

ROTOPOOL MEMORANDUM

TO: Articles Committee
FROM: <Editor's Name>
DATE: <Date>
RE: Rotopool S-XXXXX – <Article Title >

Please upload completed Rotopools to the [Volume 139 Rotopool Memos](#) folder on Sharepoint and use the following naming convention for files: S-XXXXX (<Your Lastname>) - <Article Title>

I. Recommendation

Even though it is the first section of a Rotopool, we recommend writing the Recommendation last, after you have fully developed your analysis. The Recommendation should proceed as follows:

(1) Your Recommendation*

* It may be difficult to develop a sense of how strong an article needs to be for you to recommend that it proceed to the next stage, especially in the beginning. Please do not get hung up on the recommendation. We are more interested in your analysis (according to the rubric) of the article's strengths and weaknesses, which you are already capable of doing.

(2) Article's Thesis/Main Argument and your highest-level thoughts on the Argument.

II. Summary

The summary of the article plays an important role for Articles Editors when they evaluate an article. It should be no more than 1 page. Please keep in mind that your summary should function as "neutral reporting" rather than anticipatory advocacy for your analysis. That said, do not artificially provide connections, transitions, or clarifications for the sake of easier summary when the article fails to make them.

Each summary should include a brief paragraph devoted to each major section of the article, laying out the basic progression of the author's argument. Your summary should be more comprehensive than merely encapsulating what each Part of the article does, but don't get bogged down in unimportant details or the paragraph-by-paragraph progression of the piece.

A good summary will lay out the piece's argument in more depth than the article's introduction, with particular detail provided for sections of the article where the author makes an original or important point. Feel free to use bullet points if doing so is more efficient for you, but it should not sacrifice the specificity and comprehensiveness of the summary.

III. Analysis

The analysis is the most important component of a Rotopool. Under each category, please provide a few sentences evaluating whether the article falls short of, satisfies, or exceeds the standard for

publication. (Again, if you do not yet have a good sense of what that standard is, please focus on providing your qualitative analysis without worrying about measuring the article against some “threshold.”) While it is fine to include a statement communicating your general impression, the comments should be more specific than conclusory assessments (e.g., “The article’s quality of writing is good”; “The author did a mediocre job with researching sources”) and supported by examples from the article when possible, using TAN or PTAN citations.¹

HLR is committed to promoting diverse, equitable, and inclusive scholarship. Creating a forum for underrepresented groups and marginalized communities is a perennial mission of our journal, and one where we have much to improve on. We conduct a holistic review of each article, taking into consideration both substantive and DEI factors. Some of the categories below are intended to reflect and implement our commitment.

Please prioritize quality of analysis over length. You may make cross-references if the same comment applies to multiple categories. For details on what each category means, please refer to **Table 1**.

Substantive Category	Comments
<p>Quality of Writing & Argument</p> <p>Please consider the article’s structure, readability, style, overall logic, and coherence of argument. Does the piece require substantial reorganization? Does it miss any major counter-arguments or leave any logic gaps unaddressed?</p>	
<p>Quality of Research</p> <p>Does the article display an awareness of relevant literature in the field? Are key propositions well supported by the appropriate sources?</p>	
<p>Originality</p> <p>Does the article make a novel or interesting claim? Does it address or introduce a new concept? If the article is primarily descriptive, does it nonetheless crystallize or reorganize existing scholarship in an original way?</p>	
<p>Impact</p> <p>Does the article address an issue or provide a solution that can help promote</p>	

¹ For new editors who may be seeing this jargon for the first time, TAN stands for “text accompanying note” and refers to the clause or sentence supported by a footnote. PTAN stands for “paragraph and text accompanying note” and refers to the paragraph that contains a footnote.

DEI values?	
<p>Subject Matter</p> <p>Does the article engage with an issue or subject matter that is relevant to the law and would appeal to a variety of readers? Is the article on a topic that is underrepresented in our pages?</p>	

IV. Appendix

Table 1: Description of Each Substantive Category

Substantive Category	Factors to Consider
Quality of Writing & Argument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the structure of the article make logical sense? • Does the piece require substantial reorganization? • Does the author express her argument in a clear, readable, and comprehensible manner? • Are the conclusions consistent with the observations? • Are there logical gaps in the article’s main argument? • Please do not consider choice of diction or grammatical error, unless they impair understanding of the article.
Quality of Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are key propositions well supported by the appropriate sources? • Does the article contextualize itself by citing to prominent works in the subject matter? • What is the overall quality and breadth of the sources? • Please do not penalize an article for “not having enough footnotes,” unless the lack of support is so conspicuous as to bear on the above questions.
Originality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the author making a novel and interesting claim? • If the claim is not original, is the methodology innovative? • Does the article produce new and useful knowledge about the subject matter? • Please remember that originality may be measured along various axes. For example, an article may be original in its interpretation and organization of existing schools of thought, even as it does not advance a unique normative claim. • If the article is primarily descriptive, does it nonetheless crystallize or reorganize existing scholarship in a useful way?

<p>Impact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the article going to have any foreseeable impact in enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion? • Does the article challenge any existing biases in the practice and knowledge production of law?
<p>Subject Matter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the article deal with an issue or subject matter that is relevant to the law? • Is the subject matter too technical or niche such that it would fail to reach a meaningfully broad audience? • Please consider whether the article addresses a subject matter underrepresented in our pages. For example, we have generally published far more pieces pertaining to public law than private law. • Within a conventional subject matter, please consider whether the article explores an underrepresented viewpoint.