



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2026

EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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ORGANIZATION	ACLU SoCal

Update 1: The start of my internship at ACLU SoCal has been going great. ACLU SoCal has done an excellent job welcoming me into their work, and the attorneys I have worked with so far are not only excellent advocates but also thoughtful teachers. I am grateful for the opportunity to learn from such zealous advocates. Although the internship is remote, ACLU SoCal has made a concerted effort to foster connection through team meetings, in-person events, and weekly check-ins. I have already had the opportunity to meet many members of the team and look forward to continuing to learn from and work alongside them this summer.

I am currently working on a high-profile case that seeks to hold federal law enforcement accountable for abuses of power. It has been fascinating to support the attorneys' work by conducting research on the issues being litigated. I am excited to continue working on this case throughout the summer and to support the attorneys as they navigate motions practice. It has been a valuable learning experience to see how a case develops over several years and where it stands today. I am also supporting attorneys with policy work and learning how advocacy outside the courtroom can complement legal strategies. ACLU SoCal values multiple forms of advocacy, and I am excited to learn how these different approaches can make me a more effective advocate.

Update 2: I've been enjoying working with the Criminal Justice and Police Practices team at the ACLU of Southern California. Throughout the summer, I've supported attorneys with a variety of legal research and writing assignments. Every project has challenged me to think critically, strengthen my legal analysis, and become a more effective writer. It has been incredibly rewarding to see how the skills I've developed in law school translate into real-world advocacy.

One of the most meaningful parts of this internship has been learning from the attorneys on the team. I'm constantly in awe of the people I work with—they're deeply passionate about their



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work, fiercely committed to protecting civil rights, and still take the time to mentor interns. Whether they're providing thoughtful feedback on my research or taking time to explain litigation strategy, they have been generous teachers who genuinely care about helping us grow into thoughtful advocates.

This experience has reinforced why I wanted to pursue public interest law in the first place. Every assignment contributes to broader efforts to address systemic inequities within the criminal legal system, and it has been inspiring to work alongside attorneys who approach that work with both excellence and compassion. I've gained a better understanding of impact litigation while continuing to develop the practical skills I'll rely on as a future attorney. I'm grateful for the opportunity to learn from this team, and I'm looking forward to continuing to contribute throughout the rest of the summer.

Update 3: As my internship with the Criminal Justice and Police Practices team at the ACLU SoCal continues, I've had the opportunity to deepen both my legal skills and my understanding of impact litigation. One of the most valuable lessons I've learned is that meaningful systemic change requires more than litigation alone. Time after time, I've seen the ACLU SoCal combine strategic litigation with policy advocacy, community organizing, and coalition building. Watching attorneys collaborate with organizers, advocates, and directly impacted communities has reshaped my understanding of effective advocacy. This experience has reinforced the type of attorney I hope to become—one who recognizes that the law is only one tool for creating change and who understands the importance of working alongside the communities we seek to serve.

I've also appreciated being part of a team that is genuinely invested in mentoring law students. Although the internship is remote, the attorneys have consistently made themselves available to answer questions, discuss litigation strategy, and share insights from their own careers. The ACLU SoCal has also hosted a series of brown-bag presentations designed to support interns as we navigate law school and prepare for public interest careers. Topics have included post-graduate fellowships, judicial clerkships, and the organization's ongoing litigation and advocacy efforts, providing valuable guidance on how we can continue this work after graduation.

Update 4: I've continued to really enjoy my internship with the ACLU SoCal. The work I've been doing and the attorneys I've had the opportunity to learn from have significantly broadened my understanding of what a career in criminal justice can look like. Before this internship, I primarily viewed public defense as the main avenue for meaningful criminal justice advocacy. Through my experience at the ACLU, however, I've been introduced to other forms of advocacy, including prison litigation, jail conditions work, and post-conviction litigation. Seeing how impact litigation can be used to challenge systemic injustices has expanded the ways I think about advancing civil rights and protecting the rights of incarcerated people.



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One of the highlights of my internship has been collaborating with the ACLU's national team on an ongoing project. Working across offices has given me valuable insight into how large-scale litigation and advocacy efforts are coordinated, while also allowing me to build relationships with attorneys outside of the Southern California office. It has been rewarding to contribute to a project with national implications and to see firsthand how collaboration strengthens impact litigation.

Overall, this internship has reinforced my commitment to pursuing a career in public interest law. Each assignment has challenged me to grow as a legal researcher and writer while exposing me to new areas of criminal justice advocacy. I'm grateful for the opportunity to learn from such thoughtful and dedicated advocates, and I'm excited to continue building on these experiences throughout the remainder of the summer.

Final Reflection: My internship with the ACLU SoCal has come to an end, and it was an incredibly valuable learning experience. Throughout the summer, I gained a much broader understanding of what advocacy can look like beyond traditional litigation. I had the opportunity to learn about and contribute to civil litigation, policy advocacy, community organizing, and post-conviction relief. Seeing how these different approaches can work together to address systemic issues strengthened my interest in public interest and impact litigation.

During my internship, I worked on cases involving the Racial Justice Act, which gave me the opportunity to explore how racial bias can affect the criminal legal system and the challenges involved in seeking relief for individuals who have experienced that bias. I also contributed to a high-profile case involving government surveillance, which showed me the importance of litigation as a tool for protecting civil liberties and holding government actors accountable. In addition, I worked on a policy campaign whose goal was to spread awareness on the negative impacts of AB 1071, allowing me to see how policy advocacy can complement litigation and provide another avenue for challenging harmful policies.

One of the most valuable aspects of my internship was seeing how attorneys approach advocacy from multiple angles. I learned that meaningful change does not always happen in a courtroom and that effective advocacy often requires combining litigation, policy work, community engagement, and public education. This experience expanded my understanding of criminal justice work and reinforced my interest in pursuing a career focused on protecting individual rights and addressing systemic problems. I am grateful for the opportunity to have learned from the attorneys and advocates at the ACLU SoCal and to have contributed to work that directly impacts communities.