

LAURA ROVNER
University of Denver Sturm College of Law
2255 E. Evans Avenue, Denver, Colorado 80208
303.241.5899 | lrovner@law.du.edu

EDUCATION

Georgetown University Law Center LL.M. in Clinical Teaching	1995
Cornell Law School Note Editor, <i>Cornell Journal of Law & Public Policy</i> Stanley E. Gould Prize for Outstanding Dedication to Public Interest Law	1993
University of Pennsylvania B.A. in Philosophy, Minor in Psychology <i>Phi Beta Kappa</i> <i>Magna cum laude</i>	1990

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

University of Denver Sturm College of Law Denver, Colorado <i>Professor of Law</i> <i>Director, Civil Rights Clinic</i> <i>Ronald V. Yegge Clinical Director</i> Teach and supervise Civil Rights Clinic students in their representation of clients in complex civil rights litigation before federal district and appellate courts. Directed clinical program comprised of 5 clinics and graduate clinical teaching fellowship program. Created Clinical Teaching Fellowship LLM program. Created and taught Comparative Criminal Punishment course for Denver Law's Summer Program in Sorrento, Italy.	2004 - present 2016 - present 2004 - present 2011 - 2018
University of North Dakota School of Law Grand Forks, North Dakota <i>Associate Professor of Law</i> <i>Director of Clinical Education Program & Civil Rights Project</i> Oversaw clinical legal education program, including supervision of clinic faculty, staff, student directors, and students. Administered grants and clinic budget. Founded and directed the Civil Rights Project, in which I supervised students representing clients in complex federal civil rights litigation.	2002-2004
Western State University College of Law Fullerton, California <i>Associate Professor of Law and Director of Externship Program;</i> <i>Visiting Assistant Professor of Law, 2000-01</i> Courses: Externship Director, Advocacy, Civil Procedure, Civil Rights, and Torts.	2000 - 2002

Syracuse University College of Law 1997 - 2000
Syracuse, New York

Assistant Professor of Law

Director, Public Interest Law Firm

Supervised and evaluated clinic students in their representation of clients in complex federal civil rights cases primarily involving disability discrimination in employment, prison conditions, public accommodations and public services; taught clinic seminar; developed course materials and clinic manuals.

Designed and co-taught Federal Disability Law course.

National Association of the Deaf Law Center 1995-1997
Silver Spring, Maryland

Equal Justice Works Fellow/Staff Attorney

Selected for EJW (formerly NAPIL) Fellowship to design and conduct project to address discrimination against deaf and hard of hearing people who were denied communication access to health care and to the legal system. Represented deaf and hard of hearing clients in disability rights litigation before federal courts and administrative agencies. Provided technical assistance regarding disability rights laws. Created model program for medical societies to facilitate provision of interpreters for consultations between doctors and deaf patients. Developed model hospital policy for deaf/hard of hearing patients.

Georgetown University Law Center, 1993-1995
Institute for Public Representation
Washington, DC

Graduate Fellow in Clinical Education

Supervised and evaluated clinic students in their representation of clients in civil rights matters, particularly involving the rights of individuals with disabilities under federal and state civil rights laws. Represented clients before federal district and appellate courts and administrative agencies. Planned and conducted classes, assisted in developing course materials.

SCHOLARLY & CREATIVE WORK

Solitary Confinement, Human Dignity, and the Eighth Amendment, 111 VA. L. REV. 671 (2025).

Litigating for Better Medical Care in PUBLIC HEALTH BEHIND BARS – FROM PRISONS TO COMMUNITIES (Robert B. Greifinger, ed.) (Springer Books 2021) (with Rhonda Brownstein).

COVID-19 in American Prisons: Solitary Confinement is Not the Solution (with Nicole Godfrey), 2 ARIZ. ST. L.J. ONLINE 127 (2020).

On Litigating Constitutional Challenges to the Federal Supermax: Improving Conditions and Shining a Light, 95 DENVER L. REV. 457 (2018).

“Everything Is at Stake if Norway Is Sentenced. In that Case, We Have Failed”: Solitary Confinement and the “Hard” Cases in the United States and Norway, 1 UCLA CRIM. J. L. REV. 77 (2017).

The Law of Solitary Confinement in HELL IS A VERY SMALL PLACE: VOICES FROM SOLITARY CONFINEMENT 16 (Casella, Ridgeway & Shourd) (The New Press, 2016).

Dignity and the Eighth Amendment: A New Approach to Challenging Solitary Confinement (Issue Brief), American Constitution Society, Sept. 2015.

Testing the Rationales for Long-Term Isolation: Three Scenarios, Vol. XXVI CORR. L. REP. No. 1, 13 (2014).

Seeking Integrity: Learning Integratively From Classroom Controversy (with Patti Allewa), 42 SW. U. L. REV. 355 (2013).

Extradited to a Future of Torture in a U.S. Supermax Prison, Solitary Watch (Oct. 2012).

Requiring the State to Justify Supermax Confinement for Mentally Ill Prisoners: A Disability Discrimination Approach (with Brittany Glidden), 90 DENVER L. REV. 55 (2012).

Preferring Order to Justice (with Jeanne Theoharis), 61 AM. U. L. REV. 1331 (2012).

The Unforeseen Ethical Ramifications of Classroom Faculty Participation in Law School Clinics, 75 U. CIN. L. REV. 1113 (2007).

Disability, Equality & Identity, 55 ALABAMA L. REV. 1043 (2004) (reprinted in part in EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION LAW: CASES, PROBLEMS AND CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES (Prentice Hall 2005)).

Perpetuating Stigma: Client Identity in Disability Rights Litigation, 2 UTAH L. REV. 247 (2001).

The Right to Be Heard: The Obligation of State Courts to Pay for Interpreters for Deaf Litigants, 2 CORNELL J. LAW & PUB. POLICY 205 (1992).

EXPERT TESTIMONY

Hearing on CO HB 21-1211: Regulation of Restrictive Housing in Colorado Jails, testimony before the Colorado House Judiciary Committee, Apr. 6, 2021; testimony before the Colorado Senate Judiciary Committee, May 6, 2021.

Hearing on CO SB 14-064: Restricting the Use of Solitary Confinement for Prisoners with Serious Mental Illness, testimony before the Colorado Senate Judiciary Committee, Mar. 10, 2014.

Hearing on Reassessing Solitary Confinement II: The Human Rights, Fiscal, and Public Safety Consequences, Hearing Before the S. Subcomm. On the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Human Rights, 113th Cong., Feb. 24, 2014 (Written Testimony of Prof. Laura Rovner).

Minister for Justice v. Ali Charaf Damache, Dublin, Ireland, Sept. 2013 (written reports submitted on behalf of defendant challenging extradition to U.S. on basis of his conditions of confinement in federal supermax prison if convicted).

U.S. v. Minh Quang Pham, 12-cr-423 (SDNY), March & Aug. 2013, (written report and oral testimony on behalf of defendant challenging extradition from United Kingdom to United States on basis of conditions of confinement at federal supermax prison where he would likely be confined if convicted)

Hearing on Reassessing Solitary Confinement: The Human Rights, Fiscal, and Public Safety Consequences, Hearing Before the S. Subcomm. on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Human Rights, 112th Cong., June 15, 2012 (Written Testimony of Prof. Laura Rovner).

European Court of Human Rights, *Ahmad, et al., v. United Kingdom*, App. Nos. 24027/07 et seq., May 2011 (written report submitted on behalf of six men challenging their extradition to the U.S. in the European Court of Human Rights on basis that conditions in federal supermax prison would violate international human rights law).

Matter of An Application for Permission to Apply for Judicial Review Between K. Al Fawwaz & Adel Abdel Bary, and the Secretary of State for the Home Department, 2008-09 (written reports submitted on behalf of two men challenging extradition to U.S. on basis of their conditions of confinement in federal supermax prison if convicted of crimes with which they were charged).

McKinnon v. the United Kingdom, App. No. 36004/08, Sept. 2008 (written report submitted on behalf of defendant with mental illness challenging extradition to U.S. on basis of his conditions of confinement in federal supermax prison if convicted).

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

Speaker, “The Effects of Solitary Confinement,” 2024 Capital Habeas Unit National Conference, Denver, CO, April 2024.

Panelist, “Conditions of Confinement,” Symposium on Advancing Justice for the Federally Incarcerated, Nebraska Law Review, University of Nebraska College of Law, October 2023.

Panelist, “Understanding Conditions and Advocating for Death-Sentenced Clients, Federal Capital Habeas Project Annual Conference, Atlanta, GA, May 2023.

Panelist, “Legal Clinics and Academic Freedom,” Global Alliance for Justice Education (GAJE) 11th Worldwide Conference: “Justice Education: Building Resilience and Strong Connections in Times of Global Challenges,” Stellenbosch University Faculty of Law, Stellenbosch, South Africa, December 2022.

Panelist, “Challenges to Resilience for Students Representing Incarcerated Clients,” GAJE 11th Worldwide Conference: “Justice Education: Building Resilience and Strong Connections in Times of Global Challenges,” Stellenbosch University Faculty of Law, Stellenbosch, South Africa, December 2022.

Panelist, “Current Issues in Prisoners’ Rights,” University of the Pacific McGeorge School of Law (via Zoom), April 2021.

Panelist, “When the Walls Have Ears: Government Surveillance in the Course of Client Representation,” Journal of the Legal Profession Symposium: What Do You Do When the Man’s Spying on You—The Intersection of Government Surveillance and Legal Advocacy, University of Alabama School of Law (via Zoom), March 2021.

Panelist, “COVID-19 in American Prisons: Solitary Confinement Is Not the Solution,” Arizona State Law Journal Online: Virtual Symposium on COVID-19 and Vulnerable Populations, December 2020.

Speaker, “Solitary Confinement Reform: Participants, Problems, Prospects,” Law & Society Conference (virtual), May 2020.

Participant, “On Solitary Confinement,” Carceral Logics Workshop, University of Denver Sturm College of Law, November 2019.

Panelist, “Solitary Confinement, Human Dignity, and the Eighth Amendment,” Northwestern Law Review Symposium: Rethinking Solitary Confinement, Chicago, IL, November 2019.

Peer-to-Peer Trainer, “Non-Directive Supervision,” All-Russian Conference on the Hands-On Method of Teaching - Nationwide Advanced Training for Law Professors, Moscow State University – Krasnovidovo, October 2019.

Panelist, “The participation of students in court representation: current approaches,” The Program of the International Forum of Legal Education – Tenth Nationwide Conference of Russian Legal Clinics, Moscow State University, October 2019.

Panelist, “The Rights of the Accused: A Comparative Analysis of the U.S. and Italy,” Italian Justice Under Trial: Insights from *Knox v. Italy*, University of Naples Federico II Law School, Naples, Italy, June 2019.

Panelist, “Abolition of the Current Criminal Justice System,” Denver Law Civil Rights Summit, Denver, CO, February 2019.

Panelist, “Prisoners’ Rights & Holding Prisons Accountable,” Denver Law Civil Rights Summit, Denver, CO, February 2019.

Speaker, [“What happens to people in solitary confinement.”](#) TEDxMileHigh, Denver, CO, December 2018. Selected for inclusion on TED.com (over 2.4 million views).

Panelist, “Legal Strategy in Solitary Confinement Reform—Opportunities and Challenges,” (with Prof. Jules Lobel, Prof. Alex Reinert, & Prof. Judith Resnick) Santa Cruz Academic Summit on Solitary Confinement & Health, Santa Cruz, CA, May 2018.

Panelist, “The Courts’ Impact on Solitary Confinement Reform” (with U.S. District Judge James Patterson & U.S. District Judge (ret.) Shira Scheindlen), Rethinking Solitary Confinement, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, Center on Media, Crime and Justice, New York, NY, April 2018.

Presenter, “Using Cross-Clinic Collaboration to Benefit Students, Clients, and Communities,” (with Prof. Michael Martin & Prof. Chris Northrop), AALS Conference on Clinical Legal Education, Denver, CO, May 2017.

Presenter, “The Impact of Unconstitutional Prison Conditions on Clients and Strategies to Alleviate and Explain Them” (with Ed Aro, Arnold & Porter), Federal Death Penalty Resource Counsel Project – 2016 Strategy Session, Denver, CO, November 2016.

Presenter, “Evaluating New Forms of Clinical Education” (with Prof. Claudia Angelos, Prof. Wendy Bach, Prof. Phyllis Goldfarb, Prof. Donna Lee, Prof. Alex Scherr, and Prof. Ann Shalleck), AALS Conference on Clinical Legal Education, Baltimore, MD, May 2017.

Presenter, “Faculty Governance” (with Prof. Brad Colbert & Prof. David Santacroce), AALS Workshop for New Law School Clinical Teachers, Baltimore, MD, April 2017.

Affiliated Faculty, US-European Criminal Justice Innovation Program, Oslo, Norway, September 2016.

Presenter, “What Public Defenders Should Know About Prison Law,” (with Prof. Lindsey Webb), Office of the Colorado State Public Defender, Denver, CO, November 2014.

Presenter, “Teaching Professional Identity Across the Curriculum,” 16th Biennial Conference of the Legal Writing Institute, Philadelphia, PA, June 2014.

Presenter, “Solitary Confinement and Human Rights,” Law & Society Association Annual Meeting, Minneapolis, MN, May 2014.

Presenter, “Role of the Client in Prison Conditions Litigation,” Prisoners’ Advocates Conference, Loyola University College of Law, New Orleans, LA, February 2014.

Panelist, “Out of Sight, Out of Mind: Discussion of the Consequences of Solitary Confinement,” ACLU of Colorado, Denver, CO, October 2013.

Presenter, “Incarceration and Isolation,” Columbia Law School, New York, NY, April 2012.

Presenter, Federal Bureau of Prisons Homicides – Authorized Case Training Conference, Denver, CO, March 2012.

Panelist, “Solitary Confinement,” Dart Society Conference, John Jay College, New York, NY, March 2012.

Co-presenter (with Prof. Jeanne Theoharis), “Preferring Order to Justice – Post 9/11 Civil Rights Issues in the Federal System,” Columbia Law School, Human Rights Institute, New York, NY, March 2012.

Panelist, “The Civil Rights Crisis in the Federal System Post-9/11,” Brooklyn College, New York, NY, October 2011.

Co-presenter (with Prof. Patti Alleva), Plenary Session – “Content and Context,” AALS Conference on Clinical Legal Education, Seattle, WA, June 2011.

Co-presenter (with Prof. Patti Alleva), “A Five-Lesson Framework for Reaping Dividends from Spontaneous Classroom Controversy,” Institute for Law Teaching and Learning – Summer Conference, New York, NY, June 2011.

Congressional Briefing, “The Abuses of Solitary Confinement in the U.S. Criminal Justice System,” Washington, DC, April 2011.

Presenter, “When and How to Use the Broader Civil Rights Laws When Representing People with Disabilities,” Jacobus tenBroek Disability Rights Symposium - Bridging the Gap between the Disability Rights Movement and Other Civil Rights Movements, Baltimore, MD, April 2011.

Speaker, "Litigation Strategies to Limit the Use of Isolated Confinement," ACLU Stop Solitary Conference: Building a National Campaign to End Long-term Isolated Confinement, Washington, DC, November 2010.

Co-presenter (with Prof. Patti Alleva), "The Moment as Microcosm: Making the Most of Spontaneous Classroom Controversies as Integrated Learning Opportunities," Central States Law Schools Association Conference, Grand Forks, ND, September 2010.

Speaker, "Solitary Confinement," ACLU of Colorado, Denver, CO, June 2010.

Speaker, Roundtable: "The Intersection of Terrorism and Criminal Justice," The Constitution Project, Washington, DC, June 2010.

Presenter, "Suing on Behalf of Federal Prisoners: From Private Prisons to Terre Haute," Prisoners' Rights Litigation: A Workshop for Advocates, Liman Colloquium, *Imprisoned*, Yale Law School, New Haven, CT, March 2010.

Speaker, "The Road to Freedom: A Panel Discussion on Disability and Identity," The Learning Effectiveness Program and the Center for Multicultural Excellence, University of Denver, Denver, CO, February 2007.

Speaker, "Assaults on Academic Freedom and Strategies for Dealing with Those Assaults in a Clinical Context," Society of American Law Teachers Annual Teaching Conference, Boston, MA, September 2006.

Co-presenter (with Prof. Patti Alleva), "The Quandaries of Controversy: A Theoretical Framework for Handling Sensitive Situations in the Law School Classroom," AALS Conference on New Ideas: Teaching Intentionally, Vancouver, BC, June 2006.

Speaker, "Ethical and Practice Issues in Legal Collaborations," AALS Conference on Clinical Legal Education: Collaboration in Learning, Teaching and Lawyering, New York, NY, May 2006.

Speaker, "Does the ADA Apply Behind Bars? A Discussion of *Goodman v. Georgia*," American Constitutional Society, Univ. of Denver College of Law, January 2006.

Speaker, "Alternative Ways to Look at Reproductive Rights: Same-Sex and Disability Rights," University of Denver Sturm College of Law, January 2006.

Speaker, "Ethical Ramifications of Collaborations Between Doctrinal Faculty and Clinical Programs," Sixth International Clinical Conference on Clinical Legal Education and Scholarship, UCLA School of Law, October 2005.

Speaker, "Issues Faced by Women in Law: Relating to Clients and Colleagues, Navigating the System and Balancing It All," University of Denver College of Law, March 2005.

Co-presenter (with Prof. Patti Alleva) "The Quandaries of Controversy: Handling Sensitive Situations in the Classroom," Rocky Mountain Regional Conference on Clinical Legal Education, University of Denver College of Law, October 2004.

Speaker, “Disability, Equality and Identity,” Disability Law: Equality and Difference — A Symposium on American Disability Law and the Civil Rights Model, University of Alabama School of Law, Tuscaloosa, AL, November 2003.

Keynote Speaker, “Political Interference in North Dakota,” Hard Choices in Hard Times: Crafting Creative Solutions, 18th Annual Midwest Clinical Teachers Conference, William Mitchell School of Law, Minneapolis, MN, October 2003.

Speaker, “The Quandaries of Controversy: Handling Sensitive Situations in the Classroom,” University of North Dakota Reflecting on Teaching Conference, Grand Forks, ND, Sept. 2003.

Speaker, “*Roe v. Wade* 30th Year Commemoration—The Reality of Women’s Experiences, Health and Bodies,” University of North Dakota School of Law, Grand Forks, ND, April 2003.

Speaker, “Human Rights in North Dakota,” The 2002 Peace Congress—Human Rights: The Roots of Peace and Social Justice, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, ND, October 2002.

Speaker, “Litigating Employment Discrimination Cases Under the Americans with Disabilities Act,” University of North Dakota Homecoming Continuing Legal Education Program, Grand Forks, ND, October 2002.

Coordinator, “Selective Justice: Do People with Disabilities Have Equal Access to American Courts?” Presidential Showcase Program, American Bar Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, August 2001.

Speaker, “Learning from Clients and Students with Disabilities,” Association of American Law Schools Conference on Clinical Legal Education, Albuquerque, NM, May 2000.

Panelist, “E.E.O.C. in the New Millennium,” Syracuse University College of Law, March 2000.

Faculty, Legal Issues Plenary. American Judicature Society Conference, “Improving Access to the Courts for People Who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.” Presented at four regional conferences for state court judges in 1996-97.

Moderator and Speaker, “Beyond Ramps and TTYs: Employment Rights for People with Disabilities,” National Association for Public Interest Law Conference, Washington, D.C. 1997.

AWARDS & HONORS

Recognized as an Outstanding Faculty Member Contributing to Impactful Teaching (2024, 2022, 2019)

Excellence in a Public Interest Case or Project, Clinical Legal Education Association (2023)

Case of the Year Finalist, *Winston v. Polis*, Colorado Trial Lawyers Association (2021).

Trial Lawyer of the Year Finalist, *Anderson v. Colorado & Decoteau v. Raemisch*, Public Justice (2017).

University of Denver, Distinguished Teaching Award, 2016.

Hughes-Ruud Pilot Grant Recipient – 2016.

5280 [The Denver Magazine] - Top Lawyers (Civil Rights) – 2015, 2016.

American Civil Liberties Union of Colorado, Edward Sherman Award for Outstanding Legal Work on Behalf of Furthering Civil Liberties in Colorado, 2014.

Faculty of Federal Advocates Counsel/Co-Counsel Program, In Recognition of Dedication and Professionalism to Which the Program Aspires, 2012, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021.

University of Denver Sturm College of Law, Public Interest Law Group, Excellence in Public Service Award, 2011.

BAR ADMISSIONS

Admitted in Colorado, the District of Columbia (inactive), Maryland (inactive).

Also admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Seventh, Ninth, Tenth, and D.C. Circuits, the U.S. Court of Federal Claims, and the U.S. District Courts for the Districts of Colorado, North Dakota, Maryland, the District of Columbia, the Northern District of New York, and the Southern District of Indiana.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

American Bar Association, Section on Individual Rights and Responsibilities, Vice-Chair, Committee on the Rights of People with Disabilities (1998-2005, 2010-2016) Co-Chair, Committee on the Rights of People with Disabilities (2005-2010) Co-authored ABA amicus briefs before the United States Supreme Court in <i>State of Tennessee v. Lane</i> (2004) and <i>Goodman v. State of Georgia</i> (2005)	1998 - present
American Bar Association, Commission on Mental & Physical Disability Law	2000 - 2003
American Bar Association, Task Force on Mental Illness & the Death Penalty	2002 - 2008
American Bar Association, Co-Chair, Subcommittee on Prison Litigation Reform Act	2011 - 2014
American Bar Association, Site Team Inspector Section of Legal Education	2007, 2021, 2022
ACLU of Colorado Legal Panel Vice Chair	2005 – present 2024 - present
American Constitution Society, Colorado Chapter Board of Advisors	2014 – 2020
Association of American Law Schools AALS-CLEA Joint Academic Freedom Committee Co-chair, Political Interference Group	2025 - present 2010 - 2020

Planning Committee, 2026 Conference on Clinical Legal Education	2025 - 2026
Planning Committee, 2015 Conference on Clinical Legal Education	2014-15
Standing Committee on Clinical Legal Education (Chair 2006)	2004-07; 2015-2019
Clinical Section Awards Committee	2018 - 2024
Member, Section on Clinical Legal Education	2000 - present
Center on Human Policy, Syracuse University School of Education	1997 - 2000
Member, Advocacy Board	
City of Denver Crime Prevention and Control Commission	2021 – present
Mayoral appointment to Commission	
Clinical Legal Education Association	2004 - 2007
Board of Directors	
Chair, 2005 Elections Committee	
Political Interference Group, Website Committee, Personnel Committee	
Selection Committee, <i>Clinical Law Review</i>	
Colorado Prison Law Project	2010 - 2013
Board of Directors; Litigation Advisory Committee	
Colorado State Legislature – Serious Mental Illness in Long-Term Isolated Confinement Work Group	2014 - 2017
Appointed by CO legislature to working group created as part of Senate Bill 14-064. Advise Department of Corrections on policies and procedures related to proper care and treatment of prisoners with serious mental illness in long-term isolated confinement	
Disability Law United (formerly Civil Rights Education & Enforcement Center)	2013 – present
Litigation Committee	
Faculty of Federal Advocates, Board of Directors	2010 - 2013
<i>Journal of Disability Law</i>, SSRN – Advisory Board	2006 - 2007
Mental Disability Rights International	1997 - 1998
Provided advice to disability rights groups in Central/Eastern European countries regarding new legislation as well as feasibility of constitutional challenges to the classification and education of children with disabilities.	
New York Civil Liberties Union, Central New York Chapter	1998 - 2000
Board of Directors; Local Liaison for Reproductive Rights Issues	
North Dakota Human Rights Coalition	2004 - 2006
Board of Directors	
Prison Law & Advocacy Conference	2015 – present
Steering committee for biennial conference (Chair, 2018 Conference)	

Red River Valley Community Action, Grand Forks, ND Board of Directors	2002 - 2004
Society of American Law Teachers Academic Freedom Committee	2006 – present
Solitary Watch Board of Advisors	2009 - present
U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado Pro Bono Standing Committee	2013 – present
Co-author, Federal Court Prison Litigation Handbook	2021
Pro Se Prisoner Task Force	2021 – present