

I was recently thinking back to when I decided to apply to Berkeley Law. I knew I wanted to become a more effective policy advocate, and thought that going to school to learn the languages and tools of law and policy analysis would help me get there, but I worried that the law school training would be more academic than practical. But Berkeley Law was different, in the way it held up its clinics as an invaluable part of its public mission. I thought I'd at least find a place in these clinics. And I'm only half joking when I say that what put me over the line was when I read Jeff Selbin's clinical professor biography and saw his picture, where he's smiling in a leather jacket - I thought: "Alright, it'll be okay."

In coming here, what I was hoping was a wise decision that would help me focus and specialize – turned out to be the greatest opportunity of my life. And that's all because of our clinics – because of the faculty and staff who go above and beyond, and because of the students who choose to participate. As my fellow students here today know, when you engage in these law clinics, it envelops you. It feels right. It feels like this is what law school should be about. I wish you could hear from every person here today about their work for justice, to move the needle substantially or just a bit in the right direction. I am inspired by you all – your tireless work alone, in teams, and as a clinic collective – inspired by what we've accomplished as a community and will do together in the future. For me, being a part of this community, this inclusive, fierce, and thoughtful tradition located inside the world's finest public school, has been the greatest distinction I have so far enjoyed. So it's quite difficult to put into words how honored I am to be recognized today – and to share this recognition with you, Caitlin. I want to extend my deepest thanks to the Sax family and Prize committee.

I cannot, of course, stop there. I'll try to be brief, but I have so many people to thank for their role in why I'm up here today. My past teams at EBCLC and the Policy Advocacy Clinic, or PAC, and my current PAC team: Rachel Draznin-Nagy, Ahmed Lavalais, and Tim Kline – I so admire your drive and work ethic, and I've learned so much from you about how to be part of a team. My past and present supervisors, and wonderful staff, at EBCLC: Sheila, Erin, Liam, Ted, Elisa, Tirien, Melissa, Sharon, Kate, and Mari. Thank you for your support, your patience with my endless questions, your straightforward feedback, and the work you've done at EBCLC for years in the past and what you'll do in years to come. Kate, you were an incredible client for our juvenile fees project, but most of all you're a model for what passionate advocacy should look like. And Mari, you approach your work assisting clients and pushing for policy change with a level of selflessness and awareness that impresses everyone around you – that is, on top of essentially running the entire Shattuck office.

And especially you, Jeff – I've learned so, so much from you over the past few years, and you've always helped me grow from my successes and my mistakes. I really aspire to be a teacher and advocate like you.

And finally, Stephanie. Stephanie is the glue that holds PAC together and keeps us moving. She works tirelessly, so often behind the scenes, to elevate the work of the students and the effectiveness of the clinic. She's also my closest friend at the law school. Thank you.

I also want to thank my parents, who are here today. They worked so hard to create opportunity for me, and foremost worked to instill in me that it is my grateful responsibility to use the opportunity they created, and the opportunity and privilege inherent in the circumstances of my birth – my geography, my sex, the color of my skin - to better the lives of others, guarantee opportunity and support for all, and help create a more inclusive, fair, and caring society.

My final and perhaps greatest thanks goes to Berkeley Law – to its administrators, faculty, staff, and donors, for the value they together place in clinical education. And, I should say, to the students who started EBCLC almost 30 years ago, and the donors who provide the 80% of its funding that doesn't come from the law school. I would not be able to accomplish the things I hope to accomplish without the institutional choices that lead to the creation and expansion of our clinical programs, and specifically EBCLC and the Policy Advocacy Clinic. I want to close today with what I've learned from my experience at the nexus of these two clinics, and my hope for what the future could look like and achieve.

The mission of the Policy Advocacy Clinic is to change local, state, and national policies to promote social justice, equity, and inclusion – and to do so in a way that the choice of mission and method is informed by the experience of providing direct services to affected people and families. By hearing not just of the details of the pain they endure daily – how expensive our society makes it to be poor, how inaccessible the court system is, how strenuous it is to constantly be subject to implicit and explicit racial bias that most of those in power cannot, and do not try to, come close to comprehending. And by making sure that the people experiencing injustice, who are the experts in what's needed, are at the center of the policymaking decisions, determining which fights are most important and how to craft policies that make sense on the ground.

I know the importance of policy change is not lost on anyone in this room today. As we've heard today, policy change is part of the work and mission of many of our in-house clinics, and EBCLC staff have for years worked to change policy that stands in the way of justice, because the clinic performs over 5,000 client services each year, but many of the issues are the same over and over again – and all of the students who have worked at EBCLC know the heartache of hearing a client's story and realizing that bad policy means we can help on only 1 of their 10 issues.

We live in a large state, but Sacramento is not far. And in this large state, of 40 million people, where luxury leads yet a tragic 40% are poor or near poor, our potential to have a greater policy impact that pays dividends here and beyond Alameda County is enormous. The Policy Advocacy Clinic has shown me that it's student involvement that can take our impact to the next level.

All the pieces that put us in a unique position are already in place: Backed by principled, objective research under the seal of one of the greatest research universities in the world, we could develop a presence in Sacramento that is driven by clinical students and client advocates working with post-graduate fellows living in the capital, and that is informed by thirty years of

qualitative, voluminous experience at EBCLC - experience with the nuance of need and with the limits of direct service in the face of socially and fiscally imprudent state policy. We already work with an incredible group of advocates and organizations outside of Berkeley, but no one else in the state exists at such a union of interdisciplinary research prowess, raw and passionate student talent, and connection with the needs of the community.

What an incredible learning experience it has been for me in the past few years be part of that community. One day at start of the semester I met a young client who years ago got a red light ticket, was too poor to pay the \$400 fine, was too poor to pay the additional \$300 civil assessment added by the state because he was too poor to pay the original fine, had his driver's license suspended in the pursuit of the collection of that \$700 debt, who had to keep driving in order to work to pay off that debt, whose risk of being pulled over is so much higher than mine because of the color of his skin and the condition of his car, who was pulled over for the 10th time in his life when that's never happened to me, who was then fined another \$400 and arrested for driving on a suspended license, and then fined another \$300 for being too poor to pay, and to have the cycle repeat itself a third time . . . to go from that day, to soon working with a coalition of lawyers and activists here and across the state to draft a bill to put an end to such a truly stupid policy . . . to finding that the data to make this case exists, but you're going to have to work hard to get it, and employ legal tools, and it's going to be a mess, and it's going to be hard to explain to reporters . . . but to in the end be part of the team that presents the bill and that young client's testimony, that is ready to help bring him to Sacramento to tell his story, that is today getting close to victory in the state legislature. A small victory, for certain, but one that will make an enormous impact in the daily lives of truly millions of people. And one that is replicable – not just by us, with more institutional commitment, but also by advocates in other states, who will look to that change because it was already achieved in California on such a grand scale.

You have all, together, created a place where students who dream of using legal training to make policy change can learn so intricately about the complicated, nasty character of systemic injustice, the way it is nestled inside a near incomprehensible state vehicle code, and every part of our laws, and through such learning figure out how we can systematically dismantle such injustice. I hope we can expand that opportunity for the next generation of Berkeley Law students, and by so doing expand and take advantage of our vast potential to facilitate change. Let's make it so incoming 1Ls who want to be advocates can take a two-week module in torts, contract theory, and the like, and devote the time liberated to developing clinical experience, learning theories of legal and policy movements, and then acting upon it together. Let's grow our clinic's connections with other Berkeley departments in order to leverage the resources we have at our disposal to most effectively influence policy. Let's fund a few post-graduate fellowships in Sacramento that strengthen our connection between here and there, extend the trajectory of training, and show young, aspiring advocates thinking about law school that there's a path for them inside Berkeley. The cost is small, but the opportunities are enormous, and I believe the impact will be outstanding. Thank you.