



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2022 EJA Fellow:



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Update 1: It's been a busy first several weeks to my time as a summer clerk for Public Counsel's Opportunity Under Law Team! Though Public Counsel is based in Los Angeles, the team's matters span the country, which has allowed me to dig into a variety of issues. My primary project has been legal and legislative research for an amicus brief for the case on the Indian Child Welfare Act (*Brackeen v. Haaland*) headed to the Supreme Court. It's been incredible to be a part of different team meetings and discussions that narrow broad challenges regarding Indian law and the child welfare system into specific legal arguments and approaches. Through the research and writing, I've already been learning so much in practicing these important legal skills.

In the next few weeks, I'm also looking forward to some interviews with some of the young people that Public Counsel works with on a potential litigation case that I joined today. Really excited about these interactions—more updates soon!

Update 2: We're now halfway through my summer at Public Counsel, and I've continued to have incredible learning opportunities! My team's work with the Brackeen brief has continued, and we were able to get our first draft to our partner organizations and receive a bit of feedback. It's been a busy last week filling in the details before it was ready to be sent out, but I'm continually challenged in and learning about all aspects of legal writing. I'm also getting more involved in the new potential litigation case. Even though the timeline has changed so we haven't yet met with young people for the interviews, I've been assigned to a new research topic, and, after sitting on a meeting with a partner organization with a few attorneys discussing recent intakes with young people about the issue, I'm especially motivated to get to work and drive the timeline forward.

Public Counsel also had its first welcome back event, and I was able to meet with some law clerks and team members in person for the first time! Looking forward to continuing to work hard with this team.

Update 3: It's been an incredibly busy but rewarding set of weeks here at Public Counsel's impact litigation team! My team was hard at work for Brackeen, and I've continued to learn from my supervising attorneys and



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others on my team as the drafting and editing process continues. We just finished another round of edits to get the draft to different partner organizations for feedback from different perspectives and areas of expertise on Indian law; I'm looking forward to seeing how we keep refining the legal arguments behind the brief.

The potential litigation case has also been fascinating; along with different law clerks, I have been researching some discrete questions that are still open regarding the claim that can be brought. While I'm still researching and working through the research that has already been done, it's been particularly interesting to be a part of broader team meetings with partner organizations, where I'm able to hear more about the experiences of clients that is driving this litigation.

Update 4: It's been a whirlwind of the past few weeks! Coming to the end of the summer has meant coming to the final stages of the Brackeen amicus brief, so I've been hopping on meetings with our partner organizations, reviewing and responding to feedback to continue adjusting the brief to match what our partners' visions, and doing a lot of cleaning up and citation-checking. It's been especially cool to attend whole-group meetings with all the other organizations writing briefs, and to see how the different arguments piece together.

Another primary focus in recent weeks has been research and writing for a potential litigation case that has been progressing towards being filed. Along with some other Opportunity Under Law team clerks, I was researching and writing a memo regarding a specific argument for this potential litigation case. And just this past week, I've been assisting to draft the complaint's causes of action with another clerk. This case has also been incredibly interesting because I've had the opportunity to attend biweekly meetings with all the partner organizations, including pro bono counsel and the lawyers and partner organizations working directly with the clients. It's been an exciting opportunity to continue learning about the case from all different perspectives, and I'm looking forward to continuing following the progress of the complaint!

Update 5: I can't believe that my summer at Public Counsel has finally come to an end! After extending my internship for a few more weeks, I was able to help file the Brackeen amicus brief, along with a number of other groups filing amicus briefs from different perspectives, from Indian law professors to family defense attorneys, as the final step in the summer-long process of helping to draft and edit the brief. Furthermore, I was able to take on additional research assignments with the foster youth case, with another research question related to possible disability law-related claims that the team could make with its active litigation. This active litigation seeking affirmative rights for foster youth has been an incredible opportunity as well—I've not only been able to research specific potential claims, but I've also has been able to help draft part of the complaint and learn more about what a complaint actually looks like, and how all of the different pieces of research and collaborative work fit together. In addition to finishing up these projects, I was also able to assist with the editing process of a collaborative memo on the IntegrateNYC case, regarding possible state constitutional violations and the right to an anti-racist education.



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I've learned so much throughout the summer and had the chance to develop a number of skills that I will continue to hone after this summer, but the most impactful part of my summer was the opportunity to research and help draft the Brackeen amicus brief, which I've been sharing about since my very first update! It was so incredible to be a part of an amicus brief for the Supreme Court, working on a complicated brief assignment not just with a brilliant team at OUL, but also in tandem with so many thoughtful and smart groups writing the other amicus briefs. I've learned not only about collaboration, but also about refining and revising an argument to be as effective as possible.

Overall, I'm extremely grateful for the opportunity I had this summer to intern at Public Counsel. I had the opportunity to have a few (virtual) coffee chats with the supervising attorneys at the OUL Project, where I was able to ask questions about their own career paths and what brought them to Public Counsel and the ever-evolving impact litigation space.

As I think forward to my own path, I'm so appreciative of the opportunity to have gotten some exposure to impact litigation work, and I look forward to the other ways I can explore and deepen my understanding of children's law from different perspectives and theories of change. In particular, I'm grateful for such a collegial, collaborative summer intern experience, headed by a wonderful legal fellow and organizers at OUL, and done alongside other wonderful college interns and summer law clerks. I am extremely grateful to have support from Equal Justice America to make this experience possible.