters. State laws vary, but all require landlords to return security deposits to renters within 14–60 days after they move out, according to Nolo.com’s Legal Encyclopedia.

Kentucky, Washington, and Green Bee Memphis’s state of Tennessee, among others, require landlords to keep security deposits in a separate account maintained for that purpose. In Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, Illinois, and other states, those accounts must pay interest that must be returned to renters.

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When landlords withhold security deposit refunds, they are typically required to give renters a list of damages to justify their decision. And they should not charge renters for routine cleaning or ordinary wear and tear — only for careless or willful damage or excessive filth.

Defining ordinary wear and tear can be difficult. For example, suppose a landlord installs new carpeting before a tenant moves in, and the tenant stays four years. In that case, the carpet will inevitably show some wear after the tenant moves out, but this is typically regarded as ordinary wear and tear — not a repair that tenants should be required to cover. Other examples offered by Nolo.com include linoleum stains from shower spray, which is ordinary wear and tear, versus broken tiles in the bathroom, which is damage. Similarly, dents in the wall where a door handle bumped constitute normal wear and tear, while a door ripped off the hinges is damage. Tenants should notify landlords in writing within 3–5 days of moving in about any damage to the apartment so they won’t be billed for it later.

One of the most common causes of tenant-landlord lawsuits is a landlord’s refusal to return a security deposit. Tenants who want to contest a landlord’s decision should gather evidence, including move-in and move-out reports and photos, and state their position in a dispute letter. If out-of-court efforts to settle a dispute fail, tenants usually can file suit in small claims court.

TAKE A *BREAK*



SUMMER CHICKEN SALAD

Ingredients

Inspired by FoodNetwork.com

- 3 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
 - Salt and pepper
 - 4 ears of corn, shucked
 - 3 tbsp minced dill
 - 3 stalks celery, finely diced
 - 1 red onion, finely diced
 - 1 1/2 cups blueberries
 - 1 head of butter lettuce
- Dressing**
- 3/4 cup crumbled feta cheese
 - 1/2 cup half and half
 - 1/4 cup mayonnaise
 - 1/4 cup sour cream
 - 1 tsp sugar
 - Juice of 1 lemon

Directions

1. Place chicken in a large plastic bag and pound with a mallet to flatten to 1/4-inch thickness. Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper.
2. Heat grill, then grill chicken on both sides for about 4 minutes per side; set aside to cool before slicing.
3. Grill corn until the kernels begin browning, turning regularly for even cooking. Use a knife to shave the kernels off.
4. In a bowl, mix all dressing ingredients until combined.
5. In a large bowl, combine corn, dill, celery, and onions, then stir in chicken and top with dressing and blueberries as desired.
6. Separate the head of butter lettuce into "cups" to fill with salad and enjoy!

IT'S FATHER'S DAY!

Children Create Unique Dad's Day Gifts

Recently, people have been spending big on Father's Day, and many wait until the very last minute. Last year, Americans spent a record \$22.9 billion on Father's Day, up nearly 10% from the previous year, according to an industry survey. And more than half of consumers don't start shopping until the week before Father's Day, while 3.5% wait until the very last day before the holiday, according to another survey.

The second survey also revealed that over 75% of shoppers struggle to think of good Father's Day ideas. Most settle on outings, clothing, gift cards, personal care items, or electronics. Here are three low-budget ideas you can do with your kids that are sure to charm any dad, offered by What's Up Moms, a top parenting site on YouTube co-founded by vlogger Elle Walker.

Interview Cards

If your kids are preschoolers, have them answer questions about their father and record their answers on notecards. Things like, "How old do you think Daddy is? 100? What is one thing Daddy says? What does Daddy do for work? Why do you love Daddy?" The simplicity and innocence of your children's answers will warm Dad's heart more than any store-bought gift ever could.

Shopping Spree

Give each child \$10 to pick out something for Dad, all by themselves, then take them to the nearest big-box store. Walker's youngsters came up with a mirror, a pair of swim trunks, and crib sheets, and they clearly loved being empowered to make choices.

Photos From a Kid's Perspective

You may be surprised at some of the angles children choose and the tender moments they capture, "even if they're not wow-worthy," Walker says. Her daughter caught a captivating shot of her husband, Ross, napping with their preschool son resting on his shoulder.



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WHAT WERE THEY THINKING?

WEIRD STATE LAWS SAFEGUARD SALAMANDERS AND SEAWEED

Ignorance about the law is usually not a defense if you're caught in a violation. Some oddball state laws, however, are so strange that they could only be described as booby traps for the unknowing. Here are two legislative oddities sure to surprise any hapless offender.

76 Salamanders

A popular YouTube commentator has called out the state of Illinois for barring anyone from owning more than 75 salamanders. Why? Several salamander species are classified as endangered in Illinois, and the state regulates the commercial trade of these amphibians. The law assumes any resident who possesses salamanders valued at \$600 or more intends to market them commercially — illegally. The law estimates the value of a salamander at \$5, suggesting it actually prohibits owning 120 salamanders. But who's counting?

Nighttime Seaweed

From the annals of lawmaking history, a 1973 New Hampshire law banned any effort to "carry away or

collect for the purpose of carrying away any seaweed ... between evening and daylight."

The backstory: Farmers in New Hampshire once collected seaweed from the beaches to use as fertilizer, leading at least one town to ban nighttime harvesting to "give everyone an equal chance" at stocking up on seaweed. However, after a group of high school students singled out the law as the state's dumbest, lawmakers repealed it in 2016.

Not all states with stupid laws are culpable. Internet jokesters questioned South Dakota about a law supposedly barring people from falling asleep in a cheese factory. The actual law makes a lot more sense: It bans setting up your bedroom in a space used to prepare food for the public.

Noting the error, a Sioux Falls radio station, Hot 104.7, fired back at critics, creating their own new category of missteps: "Stupid questions people ask about South Dakota." Fair enough!

