



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2025

EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



NAME	Ku'Juana Quinn
LAW SCHOOL	University of Michigan Law School
ORGANIZATION	ACLU of Michigan

Final Reflection:

I've completed my EJA fellowship with the ACLU of Michigan and what an unbelievable experience it was! I couldn't have asked for a better host organization from the professional to personal growth I underwent in such a welcoming and supportive environment.

One of the most memorable moments of my fellowship was spending my final day at the Michigan Court of Appeals, watching our former legal director—now a judge—preside over oral arguments. It was really nice seeing someone with a civil rights background on the bench, and I appreciated the chance to ask the judges about judicial advocacy and how it can or can't show up at that level. As someone who entered this field to be an advocate, it's really important that I stay true to myself at all stages of my legal career. Hearing their stories and perspectives was a helpful reminder of that and gave me some valuable insight into how I can bring my advocacy into whatever role I take on.

This summer has been a great experience overall, pushing me to think in new ways and tackle some really complex issues. I worked on the Michigan youth sentencing project, where I explored how we could challenge life sentences for people under 21. I started with *Heck v. Humphrey* but quickly shifted focus to cases that have successfully overruled *Heck* to build a strategy for this case. The research and writing were challenging, but it forced me to think creatively and beyond the usual legal boundaries.

I also worked on a memo regarding federal disability statutes and police brutality, which was a new area for me. It was interesting to dive into how these laws are applied in real-world cases and get a better understanding of how civil rights law works in practice. It gave me a whole new



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perspective on how disability rights and racial justice intersect to discriminate against individuals, and how the fight for justice truly spans across identity lines. I also had the chance to have discussions with our Racial Justice Project attorney, which gave me valuable insight into racial justice work—specifically, how it can be stalled in the judicial system. Through integrative advocacy and bringing forth multiple claims, we can still seek justice. Even if the courts don't agree, we must continue to raise racial justice claims, but we have to do it strategically. The challenges this summer were real. Whether it was navigating complicated legal issues or figuring out how to balance so many moving parts, but every small victory felt meaningful. From refining a memo to uncovering a new angle in a case, it was rewarding to see how the work added up, even when things weren't always straightforward.

Overall, this fellowship has given me a clearer sense of direction. It's helped me see how important it is to stay true to my advocacy while learning to be strategic and creative in my approach to legal work. As I look ahead, I'm excited to continue my career in impact litigation, carrying forward the lessons and insights I've gained this summer. I'm grateful for the opportunities to grow in ways I didn't expect and eager to keep pushing for change in this field.