



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

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EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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Update 1: Did you know that nearly every minute someone in the U.S. is sexually assaulted? And that in a criminal case, the state, not the survivor, is the named victim? I am proud to be named a 2026 Equal Justice America Summer Fellow in support of my work addressing this justice gap at the Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation (The CAASE).

Two weeks into my legal internship at CAASE, I have already had the opportunity to contribute research that helps inch the legal system toward better serving and protecting survivors of sexual violence and exploitation. I am being trained to use legal advocacy to expand survivors' options and autonomy while confronting the ways the legal system perpetuates harm. I feel privileged to learn from practitioners with deep subject-matter expertise who have transformed so many lives.

This fellowship has also given me a special opportunity to reflect on the many supporters, mentors, supervisors, prior workplaces, peers, and colleagues who have consistently supported my wildest ambitions—and fueled my optimism in a safer and more just future. Thank you especially to the faculty, staff, and supporters of University of California, Berkeley - School of Law. I am honored to participate in a tradition of public interest lawyering that has made this opportunity possible. I am humbled and incredibly grateful for the opportunity to dedicate myself to this work.

Update 2: I can't believe my internship with The CAASE is already halfway over. This week, I had the privilege of meeting the team in person and visiting the beautiful city of Chicago for the first time. I am leaving deeply energized by the opportunity to learn from experts in this field and by the breadth and boldness of CAASE's work—from confronting cyber sexual abuse to advocating for criminalized survivors—united by an unwavering commitment to confronting sexual violence.



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So far, I have drafted my first civil complaint, edited a motion, and completed research projects that have shown me how the law can be shaped to better serve survivors and create a safer, more just world for everyone. Thank you to Equal Justice America and University of California, Berkeley - School of Law for supporting this opportunity.

Update 3: I want to call attention to nonconsensual dissemination of intimate images, often referred to as “revenge porn,” which has been the focus of much of my recent work at The CAASE.

Like many traditional terms for gender-based violence, “revenge porn” is a misnomer. Whatever motive a perpetrator may have for nonconsensually disclosing someone’s intimate image, this editorialized term obscures the crux of the harm: sharing intimate images without consent ruptures a survivor’s sense of privacy, safety, and trust, often with devastating consequences for their employment, relationships, and autonomy.

Working in this area has underscored for me that legal advocacy against gender-based violence reaches far beyond any one field of practice. These cases raise critical questions about privacy, technology, civil rights, and survivor autonomy. I am excited to bring these lessons back to University of California, Berkeley - School of Law in fall.

I also want to highlight an important new resource for survivors seeking to remove exploitative images from the internet: <https://ncvic.org/>

Update 4: As I head into my final week at The CAASE, I keep returning to one question: Why is CAASE’s model so rare?

In law school, civil and criminal law are taught as separate worlds. For survivors of violence, they are almost always interconnected. A survivor may be navigating the criminal legal system while also seeking a protective order, support at work or school, or help pursuing a civil claim.

Yet civil litigation and victims’ rights representation remain particularly inaccessible to survivors. Victims’ rights attorneys help survivors understand what is happening in a criminal case, communicate with prosecutors, assert their legal rights, and create a record when those rights are ignored. Civil attorneys help survivors pursue remedies directly against the people or institutions that harmed them. CAASE recognizes that survivors deserve access to both.

We must always remember that the impact of sexual violence is enormous. Most of us recognize that violence, abuse, and exploitation are among the worst harms that can be inflicted on a person. We fear them and try to protect ourselves from them, even though responsibility for



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these acts lies entirely with the people who commit them. The financial consequences for survivors are also staggering—the CDC has estimated the average lifetime cost of rape at well over \$100,000 per survivor. Civil litigation can help survivors recover resources and regain some of the choices that violence tried to steal from them.

CAASE recognizes this reality. Its attorneys work with survivors as whole people rather than treating their needs as separate and isolated legal matters.

One of my fears entering law school was that building a sustainable career would require me to compromise my values. CAASE has made me much more optimistic. I am incredibly grateful that this is where I got to begin my legal career. Thank you to Equal Justice America and University of California, Berkeley - School of Law School of Law for making this summer possible.

For my Chicago connections: CAASE's Celebrating Allies fundraiser is coming up on October 28. I so wish I could be there to hear from survivors and celebrate the people who have dedicated their careers to building a better world. Attend or learn more here: <https://lnkd.in/gkHaBAfH>

Final Reflection: I often hear the same goal from survivors of gender-based violence: they want accountability, and they want the harm to stop with them. This has stayed with me. Choosing to confront something devastating for the possibility of preventing it from happening to someone else is a generous act. It takes immense bravery to subject yourself and your experiences to the scrutiny of the legal system without any guarantee that it will deliver a just outcome. I am deeply grateful to every survivor who has trusted me with their experiences and had the courage to speak about what happened to them.

My work with The CAASE this summer reinforced something I hope to remember throughout my career: our clients are the experts in their cases. Survivors understand their experiences, their safety, their relationships, and their goals in ways that lawyers never can. We have so much to learn by listening. The clients I encountered were extraordinarily smart, capable, and persistent. Most had ambitions interrupted by what happened to them, including dreams of becoming lawyers themselves. I often thought about how many people have the talent and grit to pursue those goals if only they had greater access to resources, stability, and the bandwidth that violence takes away.

I leave CAASE deeply grateful for the experience, and especially for the mentorship and support I received from Briana Singson and Deborah Hogan. I also return to University of California, Berkeley - School of Law with a refreshed sense of why I want to be a lawyer. Law school deals in abstractions. Words that feel intuitive in everyday life can become intellectualized beyond recognition. We learn that policy arguments are weak, even though policy is at the heart of why



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laws exist in the first place.

Lawyers have the opportunity to wrestle with the law so that it better conforms to the contours of everyday life. That reckoning matters because violence and exploitation are unpredictable, and the law is meaningless if its protections disappear when tested against reality. This summer gave me the privilege of turning legal abstractions into something concrete for people who had been harmed: a complaint, a demand letter, an argument for accountability. Words give abstractions force in the real world and can help shift power back toward someone who has had it taken from them.

I hope my pro bono peers and other Equal Justice America fellows are returning to campus with some version of that feeling: a clearer understanding of what our legal education can make possible and a stronger sense of how we need to use it.