



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

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EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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ORGANIZATION	MacArthur Justice Center; Public Defender Service for D.C.

Update 1: Hello! I am excited to share that I've been selected as an Equal Justice America Fellow for my work during the first half of this summer as a Law Clerk at the MacArthur Justice Center (MJC) in Chicago. I will be working on cases touching on police misconduct and prisoner's rights, including on cases surrounding misconduct committed by immigration officers in Chicago over the past year.

This work is made possible by Equal Justice America. EJA funds law students committed to expanding access to justice to the most vulnerable members of our communities. If you'd like to help more students do this work, please consider donating.

Update 2: I have continued work at MacArthur Justice Center. The biggest development since last week was that I visited the Broadview Immigration Processing facility, where MJC is monitoring certain conditions pursuant to a preliminary injunction entered in *Moreno-Gonzalez v. Mullin* (25-cv-13323). I met with individuals detained at Broadview, asked them questions about the conditions and their treatment, and collected a declaration documenting some violations of the preliminary injunction. Besides that, I have been refining research for our Federal Tort Claims Act cases against immigration officers and for a case seeking prospective injunctive relief for individuals in solitary confinement. I am also drafting a habeas petition for individuals whose liberty interest in parole, created under state law, has been repeatedly abridged by the parole board.

Update 3: I am winding down my summer at the MacArthur Justice Center. In addition to the projects I mentioned in my other updates, I have been working on drafting a state habeas petition on behalf of individuals wrongly denied parole in West Virginia. West Virginia case law is strong on incarcerated people's liberty interest in parole, and it appears that the parole board



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is violating their rights by giving undue weight to our clients' original convictions instead of their demonstrated rehabilitation. The habeas petition has given me a chance to highlight the successes of MJC's clients, as well as to critique the punitive and backwards way the parole board thinks about rehabilitation. I will have the petition finished by the end of the summer, and it has been exciting to learn about this (new to me) avenue to fighting mass incarceration.

Update 4: This week, I finished my final week at the MacArthur Justice Center. I spent this week finalizing a draft habeas petition, brought under state law, on behalf of an individual wrongly denied parole because of the severity of his initial conviction rather than--as his state law dictates--his demonstrated rehabilitation. Through this petition, I worked with MJC's client to accurately document and portray his success in his artistic endeavors, college and prison-provided coursework, and in his personal life to demonstrate the strength of his case for release. It was exciting to use favorable state law to argue for creative ways to combat mass incarceration, and to do so while building a relationship with amazing people who have spent far too long behind bars. I am hopeful that my work on this petition will ultimately lead to this individual's release.

Final Reflection: For the last four weeks, I have changed my approach to criminal legal system issues by directly representing individuals accused of serious felony offenses with the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia. It has been equal parts exciting and daunting to be responsible for defending my clients' constitutional rights during their criminal cases, which I have done primarily through researching and drafting significant portions of suppression motions for information obtained from my clients' cellphones and their cell-site location information, as well as other research and memos preparing attorneys to make the best arguments during our clients' trial. Regardless of whether I end up defending my clients' rights in civil cases or in criminal court, it has been eye-opening to complement my summer doing civil rights work with direct representation.

Over the course of the entire summer, I have gotten to learn from litigators and advocates at the top of their fields, on topics spanning from prisoners' rights to immigration to surveillance to criminal procedure. It has been exciting to learn from them and to feel like I can teach them something, too. It has also been beneficial to work in two different types of offices practicing different types of law. I have gotten a chance to see what the different office dynamics are like, and what kind of people succeed in each field. This summer has given me more information to decide which path I want to take for myself, and I feel well-equipped to make an informed decision when the time comes.

The part of my work of which I am most proud of this summer has been my work interacting directly with my clients. Whether it was individuals who were detained by ICE at the Broadview



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Processing Facility or individuals accused of serious felonies in D.C., having the feeling like I could advocate directly for the rights of people who have been subjected to the full force of powerful government actors has been incredibly rewarding. I got to explain complicated Fourth Amendment theories to clients, and I have provided an outlet for otherwise unexpressed frustrations about inhumane treatment in confinement. In both settings, I hope that I provided a sense of comfort to people without other places to turn for help. Though the direct and lasting impact of the work I did this summer may be more limited than I envision for my future work, getting the chance to help advocate for real people is something I thought would be incredibly fulfilling, and this hunch was proven correct. I am excited to take the energy, motivation, and experience from this summer to continue advocating for the rights of oppressed, overlooked, vulnerable people and communities next summer and in my career.