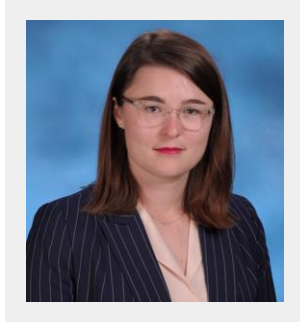




Summer 2020 EJA Fellow:



Name: Lauren Vandemortel

Law School: Boston University School of Law

Organization: Center for Public Representation

Week of June 15th

With the support of the Equal Justice America fellowship, I'm working this summer at the Center for Public Representation, a disability rights organization that litigates systemic issues nationwide. I've spent the last two weeks learning about the effort to "bring people home" -- requiring states to provide home- and community-based care to children with serious emotional disturbances and autism spectrum disorder who cycle in and out of hospitals, and adults with developmental disabilities and mental illness currently institutionalized. I am also researching the application of the ADA to encounters between law enforcement and people with disabilities.

Think about these statistics: the probability of arrest for people without a disability is 28% for white people and 37% for Black people; the probability of arrest for people with a disability is 40% for white people and 55% for black people; and at least 25% of people shot by police have a mental illness or disability.

Week of July 6th

At the Center for Public Representation this summer, it's been exciting to see advocates push for the considerations of marginalized communities during this public health crisis. I've worked with a coalition of advocates on adapting crisis standards of care so as not to discriminate against people with disabilities, people of color, and elderly people. Existing systemic inequities already worsen health outcomes for these communities -- and policies that prioritize those with a higher predicted (and often inaccurate) life expectancy further exacerbate these inequities.

Thanks to the support of Equal Justice America, I've learned a lot about effective advocacy these past few weeks.



Week of July 27th

Working with CPR this summer has given me the opportunity to not just develop my social justice advocacy skills, but my litigation skills as well. I've been diving deep into legal research and document review, and working to spot patterns and issues to support our advocacy work.

Without the support of EJA, I wouldn't have been able to strengthen these essential lawyering skills in the disability rights field.

Week of August 10th

This summer at the Center for Public Representation, I learned firsthand about strategic advocacy for people with disabilities. I listened to attorneys discuss when to push, when to defer, when to gather more information, and when to raise alarms. I'll be able to incorporate these strategies into my own future work as a civil rights advocate. I'm forever grateful for the opportunity to work with and learn from these incredible attorneys.