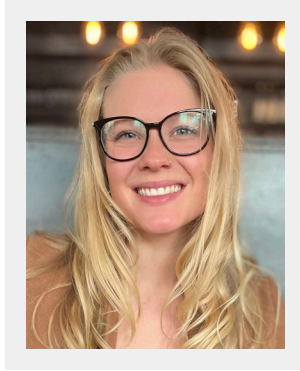




EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2022 EJA Fellow:



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Update 1: On Thursday I had the opportunity to attend a rally and virtual hearing for the D.C. Domestic Workers Bill of Rights. Domestic Workers are predominantly immigrants and women of color. They are the only group of workers excluded from the D.C Human Rights Act, yet they are integral members of the economy. First Shift Justice Project's own founder and executive director Laura Brown, testified in support of the bill. She highlighted the pandemic's effect on domestic workers as an extremely vulnerable population often denied access to COVID sick leave, PPE, and remote work. Domestic Workers care for our houses, our children, our seniors, the sick, and disabled. Domestic worker's rights are human rights. Los derechos de los trabajadores del hogar son derechos humanos.

Update 2: Currently only 10 states (including D.C.) have Paid Family Leave programs. These programs offer a wide array of protections for expecting parents, adoptive parents, people recovering from childbirth, and parental bonding. In the wake of recent Supreme Court decisions, expanding access to paid leave for individuals is more essential than ever. This week with First Shift Justice Project I have had the chance to learn more about the protections of D.C PFL and how this model can be replicated across the country.

Update 3: As an Equal Justice America Fellow I am very proud to have drafted First Shift Justice Project's statement regarding the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* decision.

“First Shift Justice Project vehemently condemns the recent Supreme Court decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*. The decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade* is an attack on women and the reproductive rights of all birthing individuals. At its core, this decision strips women of their bodily autonomy and personal liberty. As we grapple with our new reality, we must remember that the consequences of this decision fall heavily on women of color, immigrants, and low-wage workers. In a country with no universal paid family leave, no universal health insurance, and the highest maternal mortality rate in the developed world, the fallout of this decision will be catastrophic.



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At First Shift Justice Project, we will continue to support women and birthing individuals as they navigate social and economic hardships in this new post-*Rø*world. As an organization that works directly with employees who are family caretakers, single parents, and expectant mothers, we know what protecting life looks like. It is:

- Ensuring pregnant workers' access to prenatal care
- Advocating for pregnancy accommodations and job protections in the workplace
- Fighting for universal access to paid family leave
- Protecting workers with family caretaking responsibilities

We stand in solidarity with our partner organizations fighting for reproductive justice because we know that **protecting life is protecting the right to choose**. Together, we can build a future that recognizes all health care, including abortion, as a fundamental right guaranteed under the law for all.”

Update 4: This week we begin our campaign for world breast feeding week. Breastfeeding mothers in the DMV have rights inside the workplace to pump. These include a safe, clean, private location to pump and more frequent breaks.

Update 5: While the summer has come to an end, the experiences I had this summer will forever be part of my legal foundation. When I started at First Shift Justice Project in May, I hit the ground running. In one summer, I learned to spot relevant legal issues in client intake calls, draft memoranda relating to jurisdiction issues and remote work, and became familiar with local legislative advocacy. My mentors taught me how to maneuver around difficult client conversations and negotiate with opposing counsel. I had the chance to attend a local rally advocating for domestic worker protections and represented my team at a reproductive rights demonstration. My mentors taught me best practices when approaching a legal question that I was not familiar with, and they listened and guided as I led client calls.

My favorite moments were working with clients to help them advocate for themselves in the workplace. I watched as an expecting mother explained her legal rights regarding prenatal visits and lactation breaks and seeing people use First Shift's extensive resources to stand up to harassment and discrimination. I saw the barriers that immigrant womxn faced as they balanced jobs with arduous physical labor requirements and high-risk pregnancies.

I learned to read through the fine print of employment contracts. I saw the ways that employers use fear to induce employees into accepting sub-par working standards. I witnessed employers wield employee immigration status as a weapon. Throughout the summer, I was challenged to question my beliefs and internal biases. I was made to look past my initial understanding of the law and dig deeper. I finished my internship as a more informed law student and someone passionate about continuing the fight for social justice.

As I go into my second year, I have recognized the gaps in the law that fail to protect pregnant workers. I have decided to write my Law Review article about challenging the mandatory arbitration of pregnancy discrimination claims in the workforce and am pursuing other avenues to continue advocating for marginalized populations. None of this would have been possible without the funding I received from Equal Justice America.