



# Information Supplied By Candidate

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## Part I. Project Description

### Statement of Need

After a long day, █████ put in headphones and treated herself to a bath. While she was in the tub, her five-year-old daughter █████ got out of bed and wandered to her great-grandmother's house across the street. For █████ a devoted single mom, this incident was life-altering: authorities removed █████ to foster care.

█████ story is not unique. Black and brown mothers live in fear of "The New Jane Crow." The child welfare system has become for Black women what the criminal legal system is for Black men—an invasive institution that monitors and punishes them for socio-economic factors beyond their control. As society confronts structural racism in policing, it must simultaneously address systems that target families for surveillance and separation.

In New York, nearly 18,000 children live with strangers in foster care. Most were removed not for abuse, but for alleged neglect—often arising from circumstances related to poverty, such as insecure housing, poor nutrition, or lack of childcare. Racial disparities in the foster system are stark. In New York, Black children, who make up less than 15% of the population, comprise nearly 57% of foster youth and are more than twice as likely to be the subject of calls to the Central Registry. Nationwide, over 50% of Black children have had their parents investigated for abuse or neglect, and Black families are twice as likely as white families to be permanently torn apart.

Black and brown parents already face uphill battles in child protective services (CPS) cases, confronting bias, fewer resources, and greater odds of having a past conviction. They are further disadvantaged by the state's failure to require parent representation or information about their rights during the CPS investigation phase. Parents must navigate CPS questioning, home visits, strip body checks of their children, and demands for medical records without support. Indeed, most parents do not meet their lawyer until their first court date, after a full investigation has been completed and, in many cases, after their children have been removed. Moreover, because the state leaves counties to fund representation for indigent parents, the assigned attorneys are often over-burdened and ineffective.

Yet New York is poised to lead. In New York City, advocates have pioneered new models of early representation that are ripe for replication statewide. In this moment of unprecedented attention to racial justice, real change is urgent, and it is possible.

### Project Goals

My project will combat the surveillance and punishment of Black and brown mothers to reduce family separation. I will advocate for early access to counsel and other improvements to parental representation, provide information to parents about their rights and resources in CPS interactions, and educate health care providers about their role in triggering CPS cases through drug testing and reporting. I will also explore opportunities for impact litigation.

Policy & Legislative Advocacy: I will work with coalition partners to advance legislation and policy initiatives that help indigent parents access counsel at the outset of a CPS investigation, as well as other reforms. I will draft support memos, participate in policy briefings, help shape legislation, and comment on proposed administrative changes as opportunities arise. I will seek to expand and deepen the base of support for this issue, building on current momentum for racial justice.

Impact Litigation: I will seek opportunities to file amicus briefs and/or bring litigation challenging the state's failure to provide adequate counsel at pivotal moments in CPS cases, such as the investigation stage and initial removal decisions, where fundamental liberty interests are at stake.

Community Outreach & Education: Many people know their rights when approached by police officers, but few know their options when speaking to CPS investigators, who are not required to provide the equivalent of a Miranda warning to notify parents of their rights to deny entry or refuse to answer questions. CPS frequently pressures parents to provide unfettered access to their homes and make incriminating statements that may be used against them later. To better prepare parents for CPS interactions, I will develop and distribute materials on rights and resources, coordinating with [REDACTED] chapters located throughout the state to reach families in underserved upstate communities.

Health Care Provider Outreach & Education: Many child removal cases begin with health care providers, who mistakenly think they must test infants and pregnant individuals for drug exposure and report positive tests to CPS. Public health groups strongly oppose this: it can lead to separation of newborns from nursing parents and deter pregnant people from seeking health care. I will develop and present educational materials to health care providers to clarify their requirements under law and help them understand the devastating consequences of over-reporting.

## Two-Year Timeline

### 0-6 Months:

- Collaborate with coalition partners and [REDACTED] chapter offices to identify key stakeholders across the state.
- Deepen relationships with coalition partners and develop short-, mid-, and long-term goals, which may include pursuing litigation, testifying at hearings, meeting with agency officials, educating legislators, and engaging the public.
- Identify opportunities to file amicus briefs by tracking cases in New York State courts and federal courts. Draft and submit briefs.
- Monitor intakes for potential impact cases or pro-bono referrals. Engage in legal research to inform potential litigation.
- Work with the [REDACTED] eight chapters to connect with community-based organizations providing resources to impacted families.
- Begin developing Know Your Rights (KYR) and educational materials for parents and health care providers.

### 6 - 12 Months:

- Pursue opportunities for legislative and administrative advocacy, such as testifying at hearings, meeting with agency staff, and educating legislators.
- Continue to identify opportunities to file amicus briefs. Draft and submit briefs.
- Continue to monitor intakes for potential impact cases or pro-bono referrals and engage in legal research.
- Work with [REDACTED] chapters and community-based organizations to coordinate and present KYR trainings for parents in underserved areas.
- Disseminate educational materials to health care providers throughout the state, targeting public hospitals.
- Explore potential opportunities to partner with social work schools to develop a clinical program focused on advocating for parents.
- Collaborate with [REDACTED] communications and organizing departments to develop public engagement strategies.
- Reflect on the successes and challenges of the first year. Reassess project goals to ensure the needs of impacted communities are being met.

- 12 - 18 Months:**
- Continue to support legislative and administrative advocacy.
  - Continue to identify opportunities to file amicus briefs. Draft and submit briefs.
  - Continue to monitor intakes for potential impact cases or pro-bono referrals. Potentially draft a complaint and initiate civil litigation, as appropriate.
  - Expand and continue KYR trainings with community partners for parents in underserved communities.
  - Expand and continue educational outreach to health care providers throughout the state.
  - Strategically incorporate communications and organizing efforts to bolster advocacy.
  - Continue to explore potential opportunities to partner with social work schools to develop a clinical program focused on advocating for parents.

**18 - 24 Months:**

- Continue legislative advocacy efforts.
- Support any ongoing litigation efforts.
- Bolster legislative advocacy and litigation profile through public engagement campaigns, including potential media opportunities.
- Continue KYR presentations and provider education.
- Leave the [REDACTED] with a transition memo summarizing the current state of play and identifying ongoing advocacy and litigation opportunities.
- Transition KYR and provider education outreach to appropriate chapter staff and community partners.
- Develop sustainability plan for the project.

## Distinction Between Project and Existing Services

There are no services currently provided that address the need of the community to be served.

## Community Collaboration

Collaborating with community-based service providers will be essential to this project's success. Local direct service providers witness firsthand the destructive impact CPS can have on families and play a key role in identifying the mechanics of injustice. Because they are closest to the problems, they are also in the best position to inform solutions. It is important that every stage of this project is guided by the lived experience of impacted families and the practitioners who stand with them, and I plan to collaborate with them throughout my work. I have already discussed this project with the Bronx Defenders, PLAN, and CFR, and they welcome the [REDACTED] contributions in this space. I will also draw on the [REDACTED] chapter offices' relationships with direct service providers in upstate communities to learn about the unique issues they face and support their clients through KYR trainings.

Collaborating with partner organizations will be key to generating momentum and leverage for legislative advocacy. The [REDACTED] has relationships with community-based and legal impact organizations like PLAN, Movement for Family Power, and National Advocates for Pregnant Women that can help develop a strategic legislative advocacy plan that includes stakeholders and policymakers as allies. PLAN is a network of affected parents, legal services providers, and non-profit organizations that have experience with child welfare-involved children and families across the state. They have deep insight into the realities of the current system of parent representation and can help craft responsive advocacy approaches that incorporate compelling individual stories. Movement for Family Power works nationally to reduce the harms associated with the foster system. We can collaborate to bring tactics and lessons from other states to bear in New York. National Advocates for Pregnant Women will also be a useful ally in the realm of drug testing and reporting, as they can provide nuanced expertise on an intricate legal landscape. We will also partner with health organizations and associations that can facilitate connections to health care providers for education and engagement.

Ultimately, this project will not only rely on collaboration with other organizations, but also on the trust of

impacted communities. I intend to listen to and learn from community members and direct service providers and continually calibrate my work to respond to their needs and goals.

## **Potential Sponsor Involvement**

Fellowship sponsors can meaningfully expand the reach of this project. Law firms may have the opportunity to serve as co-counsel on impact litigation that establishes a parental right to earlier representation in CPS cases. Attorneys may assist with legal research, drafting pleadings, complaints, and briefs—including potential amicus briefs—and factual investigation. I can also refer individual clients facing CPS cases to a sponsoring law firm for pro-bono representation. Additionally, I am eager to train law firm staff, including both attorneys and paralegals, to deliver KYR trainings. This would significantly enhance this project's capacity to reach more parents throughout the state.

Non-legal sponsors would also be valuable assets in this work. Communications experts could help design education and training materials, along with graphics, websites, and flyers for both targeted and general audiences. They could also support media advocacy, such as by helping place op-eds. Any sponsor organization would additionally be welcome to support legislative advocacy efforts, accompanying me to hearings and meetings with local representatives. I would also be delighted to share my work with the sponsoring organization in order to deepen their understanding of these issues.

## **Candidate Pro Bono Experience**

During my first year of law school I volunteered with the International Refugee Assistance Project to support pro bono attorneys working on an asylum case for an Iraqi client. I worked with a team of students to provide regular updates to the supervising attorneys and facilitate communication between them and the client, who ultimately obtained a visa.

In addition to this direct experience with pro bono attorneys, I have significant experience coordinating projects and managing others, even those who are senior to me. Working as New York Governor Cuomo's briefer, I regularly assigned briefings to senior policy staff and respectfully managed and edited their work. As New York's Deputy Organizing Director on a 2016 presidential campaign, I additionally oversaw the work of full-time organizers and large numbers of volunteers. More recently, I was a member of my law school's Community Advocacy Lab clinic, where my client was a nonprofit organization. In this role, I served in a sense as the pro bono attorney, engaging in advocacy in concert with and at the behest of another entity. I believe these experiences have prepared me well to coordinate pro bono activities among busy attorneys, accounting for deadlines, revisions, and meaningful engagement.

## **Part II. Candidate's Personal Statement**

### **Personal Statement**

My perspective on the world and commitment to working towards social change were shaped by my upbringing at the nexus of privilege and insecurity. My sister and I were primarily raised by a single mother, who worked and sacrificed tirelessly so that we could benefit from educational resources and opportunities in a community we could barely afford. As a child, I witnessed the exhaustion and anxiety that my mom bore, even in our position of relative advantage. As I grew older, I began to understand the systemic nature of racial, gender, and economic oppression that makes striving for opportunity even more difficult for low-income women of color.

I came to law school to become a more effective ally in the fight to reduce inequalities and improve access to justice for all. I also hoped it would reveal a lynchpin issue that, if resolved, could loosen a tangle of other problems and generate a cascade of positive effects. I believe "The New Jane Crow" is that issue. In Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw's intersectionalities workshop, we discussed a Dorothy

Roberts article about prison and foster care. I was struck by the incisive way it connected the threads of structural racism, sexism, and classism to reveal a vicious cycle of oppression. It threw into relief the systemic stressors, rooted in our history of slavery and stereotypes about Black women's capacity for motherhood, that my family was privileged not to face.

Roberts' analysis also resonated with my experience volunteering with women incarcerated at Rikers Island. While these visits began as poetry discussions, they invariably evolved into conversations about personal values, family, and life's challenges; most women wanted to talk about their children and expressed that being separated from them was the most difficult aspect of their incarceration. This small window into their anguish profoundly affected me and grounds my commitment to this project.

In addition to continuing to listen and learn from impacted communities, I will also bring my own insight into the New York policymaking process to this fellowship. Working as Governor Cuomo's briefer, I had a unique window into the considerations that drive decision-making in New York government. As an advocate, lobbyist, and organizer with the Women's March, I further explored the range of tactics needed to influence the conversation. More recently, in my law school clinic, I learned how to use movement lawyering methods to advocate for policy change, while working to eliminate incarceration fees in New York State. I applied these lessons last summer as a policy intern with the [REDACTED] working in coalition to advance civil rights at the intersection of race and gender through legislation and public education. As an EJW fellow, I will draw on my familiarity with the dynamics of New York politics and bureaucracy to fight effectively alongside New York families.

My personal experience and exposure to others' struggles fuel my commitment to fighting the violence of family separation, and I believe combatting the foster system's disproportionate harms is an integral part of the struggle for racial, gender, and economic justice. If selected for this fellowship, I will use my skills to help break the oppressive cycle of family surveillance, disruption, and punishment and effect meaningful, community-centered change.

# Information Supplied by Host Organization

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## Part I. Host Organization Background

### Total Number of Attorneys on Staff

27

### Previous Experience Hosting Equal Justice Works Fellows

Yes, we have experience hosting fellows.

### Pro Bono Experience

The [REDACTED] has extensive experience working with law firms. For example, over the past several years, the [REDACTED] worked with pro bono attorneys to analyze the results of Freedom of Information Law requests concerning data and policies from more than 20 police departments, culminating in the release of a "Police Report Card." We often co-counsel with pro bono partners on major litigation, such as our class action lawsuits challenging the solitary confinement practices in New York prisons and the stop-and-frisk practices of the New York City Police Department. We also routinely engage with law firms on more discrete legal and policy research and writing projects. Our New York City location coordinates our relationships with many law firms' pro bono programs, and we have recently designated an experienced attorney, Lisa Laplace, to prioritize and expand our collaboration with pro bono partners.

## Part II. Candidate Relationship with Host Organization

### Candidate Experience at Host Organization

Ms. [REDACTED] has done substantial work with the [REDACTED] as a legal policy intern during the summer of 2020. Due to the pandemic's virtual realities, the [REDACTED] did extensive onboarding with Ms. [REDACTED] and the rest of the 2020 intern class. This onboarding focused on [REDACTED] policy and procedures, DEI trainings, and aimed to develop students' skills in writing and more. As an intern, Ms. [REDACTED] attended weekly policy department meetings where staff provided updates on their ongoing projects and discussed strategic approaches for a wide-variety of civil rights issues. She also met with staff and conducted legal research and writing for members of the policy department. Ms. [REDACTED] met separately with her supervisor and mentor weekly to monitor progress, answer questions, and provide feedback, both of whom will play significant roles in Ms. [REDACTED] fellowship. Over the summer, Ms. [REDACTED] participated in the development of the [REDACTED] agenda related to the family regulation system, the core of her proposed fellowship project, and worked closely with the staff who will supervise and work with her. Ms. [REDACTED] is fully informed about the salary and benefits provided by the [REDACTED]

## Part III. Project Background

### Conception of Project and Its Relationship to Mission of Host Organization

This proposal grew out of a recognition of the need to confront the racial justice, gender justice, due process, and civil liberties issues rampant in the child protective system in New York, as well as the

shortcomings of existing models of legal representation. Following the lead of grassroots activists and defense providers, the project focuses on the ways in which child protective services often remove children from their homes for reasons having much to do with poverty and circumstances beyond a parent's control and in ways that overwhelmingly impact families of color and women of color. Where the criminal legal system has been called the New Jim Crow, the child welfare—or family regulation—system has been called the New Jane Crow. Our project will focus on strengthening the due process protections afforded to parents at the early stages of child welfare investigations through better access to counsel and information about a parent's rights, including through legislation, possible litigation, and outreach to stakeholders, such as social workers and health care providers. The fellow will focus on parts of upstate New York where resources are scarcer. This is one pillar of our broader racial and gender justice agenda.

The project builds on the [REDACTED] prior litigation and legislative work to ensure a meaningful right to appointed counsel. In 2014, the [REDACTED] settled a lawsuit brought against five counties for failing to adequately ensure that criminal defendants received effective assistance of counsel, requiring a number of reforms. In 2017, in response to our lawsuit, legislation reformed New York's public criminal defense system statewide, including shifting costs from cash-strapped counties to the state. One of the aims of this project is to expand these types of reforms to the often-overlooked parental defense system, particularly in underserved regions that have few, if any, institutional legal services providers.

The fellow's work will be distinct from that of current [REDACTED] staff; she will be the only staff member focusing primarily on child welfare issues, although she will be supported and mentored by a team of attorneys. The [REDACTED] maintains relationships with other advocates working on these issues and supported legislation reforming the family regulation system; we hope to use this fellowship to expand that work into a more robust part of the [REDACTED] agenda. The EJW fellow will play an indispensable role helping us accomplish that objective.

## **Part IV. Supervisor Information**

### **Supervisor's Expertise in Project Subject Area**

Deputy Policy Director Erika Lorshbough will supervise Ms. [REDACTED] Mx. Lorshbough has over a decade of relevant experience, including nearly seven years at the [REDACTED]. Since 2009, Mx. Lorshbough has worked on projects involving both access to justice and government regulation of families at the intersection of race and gender. These have included working in traditional and alternative intervention models around violence within family systems; developing family supports in the contexts of kinship care, re-entry after incarceration, and access to benefits and housing; and involvement with the statewide advocacy campaign to ensure that defendants throughout New York have appropriate access to counsel. Mx. Lorshbough is also a core participant in the [REDACTED] Gender & Sexuality and Racial Justice Working Groups. Among other things, Mx. Lorshbough participates in a project across these groups that aims to reinforce alternatives to police involvement where interpersonal violence has occurred.

### **Supervisor's Experience Managing Staff**

Mx. Lorshbough has over nine years of experience managing and supervising attorneys. This includes several years of providing direct supervision to multiple [REDACTED] staff attorneys/counsels and legal fellows and managing project teams that involve attorneys of varying levels of experience. Prior to their time at the [REDACTED] Mx. Lorshbough trained and supervised other early-career attorneys in both document production and criminal appeals defense. In addition, during law school, Mx. Lorshbough established and administered for two years a pro bono project that involved the training and supervision of law students, law graduates, and admitted attorneys in representation at public benefits hearings.

## Supervisor's Proposed Interaction with Fellow

Mx. Lorshbough will meet with Ms. [REDACTED] for an hour once a week to check-in on the status of the project and provide feedback. In addition, Mx. Lorshbough and Ms. [REDACTED] will meet at least twice a month with Policy Counsel Zach Ahmad, who has been developing the [REDACTED] work on family regulation and who has more than three years' experience representing clients in the child protective system prior to joining the [REDACTED] and with Senior Policy Counsel Katharine Bodde, who co-chairs the [REDACTED] Gender & Sexuality Workgroup and leads work on pregnant people's rights. These meetings will be opportunities to ensure the project is on track to meet its anticipated milestones, to brainstorm strategies, and to troubleshoot any issues that arise in achieving the project's goals. In addition, Ms. [REDACTED] will participate in Policy Department meetings once a week, which will allow her to seek feedback from a broad range of experienced civil rights attorneys and provide updates on her project.

## EDUCATION

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J.D., expected May 2021

Honors: [REDACTED] (for academic achievement), 2L Academic Year

Activities: [REDACTED] *Journal of Gender and Law*, Symposium & Special Projects Editor

[REDACTED] Law Women's Association, Co-President

Jailhouse Book Club, Campus Outreach Coordinator

Latinx Law Students Association Moot Court Competition, Team Member

B.A. in Political Science & Human Rights, received May 2013

Honors: [REDACTED] Leadership Scholar (women's leadership certificate)

Study Abroad: [REDACTED] Program at Reid Hall, Paris, France, Spring 2012

Peace & Conflict Studies in the Lake Victoria Basin, Uganda & Rwanda, Summer 2011

## EXPERIENCE

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[REDACTED] [REDACTED] New York, NY  
*Legal Intern, Policy Department* June 2020–Aug. 2020

Supported policy development and advocacy in areas of gender and reproductive justice, criminal justice reform, and privacy. Conducted research, prepared memos and advocacy materials, drafted legislation, and engaged with coalition partners. Invited to pitch novel bill amendment in meeting with state senate sponsor.

**Brennan Center for Justice** New York, NY  
*Legal Intern, Democracy Program* Jan. 2020–Apr. 2020

Conducted legal research in areas of voting rights and campaign finance. Assisted with litigation by drafting a request for admission and trial monitoring. Drafted advocacy materials, including an op-ed.

**Community Advocacy Lab Clinic** New York, NY  
*Student Participant* Sept. 2019–Dec. 2019

Developed policy research, advocacy, and movement lawyering skills while working with a client organization to challenge incarceration fees in New York State.

**Texas RioGrande Legal Aid** Edinburg, TX  
*Summer Law Clerk* July 2019–Aug. 2019

Served rural Hispanic families along the Texas-Mexico border. Represented clients in housing cases and performed client intakes at FEMA Disaster Relief Center. Researched and prepared memos to support immigration and family law cases.

**Mecklenburg County Public Defender** Charlotte, NC  
*Summer Intern* June 2019–July 2019

Assisted attorneys in holistic public defense practice. Interviewed clients, reviewed discovery, conducted research, prepared memos and motions, and accompanied attorneys to court daily.

**Kasirer LLC** New York, NY  
*Senior Associate for Nonprofits* Aug. 2017–July 2018

Lobbied on behalf of 20 nonprofit clients to secure over \$21 million in funding in the New York City budget.

**Women's March** Washington, DC & New York, NY  
*National Organizing Team Member* Jan. 2017–May 2018

Helped organize the 2017 Women's March on Washington. Co-led subsequent political engagement campaigns.

**Hillary for America**

*Deputy Organizing Director for New York*

Oversaw New York's out-of-state canvassing program, including transportation of over 5,000 volunteers to Pennsylvania. Selected for ad-hoc projects including a briefing for Secretary Clinton and election night staff.

Brooklyn, NY  
*Sept. 2016–Nov. 2016*

**Metropolitan Public Strategies**

*Associate*

Conducted research, designed strategy plans, and drafted communications materials for issue advocacy campaigns, resulting in the passage of state legislation and regulatory change.

New York, NY  
*Apr. 2016–Sept. 2016*

**Governor Andrew Cuomo**

*Special Assistant for State Operations*

Spearheaded drafting of the 300-page 2016 State of the State policy book. Developed and refined policy proposals in conjunction with program and policy staff, legal counsel, and the Division of the Budget.

New York, NY  
*Aug. 2015–Apr. 2016*

*Special Assistant to the Governor for Briefing; Excelsior Service Fellow*

Produced the Governor's daily briefing book and personally staffed the Governor.

*Aug. 2013–Aug. 2015*

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**INTERESTS:** Former professional-level ballet dancer; Resistance Revival Chorus co-founder, aspiring gardener

September 14, 2020

**SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY WITH APPLICATION**

Equal Justice Works  
1730 M Street NW, Suite 800  
Washington, DC 20036-4511

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing to recommend [REDACTED] for an Equal Justice Works Fellowship. [REDACTED] was a student in Community Advocacy Lab, the clinic I teach at [REDACTED] Law School. [REDACTED] is, simply put, a force. Her combination of intellect, empathy, passion, and leadership has driven her successes to date. I have no doubt these same qualities would make her proposed Equal Justice Works project working with mothers in the child welfare system a meaningful success.

My clinic is designed to engage students in a holistic, experiential, individual learning experience. As a result, I see my students as attorneys, as developing professionals, as citizen advocates, and as individuals seeking to contribute to justice. Thus, I have seen that [REDACTED] classic lawyering skills – interviewing, writing, oral advocacy, legal research and analysis – are top notch. The work [REDACTED] did in clinic focused on developing a campaign to address fees charged to incarcerated individuals and their families in New York State. [REDACTED] and her team's work required traditional legal research into statutes, regulations, and cases; extremely detailed research into the financial data behind various incarceration fees in different jurisdictions; gathering information from individuals working in the prison system; and gathering information from incarcerated individuals. It also required thinking creatively and strategically about advocacy to end these harmful fees. [REDACTED] work on this project was of the highest level, and ultimately produced a report that is information advocacy on incarceration fees around the country. It was also a project that required engaging in the complexity of government systems and the legacy of racism in them. [REDACTED] ability to be concrete and productive in her work, while simultaneously navigating this complexity, was exceptional and would translate directly to her proposed Equal Justice Works fellowship project.

In addition, [REDACTED] other skills, essential to being a public interest lawyer but not recognized formally in legal education, are as strong. [REDACTED] empathy and ability to connect with a range of individuals is core to her success as an advocate. Her collaboration and leadership skills – whether behind the scenes or at the front of the team – are incredibly strong. And her creativity – about how to access information, about potential solutions, about advocacy paths – was an essential component in the success of her clinic project.

I saw all of these traits play out in [REDACTED] work in clinic, and I saw them reflected in the respect her client organization and fellow students had for her. It is unsurprising to me that [REDACTED] previous employment, her activities as a student, and her volunteerism and activism all reflect these same traits. She is that unusual law student who has already figured out how to combine her intellectual and interpersonal strengths and use them, concretely, to motivate others to create change. Whether it is working for state government, organizing protest marches, founding a chorus, or interning for national advocacy organizations, [REDACTED] is able to lead towards social change.

[REDACTED] proposed fellowship project is a marvelous fit for her strengths, her interests, and crucial community needs. Speaking from my own expertise as an advocate and government advisor, the child welfare system is a travesty. Though it does not currently draw the public attention that incarceration does, it is at least as harmful to Black communities. [REDACTED] project proposal accurately captures that even incremental investment in information and advocacy would yield immediate improvement in many lives. And I have no doubt that if [REDACTED] were awarded a fellowship to do this work, it would launch the career of an extraordinary advocate for women and families.

I am happy to provide more information or talk about [REDACTED] candidacy. I can be reached at [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

September 16, 2020

Equal Justice Works  
1730 M Street NW, Suite 800  
Washington, DC 20036-4511

Dear Fellowship Committee:

I am writing to offer my strongest support for [REDACTED] application for a 2021-22 Equal Justice Works (EJW) Fellowship. As her spring 2020 externship supervisor at the Brennan Center for Justice, and as her professor in my voting rights seminar at [REDACTED] I got to know [REDACTED] her capabilities, and her work product very well. [REDACTED] has outstanding research and writing skills, exemplary professionalism, and a deep passion for civil rights work. Even as an intern, she dramatically increased our team's productivity while helping us respond to the COVID-19 crisis as it emerged in real time. As an EJW fellow, I know she will bring the same competence, reliability, and positive attitude she demonstrated throughout my work with her.

By way of overview, [REDACTED] was a very strong legal intern for three reasons. First, she added much-needed research and writing capacity as we rushed to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak in the midst of state primary elections. [REDACTED] contributed to our projects researching vote-by-mail policies in all 50 states, accurately deciphering state statutes and even catching discrepancies in others' work. She also fact-checked and edited state poll worker guides for use in the 2020 election cycle. This required nuanced attention to detail and willingness to spend time diving deep into the weeds of state and local election policies. A strong writer, I relied on [REDACTED] to draft and edit public-facing letters and op-eds. She was able to take these assignments and run with them, working independently and requiring minimal revision.

Additionally, [REDACTED] conducted herself as a very mature and sophisticated professional. Throughout her work for me, it was clear that [REDACTED] benefited from her years of experience before law school; she exercised thoughtful judgment and carried herself with aplomb. She showcased these skills when evaluating policy/political landscapes for state-specific work products.

In addition to [REDACTED] remarkable capability and work ethic, she also exhibited a sincere commitment to the civil rights of marginalized communities. While I worked with her primarily on voting rights, her interest in this topic was clearly grounded in concern for marginalized groups and the ways in which systemic harms disproportionately impact low income people of color. Her comments in class further revealed deep thinking and creativity to push beyond what the law was and imagine how it could be.

I offer my highest and most enthusiastic recommendation for [REDACTED] for the EJW fellowship. I have spoken with her about her fellowship project proposal and, while I believe she possesses the legal skills, persistence, and adaptability that will allow her to thrive in any job, I am confident she will succeed at this one. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Myrna Pérez". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Myrna Pérez  
Director, Voting Rights & Elections  
Brennan Center for Justice