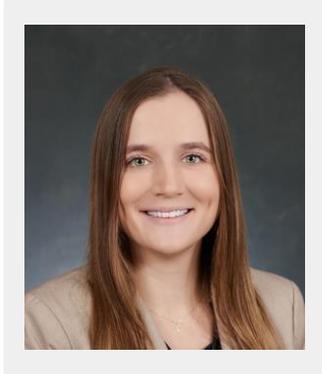




# EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

## Summer 2023 EJA Fellow:



**Name:** Emily Pratt

**Law School:** American University Washington College of Law

**Organization:** ABA South Texas ProBono Asylum Representation Project (ProBAR)

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### Update 1:

I have just started my fellowship with ProBAR in Texas. It has been an eyeopening experience coming down to the U.S.-Mexico border. I've learned so much about representing unaccompanied children and about the unique challenges that come with representing so many children who go through the many shelters at the border. I've gone to several of those shelters and observed court and have learned about asylum and Special Juvenile Immigrant Status. I am so excited for my summer at ProBAR!

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### Update 2:

I have spent the last two weeks starting on my first assignments and meeting clients who are represented by ProBAR. I have learned so much about the conditions in countries across the world, conditions that force people to move to the United States. I often wish I could do more to help, but I know that the services ProBAR provides are invaluable and I am happy to contribute. I was able to prepare petitions for SIJS status and work on research for asylum and for U-Visa Certification.

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### Update 3:

This last week I was given my first assignment on an adult case. The noncitizen ProBAR represents is detained, and has been detained for over a year. I was asked to help work on the request for a bond hearing. It was shocking and upsetting to learn how many noncitizens are subject to mandatory detention, in which they are detained without a hearing until their proceedings have concluded. Removal proceedings often take months to years, and even the commission of a minor crime from ten or twenty years ago can subject a noncitizen to mandatory detention. I wish more attorneys would consider taking probono immigration cases, or would consider traveling to the border to work. Noncitizens are not afforded the right to council, even if they're detained! Immigration law is extremely complicated, and simple mistakes can result in deportation.



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## **Update 4:**

The ten weeks I spent at ProBAR as a law fellow were invaluable to me and to my learning. It was a reminder of the need for accessible, affordable, quality legal representation for the many noncitizens in the United States who face deportation. I worked on the Children's Team with attorneys serving unaccompanied children in shelters at the U.S.-Mexico border. Many of the cases I worked on were with children seeking asylum in the United States or with children who had experienced abuse, abandonment, or neglect by a parent. What became clear during my time at ProBAR is that while access to legal services is important, immigration reform is what is truly needed. Laws and policies need to better protect noncitizens seeking refuge in the United States. I am grateful for the opportunity I had this summer to join an organization fighting to provide direct legal representation to noncitizens at the U.S. border. It was truly eye-opening to see what noncitizens, adults and children alike, experience after making the dangerous journey to the United States. I look forward to continuing to advocate for noncitizens through my work as a student attorney for American University Washington College of Law's Immigration Justice Clinic this Fall. A huge thank you to Equal Justice America for supporting my work with ProBAR this summer.