



# EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

## SUMMER 2024

## EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



<b>NAME</b>	Christina Ramelli
<b>LAW SCHOOL</b>	Rutgers Law School - Camden
<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	ACLU of Pennsylvania

**Update 1:** I've just completed the third week of my internship at the ACLU of Pennsylvania. So far, I've been actively involved in assignments related to voting rights and researching the right to parole review and release, as well as how homelessness impacts both.

With the November election fast approaching, the ACLU of Pennsylvania is focused on enabling both in-person and mail-in voting. I've come to understand the crucial need to allow voters to cure, or fix their mistake, when mail-in ballots lack a date. Curing is a matter of protecting each voter's voice and choice.

My research into the right to parole release and fair parole review has helped me better understand how substantive due process, a grand legal concept I struggled with in law school, impacts people in their lives. Additionally, through research and discussions within the organization, I have learned more about how our criminal justice system ignores or is indifferent to the special challenges facing indigent defendants. In fact, just yesterday, the ACLU of Pennsylvania held a press conference about their latest filing to ensure that people who cannot afford a criminal defense attorney are provided with effective, free representation, as required by the Constitution.

**Update 2:** I'm more than halfway through my 10-week internship at the ACLU of Pennsylvania. I've been actively involved in assignments related to voting rights, the right to parole review and release, and First Amendment rights.

Gathering facts and sorting through discovery is crucial to building a case, from preparing for depositions to the trial itself. As the organization works on a First Amendment case, I have been able to be part of a larger team reading through discovery—an important hands-on learning opportunity.

With the November election fast approaching, the ACLU of Pennsylvania remains focused on



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enabling in-person and mail-in voting. It has been exciting to work on fact-gathering for the ACLU's latest filing in Washington County. The organization is holding a press conference to discuss the filing later today.

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**Update 3:** With only two weeks left at my internship at the ACLU of Pennsylvania, I've been wrapping up projects on free speech on public land and the right to fair parole review while also trying to gain exposure to as many aspects of a legal career as possible. My time here has allowed me to gain hands-on experience reaching out to prospective clients to learn about their legal challenges, reviewing discovery, and researching and writing about legal issues.

I have also participated in many educational meetings about issues outside of my current scope of work. The topics have ranged from free speech in the classroom to the current state of reproductive freedom. This week, the ACLU hosted a national briefing summarizing the recent Supreme Court Term, and several local legal organizations working to uphold prisoner's rights hosted a lunch and learn for their interns.

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**Update 4:** I've just wrapped up my final week as an intern at the ACLU of Pennsylvania! The experience has been incredibly enriching. I dove into a range of critical issues, from parole rights to voting rights and First Amendment protections.

A significant portion of my time was devoted to researching fair parole review in the Third Circuit and examining potential ADA and Rehabilitation Act challenges related to parole delays for individuals with disabilities.

This internship gave me invaluable hands-on experience. I spent days researching, analyzing cases, and piecing together legal theories to challenge unjust policies. Crafting legal arguments around these complex issues not only deepened my understanding of legal concepts but also honed my writing skills.

Overall, this experience has been transformative. Engaging in client outreach, participating in discovery, and observing trial preparation have all enhanced my grasp of what I've studied.

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**Update 5:** During my 10-week internship at the ACLU of Pennsylvania, I gained significant experience in various areas of law, particularly in voting rights, parole review, and First Amendment protections. With the November election approaching, I contributed to efforts focused on enabling mail-in voting and removing superfluous barriers like dates on the outer envelope. My research on the right to parole release deepened my understanding of substantive due process and the systemic challenges faced by indigent defendants. Additionally, I engaged in hands-on legal work, from client outreach, fact gathering, and reviewing discovery in preparation for trial. Throughout my internship, I also attended educational meetings on topics such as free speech, prosecuting the police, and reproductive rights, which broadened my perspective on current legal challenges. The experience was transformative, sharpening my legal skills and reinforcing my commitment to pursuing a career in law. I am immensely grateful to the ACLU of PA and Equal Justice America for this invaluable opportunity.