



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

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EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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Update 1: This summer, I am working as a legal intern at the ACLU of Texas, an organization I have long admired. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to join the ACLU team this summer and learn from some of the best public interest advocates in the state. I am also thankful to Equal Justice America and the William Wayne Justice Center for Public Interest Law at the University of Texas School of Law for funding my involvement in this exciting opportunity. During my time here, I've delved into research projects that address the First Amendment and other constitutional law issues. These projects have been both complex and challenging, but the support from the ACLU team has been encouraging. I'm thoroughly enjoying my internship and eagerly look forward to tackling more projects as the summer progresses!

Update 2: In my first month at the ACLU of Texas, I have learned not only about legal advocacy but also about the many different ways that one can make a difference—even outside of the law. Before starting my internship, I believed that impact litigation was the primary way to create substantial change in the law. But it is so much more than that, and thankfully, the ACLU of Texas has provided me with the opportunity to sit in on development, policy, and communication strategic planning meetings and learn from various advocates in the state. This past month, I also had the incredible privilege of working on a Petition for a Writ of Certiorari to the U.S. Supreme Court! Alongside ACLU of Texas attorneys and other summer interns, I worked as part of a team to finalize a cert petition defending our clients' First Amendment rights. It was an intense and fast-paced assignment, but the team supported me the entire way. My favorite part of working on this assignment was speaking with our clients afterward, letting them know we had filed the cert petition, and celebrating with them. Working on that assignment was a huge honor, as was the opportunity to meet with the clients. The cert petition the ACLU of Texas has filed will hopefully be granted by the Supreme Court so that we can ensure that the First Amendment Rights of our clients, and those of so many other Americans, remain protected.



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Update 3: Over the past few weeks, I have had the opportunity to work on projects concerning the intersection of civil rights, family law, and immigrants' rights. These projects have been eye-opening, and I've learned more about these topics than I ever thought I would.

However, my internship came to a grinding halt last week as Hurricane Beryl swept over Houston. While my experience under the storm was manageable, seeing how many Houstonians were affected after a Category 1 storm was saddening and distressing. In the next few weeks, as investigations occur to determine how to better prepare for the next storm, public interest lawyers' work will become critical to address the injustices caused by the state's mishandling and inefficient response to the storm.

Update 4: One of the highlights of my internship at the ACLU of Texas has been participating in legal strategy meetings as we prepare for ongoing or upcoming litigation. Recently, I had the opportunity to work alongside ACLU attorneys and discuss the pros and cons of pursuing different legal routes for a case we are working on. I got to see ACLU attorneys go back and forth as they considered every aspect of the case, and I was also able to share my input. It felt like real-time "issue spotting," like on a law school final exam, but this was far more enjoyable. In these meetings, I also witnessed the ACLU of Texas consistently prioritize their client's well-being at every litigation stage. Whether it's considering the emotional burden and cost a lawsuit may have, or whether it may cause our clients to relive a painful experience, this team keeps these concerns front and center at all times. It is a privilege to watch the ACLU of Texas work, and I know that I have learned skills and values I will carry for a lifetime.

Update 5: My time as a legal intern at the ACLU of Texas has ended. Throughout the summer, I had the amazing privilege of working with some of the most prominent civil and constitutional rights advocates in Texas. I learned more about what effective impact litigation looks like and the strategic planning it entails. Including assisting in drafting pre-litigation memorandums, preparing the filing of a Writ of Certiorari petition to the Supreme Court of the United States, and participating in internal and external legal meetings.

Over the summer, I delved into legal areas I was unfamiliar with. From First Amendment law to family law and other constitutional rights areas, I learned far more than I could have imagined. At every step, I felt supported and encouraged by the ACLU of Texas team. I also learned how to approach legal research and manage deadlines more effectively. These skills are essential for advocacy, and it was a privilege to learn them from the skilled attorneys at the ACLU of Texas. The entire ACLU team knows the amount of work, effort, and perseverance it takes to advocate in a state that continuously harms the most vulnerable. I am lucky to say I got to work alongside them this summer.



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Ultimately, my time at the ACLU of Texas has been illuminating as to the kind of advocate I want to be in the future. I have found my purpose in the legal profession- to remain in Texas and continue fighting to advance the rights of all Texans, from the border to across the state. And I also want to work in a challenging yet supportive environment, so that I can continue to grow in my career. While I am unsure where I will end up after I graduate from law school next year, I know for certain that I am going to use my legal education to serve my community – wherever that may be.