

BACKGROUND STATEMENT

Founder of Healing Equity and Liberation (HEAL) Organization, dedicated to the creation of a justice framework for psychedelic decriminalization, regulation, and healing. Passionate federal advocate with over 17 years' experience working with Congress, executive branch agencies, association governance, and leading national experts, organizations, and coalitions, to transform criminal legal systems and advance other social policy reforms. Key strengths include building advocacy campaigns, drafting legislative language, establishing partnerships, communication with a wide variety of audiences, translating complex material for the public and policymakers, grassroots and grasstops engagement, and analytic and strategic thinking. Deep knowledge of various federal affairs software tools and lobbying laws, rules, and filing requirements.

Recent successes:

- Secured the testimony of a Vera Institute of Justice sentencing expert at the June 17, 2021 House Judiciary Crime Subcommittee hearing, *Undoing the Damage of the War on Drugs: A Renewed Call for Sentencing Reform*;
- Drafted and secured House sponsors for the bipartisan *Community First Pretrial Reform and Jail Decarceration Act*, slated for reintroduction soon, which would establish \$600 million in funding over five years for front-end criminal legal system reform;
- Provided detailed input into the *COVID-19 in Corrections Data Transparency Act* and secured original co-sponsorships for the House and Senate bills;
- Brought Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley on-board as co-host of a Vera Institute event on the sidelines of the Democratic presidential primary debate in South Carolina;
- Advocated successfully for language in recent fiscal years' appropriations reports to curb U.S. Department of Agriculture funding of local jail construction; and
- Wrote and advocated for legislative language that was passed as part of the *FIRST STEP Act* to forbid subjecting people in federal prisons or U.S. Marshals custody to shackling and solitary confinement during pregnancy, labor, childbirth, and the postpartum period.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Healing Equity and Liberation (HEAL) Organization

Washington, DC

Founder

Jun 2021 – present

- Develop and execute overall mission and vision around justice in psychedelic decriminalization, regulation, and healing
- Design and implement federal campaigns on behalf of clients
- Provide thought leadership on the use of federal policy to advance psychedelic issues
- Oversee all aspects of business and strategic development, planning, and operations
- Engage Congress, federal agencies, and national organizations and coalitions on key psychedelic and related issues
- Collaborate with thought partners from diverse professional fields

Vera Institute of Justice, Federal Policy

Washington, DC

Senior Associate

Aug 2018 – Jun 2021

- Oversaw a policy portfolio that includes jail decarceration, rural issues, sentencing, COVID-19 in corrections, divestment of over \$1 billion per year in federal funds that flow into local jails, and guardianship for older adults and people with disabilities
- Drafted legislative and appropriations proposals, with Vera expert input
- Develop and execute strategic plans to secure congressional champions for Vera priorities

(references available upon request)

- Managed Vera's efforts around the 2020 presidential primary and general elections and recommendations and outreach to the Biden-Harris transition team
- Led planning efforts and delivered introductory remarks for a standing room only congressional briefing, *Rural America's Hidden Jail Crisis*

American Psychological Association, Public Interest Government Relations Washington, DC

Legislative and Federal Affairs Officer Jan 2017 – Aug 2018

- Develop and advocated for APA policy goals related to sentencing, prison reform, justice-involved women, mental health and substance use among justice-involved individuals, policing, community reentry, juvenile justice, child maltreatment prevention and treatment, child welfare, children's physical and mental health, trauma-informed care, and other issues
- Launched and co-chaired the Consensus Workgroup on Behavioral Health Issues in Criminal Justice, the first national-level policy coalition devoted to these issues
- Engaged APA governance members and leading experts in the field in advocacy trainings, Capitol Hill visits, digital advocacy, and development of APA federal policy recommendations
- Developed and executed high-profile public events, such as congressional briefings on police-community relations and prison and reentry mental health
- Coordinated with public affairs, membership, and communications staff from across the association to highlight policy efforts in press releases and social media
- Liaised with APA governance groups, including the Committee on Children, Youth, and Families, Committee on Legal Issues, Board for the Advancement of Psychology in the Public Interests, Task Force on Serious Mental Illness and Serious Emotional Disturbance, and coordinating committees for several APA Divisions

Legislative and Federal Affairs Associate May 2016 – Jan 2017

Senior Policy Associate Oct 2009 – May 2016

Policy Associate Jan 2007 – Oct 2009

- Co-chaired the Mental Health Liaison Group's Social Services Committee and the Act 4 Juvenile Justice coalition's Mental Health and Substance Abuse Committee
- Organized launch of the APA Public Interest Directorate's Twitter account

Administrator, Congressional Fellowship Program Jan 2007 – present

- Counseled Fellows on their selection of congressional office placement
- Initiated strategies to increase application numbers and secure additional program funding
- Oversaw all aspects of program budget, including planning, tracking, and management

College Entrance Examination Board, Government Relations Washington, DC

Legislative and Administrative Associate Jul 2004 – Jan 2007

- Supported the release of annual reports on college pricing and student aid
- Improved office administrative processes, in collaboration with office director

PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Community organizer and city policy advocate, Washington, DC
- Volunteer, Inpatient Mental Health, VA Hospital, Washington, DC
- Past Advisory Board member, Center for School Mental Health, Baltimore, MD
- BA in psychology and political science, *cum laude*, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN
- Graduate coursework in research methods, George Washington University, Washington, DC