**Purposes of Law Key Terms**

**Crime** –any act that the government has declared to be an offense against the public good,declared by statute to be a crime, and which is prosecutable in a criminal proceeding

**Criminal Law** –the body of law that deals with conduct so harmful to society as a whole that itis prohibited by statute, prosecutable, and punishable by the government

**Cruel and Unusual Punishment** –punishment that violates the principle of proportionality andis considered too harsh for the crime committed **–** prohibited by the Eighth Amendment

**Due Process** –the government must treat people equally and fairly before the law

**Ex post facto** – “not after the fact”; persons cannot be punished for actions committed beforethe law prohibiting the behavior was passed

**Jurisprudence** –the philosophy of law; the science and study of the law

**Law** –a body of rules of conduct that is prescribed by a legitimate authority, usually in the formof a statute, which mandates certain forms of behaviors

**Legality** –laws defining crimes and penalties must be made public before being enforced ***Mala in se*** –acts that are crimes because they are inherently evil

***Mala prohibita*** –acts that are prohibited because they are defined as crimes by law, notbecause the act is harmful or inherently evil

***Nulla poena sine lege*** – “no punishment without law”; no person can be punished for his or heractions, or failure to act, unless that behavior has been clearly made a crime by law

**Right to Privacy** –laws cannot violate the reasonable personal privacy of citizens

**Rule of Law** –the principle that standards of behavior are established by laws and not bydictators or religious leaders; no person is above the law

**Social Change** –the process by which ideas and practices are modified, either actively orpassively through natural forces or deliberate social actions

**Social Control** –efforts by society to regulate the behavior of its members

**Void for Overbreadth** –laws are illegal if they are stated so broadly as to prohibit legalactivities as well as the illegal behavior

**Void for Vagueness** –definitions of laws must be clear and reasonable, specifying prohibitedbehaviors; otherwise, those laws are illegal; a law must say what it means and mean what it says