

# Ohio Justice and Policy Center

## Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://ohiojpc.org/2021/06/23/caroline-miller-legal-intern/>

### Public Facing Advocacy Writing

by [Marais Jacon-Duffy](#) | Jun 23, 2021 | [Blog](#), [Interns](#) | [0 comments](#)

*By Caroline Miller, a summer legal intern at OJPC.*

I was thinking about going to law school after I earned my bachelors degree in marketing, but I decided to take a year off while I mulled it over and saved up for school. I took a job in food service management in Louisville, planning to take the LSAT in a few months. At the time, I thought I might end up working in corporate law, like many of my former classmates and peers. But things changed once I got to know some of my coworkers.

I had coworkers who were more intimately familiar with the criminal legal system than I was, who knew how casually injustice was dealt out, or ignored, and perpetuated in our country. They showed up for work, smiled, and did their jobs all behind broken hearts and under a cloud of looming anxiety. They had family members who were locked up or dead because of our cruel system of injustice. They themselves were just a few missteps away from disaster because of our unforgiving legal system that criminalizes poverty. All of these coworkers were Black, and it didn't take long for it to sink in that this is the reality for so many Black Americans, who have always received the brunt end of injustice in our country. This truth sunk in once I saw it with my own eyes, happening to people I cared about, and it forever changed how I see the role I can play in dismantling unjust systems as a lawyer.

After my first year of law school, I began to work with Cincinnati-area public interest organizations like the Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, the Childrens Law Center, and the Immigrant and Refugee Law Center. During my second year of law school, I was very excited to work with another amazing organization the Ohio Justice and Policy Center.

Though I am still in the early part of my internship, OJPC's small community made me feel right at home. Working alongside individuals who are filled with the same passionate fire for justice gives me the courage to not only fight for clients and policy changes, but to be a different voice in the community that I grew up in.

When I talk with my neighbors and family about the work I'm doing at OJPC and the work I hope to do in the future, I can see that they are learning many for the first time about just some of the injustices we are fortunate to never experience firsthand. And after that initial wake-up call, I challenge them to find meaningful ways in which they can be more than bystanders to injustice, and fight the system themselves.

My decision to stand up for those brutalized by racism or dehumanized at the hands of our criminal justice system has been one that I consider more than a job. It's a personal path to awakening and an action that speaks louder than any words.

Working with the OJPC has given me the tools and resources to be an activist a leader in my community with an eye towards justice. It has given me both a network and empowerment to not only zealously advocate for those who need it the most, but also to unlearn harmful behaviors and dismantle harmful systems. OJPC has allowed me to see the millions of ways that our systems could be more humane and redemptive; but I know that seeds of change will not sprout alone, in an office or a court room. I know now that it's more than a job it's a calling to scatter the seeds of change everywhere I go.

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