



## Summer 2021 EJA Fellow:



**Name:** Claire Weintraub

**Law School:** Berkeley Law

**Organization:** Public Counsel

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### Update 1:

This summer I am working as a law clerk with Public Counsel's Immigrants' Rights Project to help provide legal representation to children in immigration removal proceedings. I am about two weeks into my clerkship, and so far, I have worked on asylum and Special Immigrant Juvenile Status applications, including meeting with clients over the phone. I have also had the opportunity to learn about and get involved with some of the legislative advocacy work that Public Counsel is doing in conjunction with other non-profits that advocate for immigrants' rights. It has been exciting learning about all the important work Public Counsel is doing in this area, and I am energized by the idea of simultaneously advocating for individual clients as well as systemic change to our immigration system. My clerkship was made possible in part by Equal Justice America's Legal Services Fellowship.

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### Update 2:

I am almost halfway through my summer clerkship with Public Counsel's Immigrants' Rights Project. Over the past few weeks, I have had the privilege of attending several discussions and trainings related to trauma-informed work, compassion fatigue, and professional burnout among public interest attorneys. I have really appreciated the chance to gain a deeper understanding of what trauma is and the ways in which it may manifest in an attorney-client relationship. This feels especially important in immigration law, as so many clients are not only fleeing traumatic experiences in their home countries but also being re-traumatized by the legal immigration system itself, which forces many clients to repeatedly relive their most painful and difficult experiences. While a more humane immigration system is the long-term goal, I am grateful to be gaining the skills and knowledge necessary to work with clients in a trauma-informed way as I begin my career as a public interest attorney.



### **Update 3:**

Over the course of my summer clerkship with Public Counsel's Immigrants' Rights Project, we have both celebrated and lamented some pretty significant legal changes in the field of immigration law.

For example, in June the Attorney General vacated two administrative decisions from the previous administration that severely limited the rights of individuals fleeing domestic violence in their home countries who were seeking asylum in the United States. This was a huge win for those asylum seekers and their advocates.

On the other hand, the Supreme Court, in some cases unanimously, ruled against immigrants in a series of decisions released in June and July. This included a decision limiting access to bond for certain individuals being held in immigration detention and a decision prohibiting access to Legal Permanent Residency for many recipients of Temporary Protected Status.

Given the inconstant nature of immigration law, access to affordable legal services for those navigating our immigration system is particularly important.

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### **Entry 4:**

This week I am finishing up my summer clerkship with Public Counsel's Immigrants' Rights Project. I will have a few last calls with clients to wrap up my work on their cases and the chance to participate in some legislative advocacy meetings. I am extremely grateful to Public Counsel and all of the attorneys and staff who welcomed me onto their team and shared their knowledge and experience with me this summer. I have learned so much about the substantive practice of immigration law, particularly as it relates to unaccompanied children, as well as best practices for approaching the work in a client-centered, trauma informed way. It has been such a privilege to witness the zealous advocacy of everyone at the Immigrants' Rights Project first-hand, and I am excited to bring the lessons learned this summer into my future career.

My clerkship was made possible in part by Equal Justice America's summer civil legal services fellowship. You can contribute to Equal Justice America and their efforts to support law students and recent graduates in providing affordable civil legal services.