



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2026

EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



NAME	Ava Stuart
LAW SCHOOL	The University of Texas School of Law
ORGANIZATION	The Texas Civil Rights Project

Update 1: Two weeks ago, I began my summer as an Equal Justice America Fellow and Law Clerk with the Texas Civil Rights Project.

This summer, I am working on criminal legal issues and learning how legal advocacy can help protect the rights, dignity, and safety of communities across Texas. The opportunity to support efforts that address real consequences of the legal system and help ensure Texans have access to meaningful legal protections is the reason I applied to law school.

I am thankful for the chance to learn from the incredible attorneys, advocates, and organizers at the Texas Civil Rights Project, and I look forward to continuing to contribute to their work.

Thank you to Equal Justice America for supporting law students pursuing public interest work.

Update 2: I am very grateful to be spending my summer at the Texas Civil Rights Project as an Equal Justice America Fellow.

I have been working at the intersection of criminal legal policy and litigation for the past four weeks, and it has been invaluable in informing my path forward. Each day reinforces how critical access to legal representation is for communities navigating the criminal legal system.

Update 3: In my six weeks as a Law Clerk at the Texas Civil Rights Project, I have been able to work on a wide range of projects. Reengaging my policy knowledge while improving my legal research and writing skills has been exactly what I hoped to do this summer, and getting to do it in service of Texas communities makes it even better. Gaining in-depth knowledge in specific issue areas is something I have wanted to do for years. I have also been involved in coalition



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

meetings, which have shown me a different window into organizing. So much of the fulfillment I have experienced this summer is thanks to the fantastic mentors and collaborative team I've had the pleasure of working with thus far.

Update 4: With only two weeks left in my summer clerkship, I feel more motivated than ever to complete the work I've been invested in. In law school, the stakes of an assignment are always hypothetical—but this summer at the Texas Civil Rights Project, I've been able to connect the skills I'm building to real people and real consequences. That connection has been reinvigorating, and honestly makes this work feel so much more sustainable.

Final Reflection: As part of my Equal Justice America fellowship this summer, I've been sharing updates every two weeks about my time at the Texas Civil Rights Project. I'm very grateful to EJA for supporting my summer and giving me the chance to reflect on this work along the way.

I came into the summer hoping to leave with more clarity about the kind of legal work I want to do. I feel fortunate to have found that clarity. Working on criminal legal civil rights issues has been meaningful, challenging, and grounding. After a first year of law school that sometimes felt abstract, this summer helped reconnect me to why I came to law school.

I could not be more grateful to my mentor, Kirsten Budwine, Esq., and to the attorneys, advocates, organizers, and staff at the Texas Civil Rights Project who took the time to teach me, answer my questions, and trust me with important work. I feel confident that this is the kind of work I want to keep doing. I'm excited to carry more confidence and energy into 2L and into the organizations and advocacy work I will be part of this year.

If you'd like to support the work EJA does funding summer fellowships like mine, you can donate.