

LAWSON A. WRIGHT

lawson.wright@princeton.edu • (203) 613-0367

EDUCATION

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

A.B. candidate in Politics; Minors in History and Computer Science | GPA: 4.0 | LSAT: 176

Princeton, NJ

Expected May 2027

- Honors: Two-time recipient, Shapiro Prize for Academic Excellence (2023-2024, 2024-2025; top ~4% of class); Leonard D. Schaeffer Fellow in Government Service (2025; one of 50 undergraduates nationally selected for competitive fellowship)
- Activities: Princeton Federalist Society, *President*; Princeton Legal Journal, *President*; Princeton Collegiate Moot Court, *Co-Founder & President*; James Madison Program in American Ideas and Institutions, *Undergraduate Fellow*; Community Living Advisor; Episcopal Church at Princeton; Rec Tennis
- Publications: “From *Ableman* to *Wright*: Lincoln’s Anger and the Civil War Crisis of State Habeas Corpus Jurisdiction,” 47 JOURNAL OF THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN ASSOCIATION (forthcoming 2026) [[LINK](#)]; “The Departmentalist Problem with Universal Injunctions: Three Insights into *Trump v. CASA*,” 10 SUFFOLK U. LAW REV. ONLINE (2025) [[LINK](#)]; “Originalism and Jury Nullification in America: A Legal Basis for the Restoration of a Lost Right,” 3 PRINCETON LEGAL JOURNAL 31 (2024) [[LINK](#)]

EXPERIENCE

UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

Vice Chair, New York Advisory Committee (*Federal Appointment*)

New York State

February 2025 – Present

- Appointed by bipartisan majority of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights to serve a four-year term on a 12-member federal committee which advises on civil rights issues in New York State.
- Currently investigating antisemitism on college campuses, specifically how university policies and administrators may contribute to the problem; preparing to hear testimony and draft a federal report to be published by the Civil Rights Commission.
- Authored a set of procedural rules to ensure bipartisanship and fairness on the New York committee; the U.S. Commission later adopted them as the standard for all 56 advisory committees nationwide.

MANHATTAN INSTITUTE FOR POLICY RESEARCH

Collegiate Associate

New York, NY

September 2025 – Present

- Surveyed rebuttable detention presumptions and constitutional challenges to state bail regimes to support drafting model Tennessee bail reform legislation aimed at improving public safety through more consistent detention of high-risk individuals.
- Conducting historical legal research on the misapplication of 19th century municipal corporation law by courts and its lingering influence on contemporary doctrines governing universal injunctions and other equitable remedies.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

Judicial Intern, U.S. Magistrate Judge Cheryl L. Pollak

Brooklyn, NY

May 2025 – August 2025

- Drafted four complete judicial opinions issued by the Court in complex federal civil and constitutional matters, including: constitutional standing requirements to bring Americans with Disabilities Act claims; the appointment of counsel in a *pro se* § 1983 civil rights case; personal jurisdiction over out-of-state defendants; and diversity jurisdiction in a foreclosure action involving mortgage-backed securities. Collaborated closely with the judge and law clerks to revise opinions for issuance.
- Conducted legal research on issues including the Social Security Act, Fair Labor Standards Act, New York insurance law, and common law courthouse immunity from service of process; contributed substantive sections to three additional judicial opinions.
- Researched legal standards, evidentiary privileges, and relevant state and federal law in a high-stakes discovery dispute arising from a wrongful conviction lawsuit involving a plaintiff exonerated after three decades of incarceration.

OFFICE OF THE FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER, DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY

Appellate Legal Intern

Trenton, NJ

September 2024 – January 2025

- Identified a critical constitutional defect in a client’s jury instructions—where the judge improperly decided as a matter of law an essential factual element of the offense—violating both the Fifth and Sixth Amendments. Drafted the full appellate brief argument section on this issue, which was included in the final submission to the Third Circuit with only minimal revision.
- Shaped legal strategy in the first appellate case interpreting the phrase “personally cause” under the recently amended federal sentencing guidelines, with my research central to the final brief; wrote internal memo on various other sentencing issues.

AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS PROJECT

Research Intern

Dallas, TX (remote)

December 2024 – January 2025

- Researched judicial ethics statutes, rules, and procedures in each state to facilitate legal challenges to discriminatory, race-exclusive clerkship programs in some state courts, supporting effort to guarantee equal protection under the law.

OFFICE OF THE FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER, DISTRICT OF CONNECTICUT

Legal Intern

New Haven, CT

May 2024 – August 2024

- Helped spearhead post-conviction representation of client accused of wire fraud under the supervision of an Assistant Federal Defender; performed factual, social science, and legal research; interviewed client and his relatives; drafted persuasive sentencing memorandum that successfully secured a below-guidelines sentence.

SKILLS

Westlaw; LexisNexis; PACER; Legal Research and Writing; Brief & Motion Drafting; Bluebook Citation