



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2026

EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



NAME	Kristen Shaw
LAW SCHOOL	University of San Francisco School of Law
ORGANIZATION	Equal Rights Advocates

Update 1:

During my first weeks at Equal Rights Advocates (ERA), I have supported the litigation team in representing a group of high school girl athletes pro bono. In their state, girls who participate in their sport are explicitly treated differently from the boys. The contrasting treatment includes the symbolic (trophies for boys, no trophies for girls) and serious (it's much harder for girls to advance to state competitions—which could give them opportunities for college scholarships—than boys competing in the same sport). This clear gender discrimination violates the federal Title IX prohibition on sex inequality in athletic programs. It is exciting to get involved in a case that benefits teenage girls, to help them grow into women who understand their rights and know there are good lawyers who will back them up.

Update 2:

As I continue with my summer clerkship at Equal Rights Advocates (ERA), I have been working with the litigation team to support women working in the building trades. These are highly-skilled female professionals working in fields like carpentry, painting, plumbing, electrical, and HVAC. Women make up just over 4% of the on-site building and construction trades workforce, and many suffer discrimination including relentless sexual harassment on the job. ERA offers legal advice and legal representation to these women. Recently, I supported a senior attorney with a service intake interview with a tradeswoman. I gathered together materials the potential client sent for review and organized the information into an intake template for the attorney. Then, with the potential client's consent, I listened in and took notes during the interview. This potential client works as a skilled union construction worker. Often, she is the only woman at a job site. She recently told her boss that she is expecting a baby, and requested accommodations to help her work more safely during her pregnancy. She was then almost immediately fired.



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Anti-discrimination laws do not mean anything if no one enforces them. As a law clerk, I am grateful to have the chance to support women like this as they face appalling discrimination because of their sex. I am proud to play a role in ERA's work to push for the rights of working women.

Update 3:

To support the litigation team at Equal Rights Advocates, I have been working on a long research project to look into court interpretations of the Washington State equal pay law. ERA is preparing a case on behalf of female employees of a large corporation with offices in several states. Appalling—in 2026—this corporation systematically underpays women in its workforce as contrasted to men doing comparably similar jobs. Washington passed one of the most comprehensive equal pay laws in the country in 2018 to ensure that women in that state make equal and fair wages. The Washington state court system, and federal courts in the state have since heard cases testing various aspects of this legislation. Now, as ERA prepares to fight for this group who learned they do not make as much as their male colleagues, my research will help them make strong arguments that will build on precedent and get justice for these women!

Update 4:

In my work to support the team at Equal Rights Advocates (ERA) this summer, I have been spending a lot of my time conducting research about the Equal Opportunity Commission (EEOC). This is in anticipation of the EEOC's proposed regulatory changes to how the agency enforces Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. Title VII is the legislation that prohibits employment-based discrimination based on sex, race and other characteristics. In the Spring, EEOC leadership signaled that they plan to stop the agency's long-standing collection of employee demographic data from employers nationwide. The EEOC has mandated this reporting since the 1960s. The data has been essential not only for the EEOC to enforce Title VII but also for wronged individuals to use to substantiate private rights of action in civil discrimination suits. Sure enough, on July 21, 2026 the EEOC publicly announced a proposed rule to halt collection of EEO-1 (employee demographic data). Federal regulatory changes typically go through a public process through which stakeholders can review and give substantive feedback on the proposed changes. As such, the EEOC launched a public comment period that will end August 11, 2026. ERA is leading a coalition of civil rights organizations across the country to push back against this proposed change to EEOC Title VII enforcement. I have been conducting research to help with this urgent project. Over the past two weeks I have developed a survey of the impact of EEO-1 data both internally, as used by the EEOC to enforce anti-discrimination law, and in the general research community to inform various studies. The research will be used by ERA leadership to demonstrate the positive impact, over decades, of this demographic reporting to help build a case against the end of this crucial data collection.



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Final Reflection: With EJA's support, I was able to accept a clerkship at Equal Rights Advocates (ERA) for my 2L summer. This was my first opportunity to experience how the law is both practiced and policy is impacted in a non-profit context. It was important for me to get this non-profit exposure as I move into my third and final year of law school to help me decide where I want to work after graduation. ERA is such a special organization that blends litigation with policy activism to change laws across the country together with strategic communications to galvanize grassroots support. I learned so much from the team about how and why to take on cases when other resources for women and girls facing discrimination are scarce. I was able to support litigation on behalf of (construction) tradeswomen facing on-the-job discrimination, a multi-state wage discrimination class action against a major corporation, and a sex discrimination case on behalf of high school girl athletes. At the same time, because my summer clerkship coincided with the federal government's attempt to change regulatory enforcement of anti-discrimination policy, I had the once-in-a-lifetime chance to participate in ERA's advocacy to protect the Civil Rights Act. Without EJA's support, it would be difficult—likely impossible—for law students to accept unpaid legal internships at non-profit organizations. I am grateful to have been chosen as an EJA fellow!