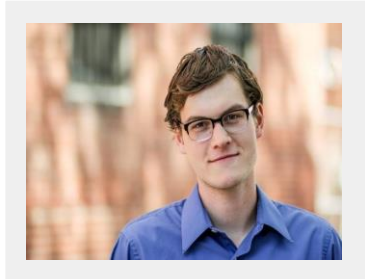




Summer 2021 EJA Fellow:



Name: David Tisel

Law School: NYU

Organization: American Friends Service
Committee

Update 1:

This summer, I am an Equal Justice America fellow at the American Friends Service Committee immigrant rights program, assisting attorneys with clients detained in New Jersey immigrant detention centers. I recently had the opportunity to appear in immigration court under supervision, and our client was released from immigration detention on bond! He will now live with his brother while continuing to apply for asylum in the United States. My first court appearance, though over the phone, was just as nerve-wracking as you can imagine. With Jordan's great supervision, everything worked out and our client is now out of detention.

Update 2:

2nd EJA Fellow Update! "Immigration law is a lot like tax law," said my colleague Guisselda. Knee-deep in alphabet soup, I couldn't agree more. Every industry has jargon, but Immigration Law seems almost calculated to be indecipherable. Halfway through my summer internship, I wonder how the system's complexity may be serving an objective to make it almost impossible for a non-lawyer to successfully defend oneself 'pro-se.' Like much of immigration law, complexity helps create a wedge between poor migrants/asylum seekers, usually unrepresented even when detained, and those with the resources to purchase compliance.

Here are some helpful acronyms I've learned, which are only a drop in the bucket. CFI = Credible Fear Interview; MTR= Motion to Remand OR Motion to Reopen; PFR = Petition For Review (in a Circuit Court of Appeals). And of course a few numbered forms. G28 = Notice of Entry of Appearance as Attorney; I-589= Asylum Application Form; I-918b = U Visa Certification Form, 42B=Application for Cancellation of Removal and Adjustment of Status for Certain Nonpermanent Residents. The list goes on much further!



Update 3:

I've been working on a Motion to Reopen for Ineffective Assistance of Prior Counsel, for a case that highlights for me the structurally racist interaction between immigration law and the War on Drugs. People are ensnared in the immigration deportation and detention machine based on convictions for minor crimes that non-immigrations, especially white people, do without getting arrested - like marijuana possession.

A is originally from Haiti. He has lived in a heavily policed part of NJ since the early 90s, and he has been arrested for simple possession of a small amount of marijuana four times in 20 years. He is a lawful permanent resident, but under the INA he is removable because of more than one conviction. And although Haitians are now generally eligible for temporary protected status, TPS, if you have 2 misdemeanors you are barred from applying for TPS. His best option is to apply for asylum, but this is an uphill climb, and he has already lost his asylum case and his appeal to the BIA.

Ironically, recreational marijuana is now legal in New Jersey. What about the people like A who were over-policed and have faced prison time or deportation because of the War on Drugs? Beyond legalization, what would reparations for the War on Drugs look like?

Entry 4:

Looking back on my summer at the American Friends Service Committee Immigrant Rights Program in Newark, NJ, I wanted to send a huge thank you to everyone there who contributed to my positive experience as a summer legal intern. It was a warm and collaborative work environment, and they trusted me with substantive work as a 1L intern, including appearing in immigration court under supervision, and writing a Motion to Reopen for Ineffective Assistance of Prior Counsel.

Also a huge thank you to New York University School of Law's Public Interest Legal Center, the Elizabeth Frankel Fellowship, and Equal Justice America for the funding that made my summer internship at AFSC possible.