



“What Would CEB Say?”

How Leading Criminal Defense Lawyers Leverage CEB



Joseph Tully
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In the age-old battle of resources against prosecutors, CEB’s legal research tools support some of California’s most highly skilled and experienced criminal defense lawyers.

The challenge: countering the criminal justice system’s vast resources

No matter their years of experience and depth of practice, the challenge for California criminal defense attorneys remains the same. In building their cases, prosecutors are bolstered by vast, systematic power, requiring a strategic and resilient defense to level the playing field.

“You’re essentially going up against a machine with almost unlimited resources and advantages against you and your client,” said criminal defense veteran Joseph Tully, managing partner of Tully & Weiss.

With 25 years of experience representing individuals under investigation or prosecution, Tully describes himself as committed to the cause of criminal law “and all the headaches and heartaches that come with that.”

Many of those headaches arrive in the form of complex, high-stakes trials in which formidable prosecutors pursue serious charges involving firearms, drugs, sex offenses, whistleblower protection, murder and other felonies. As for the heartaches, the responsibility of protecting someone’s future — and even their life — can be profoundly heavy.

But mounting an effective defense doesn’t just take skill and resilience, in Tully’s experience; it also requires an arsenal of resources that streamline research, enhance strategy and provide comprehensive support in the face of relentless opposition.



“When the government is using its full weight and might against your client, you need to be able to battle effectively against your opponent,” he said.

“You need to be extremely efficient and effective and put tools in place that help you do that.”

The approach: “What does CEB say?”

When Tully began his career as a deputy public defender in Fresno County in 1999, he watched his peers carefully, analyzing how they approached their cases to discern what set the most effective and experienced attorneys apart. Within weeks, he noticed something they all seemed to have in common.

“They were winning cases, succeeding on issues in motion and securing trial victories. They were getting good resolutions in negotiating and persuading judges and district attorneys to give better offers,” Tully said. “And they were all consulting CEB. In the courtroom, at the counsel table, in the office, I would hear attorneys talking about issues and asking, ‘What does CEB say?’”

Specifically, these attorneys were leveraging the California-focused legal research tool to prepare motions and appeals, challenge testimony, and guide sentencing negotiations.

They also used CEB to proactively identify and prepare for issues that could impact their cases.

Convinced by what he saw, Tully incorporated CEB into his practice, and the resource has been his indispensable ally ever since. Winding through more than 1,000 felony and other cases, the launch of his firm in 2001, and expansion into six offices across California, CEB is the common thread tying Tully’s career together.

Tully has leaned predominantly on CEB’s [Practice Guides](#) and [Secondary Sources](#) for their in-depth analysis from an expert community of contributing judges and lawyers. By exclusively focusing on California, CEB can provide highly detailed and state-specific insights, eliminating the hassle of navigating through extraneous information pertaining to national cases.

CEB also ensures Tully stays current on the twists and turns of California’s complex legal system that could impact his clients. The [Criminal Law OnLAW Pro library](#), for example, has been invaluable in ensuring he understands how courts will likely interpret the facts of his cases and the precedent they’ll rely on in sentencing or assessing penalties. This is invaluable information to ensure he considers every possible scenario to secure the best possible results for a client.

Armed with a comprehensive [guide to appeals and habeas corpus practice](#) in state and federal court, Tully has tackled all manner of post-conviction challenges. Meanwhile, the [criminal law forms manual](#) has helped his firm build up new practice areas with templates for dozens of motions and navigate more novel legal issues with a writ of error coram nobis.

In one recent case, where Tully’s client faced a lengthy prison term due to multiple sentencing enhancements, [CEB’s guide](#) provided detailed strategies on challenging the applicability of those enhancements, resulting in a significant reduction. Additionally, when expert testimony was crucial in disputing forensic evidence, [the guide](#) offered precise techniques for cross-examining the prosecution’s experts, undermining their credibility and strengthening his defense.





“It’s a fundamental tool that California practitioners need, and it’s basically like breathing if you’re a criminal defense attorney,” he said. “You need it on hand with you when you’re just starting out, but I use it constantly after 25 years of heavy, intense practice.”

Result: “It’s like breathing” for criminal defense attorneys

Now widely known for his accomplishments — including landmark, precedent-setting Stand Your Ground wins — Tully is no longer a newbie. In fact, he’s long since been a certified criminal law specialist, a designation that the California Board of Legal Specialization awards to less than 1% of the state’s lawyers. He also regularly provides analysis for major media outlets and networks such as Court TV, NBC, CBS, Rolling Stone, and other national and international media outlets.

CEB remains his “bible,” used on a daily basis across his firm.



Want to see how CEB can transform your practice?

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