

UCLA School of Law **Center on Reproductive Health, Law, and Policy**

Q & A

We're excited to introduce our new Legal Fellow, Tarj Patel. Tarj received her J.D. from UCLA School of Law in May 2026, where she specialized in Criminal Law and Policy. She previously worked with the Center as a Legal Extern and later served as a law clerk with the Orange County and Los Angeles County Public Defender's Offices. In this Q&A, Tarj shares more about her path to CRHLP, how her experiences in criminal defense have shaped her interest in reproductive health and justice, the work she is taking on as a Legal Fellow, and what drew her back to the Center after graduating from UCLA Law.



Interviewee: Tarj Patel, CRHLP Legal Fellow



Interviewer: Kelsey Padilla, Program & Communication Coordinator

Q: Can you tell us a little about yourself and your path to the Center? You previously worked with CRHLP as a legal extern while at UCLA Law. What brought you back to the Center as a legal fellow?

A: I'm originally from the Bay Area and just graduated from UCLA Law this May with a specialization in Criminal Law & Policy. I got involved in grassroots organizing during undergrad, which really spurred my interest in attending law school and pursuing a career in public interest law. While I was always a strong advocate for reproductive rights and gender justice, like many people, the Dobbs decision really ended up feeling like a pivotal call to action for me. I've always thought of the law as a tool for change, and that decision made it clear to me that I wanted to play a part in protecting the rights of everyone to safely access healthcare and make informed decisions about their bodies, families, and lives. During law school, my externship with the Center taught me about the importance of interdisciplinary work in effectuating change. I came back to the Center to further contribute to this work.

Q: Having experienced the Center as an extern and now returning as a fellow, how has your perspective on CRHLP's work evolved?

A: My externship with the Center was one of the first times that I could envision myself being a legal advocate at the intersection of law and policy. I got to do fascinating legal research and projects on, for example, mifepristone litigation and minors' rights that gave me a broad understanding of the reproductive justice landscape. Coming back now as a fellow, I have a much deeper understanding of how research, laws, and policy can and should work in tandem to promote reproductive freedom. In

addition, I feel much more knowledgeable about the Center's interdisciplinary approach and how its work in areas such as the Reproductive Freedom Amendments can play a huge role in ongoing legal, legislative, and political battles throughout the country. During my fellowship year, I am really looking forward to assisting the Center in developing novel legal theories and policy solutions to address ongoing attacks against reproductive autonomy.

Q: Is there a particular issue in reproductive health law or policy that you're especially interested in following right now? What draws you to that area?

A: There are actually a few issues that I am interested in following at the moment! First, I am interested in targeting the issue of reproductive health deserts. In order for people to exercise full bodily autonomy, they need to have access to convenient, safe, and affordable health care. Living in these deserts presents an unsurmountable obstacle for people, and this lack of access needs to be urgently addressed. Second, I am passionate about combatting family policing. I participated in the Community Lawyering in Education Clinic during law school, in which I learned more about the irreparable harm that family policing causes to communities that are already underserved, marginalized, and overpoliced. Fighting against family policing is essential to promoting reproductive equity for all. Third, I am passionate about minors' rights generally, but with a particular interest in advocating for comprehensive sex education. To make healthy and informed choices, young people need to receive proper education, information, and resources.

In the News

Newsom Vetoes Bill That Would Ban Extraditions for Abortion and Gender-Affirming Care

California's pro-repro rights governor rejects a key protection that 18 blue states have enshrined into law.



NINA MARTIN

Editor/Reporter

[Bio](#)



Gov. Gavin Newsom at a November 2022 watch party for Proposition 1, which enshrined reproductive freedom in California's constitution. Hector Amezcua/TNS/ZUMA

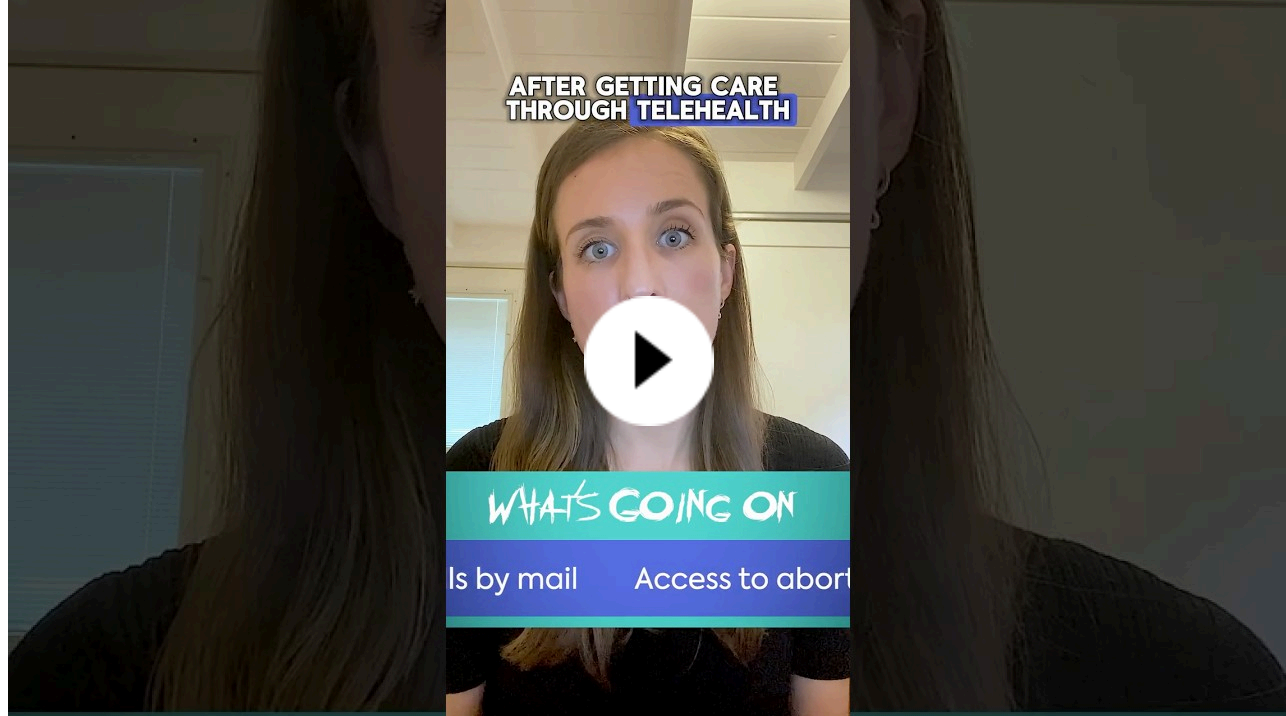
CRHLP Senior Staff Attorney Amanda Barrow was featured in Mother Jones [coverage](#) of California Governor Gavin Newsom's [veto](#) of AB 2164, legislation that would have codified protections preventing California from recognizing certain out-of-state extradition requests involving legally protected reproductive and gender-affirming health care.

California currently has an executive order providing protection against extradition, but codifying those protections in state law would provide more durable safeguards. "Legislatively enacted laws are just on firmer footing when there are political changes at the executive level," Barrow told Mother Jones. Unlike legislation, the executive order "could be revoked by a governor who is anti-abortion or anti-gender-affirming care."

The veto means that these extradition protections will remain at the Governor's discretion, putting California out of step with 18 other shield law states that have enacted statutory protections.

Learn more about shield laws in our [State Law Guide](#).

Watch



CRHLP Senior Staff Attorney Amanda Barrow teamed up with Plan C Pills to explain the current status of Louisiana v. FDA, the case where Louisiana is trying to end access to mifepristone via mail and pharmacy. Watch this video to learn the latest, and check out the [amicus brief](#) CRHLP, ANSIRH, and O'Melveny & Myers LLP submitted on behalf of 322 reproductive health researchers on the decades of scientific research demonstrating that medication abortion with mifepristone is safe and effective, including when provided through telehealth.

Events

Legal Leaders for Reproductive Justice Reception

Join us to celebrate advocates and organizations whose leadership has helped build the Center and advance the work of the Southern California Legal Alliance for Reproductive Justice pro bono network.

Recognizing



Rick Chavez Zbur
Assemblymember
District 51



Sue Dunlap
Planned Parenthood LA
President and CEO



Brad Sears
Founding Director
Williams Institute



Isaac G. Bryan
Assemblymember
District 55

Gibson Dunn

O'Melveny

**Women Lawyers Association of Los
Angeles**

**October 28,
2026**

5:00–6:30 p.m.

**Gibson Dunn
333 South Grand Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90071**

*Hosted in partnership with
Gibson Dunn.*

RSVP

[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/CRHLPRSV](https://tinyurl.com/CRHLPRSV)

Join us at an intimate gathering for those dedicated to reproductive justice. We will be recognizing the people and organizations whose leadership has been instrumental to the early success of our Center and the Southern California Legal Alliance for Reproductive Justice (SoCal LARJ) pro bono network. Come connect with colleagues and celebrate our shared work to provide urgently needed pro bono legal services to reproductive health providers and organizations nationwide.

UCLA

School of Law

Center on Reproductive Health, Law & Policy

Leveraging the “Menopause Moment” to Demand Women’s Health Equity: Book Launch and Panel Discussion

Celebrating Jennifer Weiss-Wolf’s new book, ***When in Menopause: A User’s Manual and Citizen’s Guide***, this discussion will bring together policy experts, UCLA’s leading menopause care provider, **Dr. Rajita Patil**, and groundbreaking reproductive scientist, **Dr. Amander Clark** to discuss why menopause care that is high-quality, inclusive, and affordable is still so difficult to access; why we still see a chronic inattention to and underinvestment in women’s health and research; and ways we can understand and use the “menopause moment” to reshape the national conversation about equity in women’s health.

This event will be in person and streamed live online.

The evening will also feature special guests and refreshments.

When in Menopause **A User’s Manual & Citizen’s Guide**

by Jennifer Weiss-Wolf

Foreword by New York Times
bestselling author Sharon Malone, M.D.

Cosponsored by:

UCLA Comprehensive Menopause Care Program
UCLA Center for Reproductive Science Health & Education
UCLA Bixby Center
UCLA Barbra Streisand Center
UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television
UCLA Law Women LEAD



October 13, 2026



5pm- 7pm



**James West Alumni
Center
530 Westwood Ave**

RSVP at: <https://tinyurl.com/CRHLPMenopause>

Join us to celebrate Jennifer Weiss-Wolf’s new book, *When in Menopause: A User’s Manual and Citizen’s Guide*. CRHLP Director Melissa Goodman will lead a discussion amongst lawyer and author Jennifer, UCLA menopause care leader Dr. Rajita Patil, and UCLA reproductive scientist Dr. Amander Clark about menopause care, research, needed policy interventions and systems change, and the opportunity to reshape the national conversation around women’s health.

Join us in person or stream the conversation online. Special guests and refreshments will be featured throughout the evening. RSVP here: <https://tinyurl.com/CRHLPMenopause>

Mapping Contraceptive Access Policies

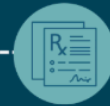
State policy plays a powerful role in determining whether someone can access the contraceptive care they need to support their sexual and reproductive well-being. In recent years, many states have taken steps to expand access by codifying the Affordable Care Act (ACA) contraceptive coverage mandate, requiring insurance coverage of extended contraceptive supplies, and authorizing pharmacists to prescribe contraception.



**ACA
Codification**



**Extended
Supplies**



**Pharmacist
Prescribing**

Photo credit: PA Catalyst

Two resources on contraception were released recently, offering complementary perspectives on contraceptive access across the United States. The PA Catalyst team at CONVERGE released a set of [interactive maps](#) tracking state-level policies that expand access to contraception, including policies codifying the Affordable Care Act contraceptive coverage mandate, requiring insurance coverage of extended contraceptive supplies, and allowing pharmacists to prescribe contraception. The maps include data from 2013–2025 and show how state contraceptive access policies have changed over time. As of 2025, 17 states and Washington, D.C., had enacted all three policies, while 35 states and Washington, D.C., had enacted at least one. Separately, Power to Decide and the Guttmacher Institute launched new [Contraceptive Access Maps](#), replacing Power to Decide's former Contraceptive Desert Map with a new methodology focused on gaps between the availability of publicly funded contraceptive care and the number of people who need it. The new data show that 21.4 million women of reproductive age who need low- or no-cost contraception live in a county with an access gap, including 15.7 million living in counties with an extreme gap. Together, the resources highlight both the policy landscape shaping contraceptive access and the geographic gaps that remain in access to publicly funded care.



Photo credit: Stateline

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) [has launched](#) a new drinking water study that will use non-targeted analysis to screen for pharmaceuticals, polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), and more than 1,000 other potential contaminants, including for the first time, mifepristone and misoprostol. The study comes [despite](#) the complete absence of evidence that mifepristone is harming the environment or human health, and as part of a broader campaign by anti-abortion policymakers and advocates to use environmental laws and regulations to target medication abortion. In 2025, lawmakers introduced nine bills in seven states that sought to use environmental policies to restrict medication abortion, including proposals requiring water-system testing for mifepristone, imposing liability on manufacturers, restricting telehealth provision, and requiring medical-waste kits for abortion patients. The non-targeted analysis method the EPA will use can identify whether chemicals are present in a sample but does not by itself establish their concentration or whether their presence poses a health risk. The FDA previously concluded, as part of its environmental review of mifepristone, that the drug could be manufactured, used, and disposed of without expected adverse environmental effects.

Food for Thought



With so much going on in the world of reproductive health, law, and policy, every week we'll share articles, books, and media you might have missed.

[Black Women's Survival During Birth Shouldn't Be Left to Chance](#)

[A Texas-Sized Data Gap: How Anti-Abortion and Anti-Trans Politics Threaten Birth Justice](#)

[In a Texas prison, Kwaneta cultivated a menopause support network from scraps of paper](#)



Reimagining the future of reproductive health, law, and policy.

UCLA Center on Reproductive Health, Law, and Policy is a think tank and research center created to develop long-term, lasting solutions that advance all aspects of reproductive justice, and address the current national crisis of abortion access.

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