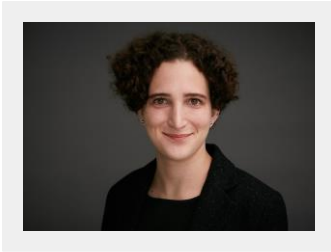




Summer 2020 EJA Fellow:



Name: Rachel Rein

Law School: Columbia Law School

Organization: The Human Trafficking Legal Center

Week of June 15th

Three weeks ago, I started my legal fellowship with The Human Trafficking Legal Center, a DC-based nonprofit which helps human trafficking survivors obtain effective pro bono civil legal representation.

Crisis lays bare inequities and injustices. So, I am especially grateful to serve amid the pandemic and U.S. protests with an organization that mostly serves BIPOC female survivors. For example, I have contributed to research on compensation for trafficking survivors so that they can rebuild their lives. I have become acutely aware of the disparities in compensation survivors receive in the legal system---disparities partially based upon who is able to secure effective representation.

I am fortunate to serve in an organization with a scope that reaches beyond U.S. borders. This past week, the Human Trafficking Legal Center released a guide to wipe out forced labor in supply chains. The guide explains how to petition the U.S. government, using the Tariff Act, to stop tainted imports. Please check out <https://www.htlegalcenter.org/our-work/our-publications/> for the full guide.

Finally, Equal Justice America has made it possible for me to focus on serving others this summer. As I continue my work in weeks to come, please consider donating to Equal Justice America.

Week of July 6th

A little over one month ago, I started my legal fellowship with The Human Trafficking Legal Center. I have focused my last few weeks on police accountability.

Sex trafficking victims report harassment and sexual violence at the hands of police, as do sex workers. I am researching specific cases of police sexual misconduct and abuse. The stories are harrowing and not mine to tell in detail. For example, I have read countless accounts of police threatening to arrest sex workers if they reject sexual advances. Recent reports (<https://newrepublic.com/article/156205/human-trafficking-prevention-month-dangerous-joke>) from Arizona indicate that federal prosecutors scuttled a multi-year sex trafficking



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investigation after allegations emerged that HSI agents engaged in sex acts with the victims they were "investigating." I am currently seeking avenues to speak with trafficking survivors so that they may share their own stories in safe ways. As always, the goal is for the survivors to maintain agency over their telling.

Equal Justice America has made it possible for me to continue fighting for the underserved this summer. As I continue my work, please consider donating to Equal Justice America.

Week of July 27th

As my legal fellowship with The Human Trafficking Legal Center nears its close, I have begun reflecting on how the anti-trafficking community currently serves survivors, and what changes the community can make to help survivors achieve justice.

Current criminal legal remedies for survivors can leave out, or harm, the most vulnerable. When police threaten to arrest survivors, especially people of color, for crimes they were forced to commit by their traffickers, they harm those they are sworn to protect. When activists neglect to listen to Survivor Leaders, the anti-trafficking movement as a whole suffers.

I am learning what it means to be a partner in fighting for equity, as well as how best to amplify survivors' voices. I feel lucky to work at an organization unafraid to ask hard questions, to listen, and willing to implement uncomfortable solutions.

Week of August 10th

As my legal fellowship with The Human Trafficking Legal Center comes to a close, I am especially grateful to take with me lessons for future advocacy.

First and foremost, I have learned that it is critical for advocates and partners to amplify survivors' voices. Instead of telling survivors' stories for them, pro bono partners can provide survivors with the tools to share their own experiences.

Next, I have learned that data is key. People's intuitions, no matter how well-intentioned, often fail to capture the nuances of issues. When advocates neglect the data, they may miss out on the most effective ways to help survivors achieve justice.

Finally, I have been reminded of the importance of teamwork and inclusion. I am grateful for the chance to have worked for an organization that values and supports its members, as well as inspires them to speak their own truths.

As I end my work (for now), please consider donating to Equal Justice America, which made my work possible.