

# VANESSA DEL VALLE

375 E. Chicago Ave., Chicago, IL 60611 • vanessa.delvalle@law.northwestern.edu • (312) 503-5932

## LEGAL EXPERIENCE

**MacArthur Justice Center, Northwestern Pritzker School of Law** Chicago, IL  
*Clinical Assistant Professor of Law, Bluhm Legal Clinic* November 2015 – Present

- Civil rights attorney and clinical instructor, litigating cases at trial level to achieve criminal justice reform.
- Enforces the civil rights of individuals involved with the criminal justice system. Selected cases involve the rights of incarcerated individuals, the rights of victims of police misconduct, the rights of innocent people who served time for crimes they did not commit, the due process rights of people on parole, the rights of immigrants, and the rights of transgender individuals.
- Partners with community activists, organizers, advocates, and elected officials to fight injustice and achieve systemic reform.
- Co-teaches seminar on civil rights litigation and supervises students' participation as junior counsel on the Center's cases.

**United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois** Chicago, IL  
*Law Clerk for Chief Judge Rubén Castillo* October 2013 – October 2015

**Stanford Community Law Clinic** East Palo Alto, CA  
*Certified Law Student* January – March 2013

**Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP** New York, NY  
*Summer Associate* June – August 2012

**Stanford Criminal Defense Clinic** Stanford, CA  
*Certified Law Student* January – June 2012

**The Legal Aid Society – Immigration Law Unit** New York, NY  
*Legal Intern* June – August 2011

**Covington & Burling LLP** Washington, DC  
*Sponsors for Educational Opportunity (SEO) – Legal Intern* June – August 2010

**The Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia** Washington, DC  
*Intern Investigator* June – August 2009

## REPRESENTATIVE CASES

### Class Action Suits

- *Chicagoans for an End to the Gang Database v. City of Chicago, et al.*, No. 18-cv-4242 (N.D. Ill. filed 2018) (Community-based class action challenging the use of the Chicago Police Department's Gang Database. Successfully resolved in September 2020 after winning significant protections that will reduce the harm to community members.)
- *Campbell, et al. v. City of Chicago, et al.*, No. 17-cv-6260 (N.D. Ill. filed 2017) (Community-based class action challenging the Chicago Police Department's pattern and practice of using excessive force. Plaintiffs won enforcement rights in the Consent Decree.)

- *Morales, et al. v. Findley, et al.*, No. 13-cv-7572 (N.D. Ill. filed 2013) (Class action challenging parole revocation procedures in the State of Illinois. Settlement agreement approved in 2017, establishing state-funded attorneys for eligible parolees and due process protections at parole revocation hearings.)
- *Money, et al. v. Pritzker, et al.*, No. 20-cv-2093 (N.D. Ill. filed 2020) (Class action on behalf of Illinois prisoners, in particular those that are medically vulnerable due to age or underlying medical condition, seeking a reduction in the prison population to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and save lives. Reached a settlement in March 2021 that resulted in the release of over 1,000 people and IDOC's agreement to continue to identify medically vulnerable and elderly people who are eligible for release through legally available mechanisms.)

#### Trial Level Cases

- *Hampton v. Baldwin, et al.*, No. 18-cv-550 (S.D. Ill. filed 2018) (Prisoner rights case seeking the transfer of a transgender woman prisoner from a men's prison to a women's prison. Won historic preliminary injunction ordering the Illinois Department of Corrections to train all staff on transgender issues and reevaluate transgender woman prisoner's placement, resulting in her transfer to a women's prison.)
- *Hampton v. Mayer, et al.*, No. 17-cv-936 (S.D. Ill. filed 2017) (Prisoner rights case seeking damages on behalf of a transgender woman prisoner who suffered horrific sexual abuse and harassment while housed in a men's prison.)
- *Monroe v. Jeffreys*, No. 19-cv-1060 (C.D. Ill. filed 2019) (Prisoner rights case seeking the transfer of a transgender woman prisoner from a men's prison to a women's prison. After she was transferred to women's prison, won historic preliminary injunction ordering the Illinois Department of Corrections to keep her in the women's division, and requiring 14 days' notice if the Department decides it has a specific reason to transfer her back to men's division.)
- *Tay v. Jeffreys, et al.*, No. 19-cv-501 (S.D. Ill. filed 2019) (Prisoner rights case seeking damages and the transfer of a transgender woman prisoner from a men's prison to a women's prison. Won preliminary injunction ordering an individualized safety plan.)
- *Catalan-Ramirez v. Wong, et al.*, No. 17-cv-3258 (N.D. Ill. filed 2017) (Civil rights suit seeking injunctive relief and damages on behalf of an undocumented immigrant against federal and state actors for wrongfully labeling him a gang member, initiating deportation proceedings, and detaining him without providing reasonable accommodations and medical care for his disability. Resulted in a settlement and release from detention.)
- *Emad v. Wong, et al.*, No. 19-cv-598 (E.D. Wis. filed 2019) (Civil rights suit seeking injunctive relief and damages on behalf of an undocumented Palestinian Muslim who has lived in the United States for over 25 years and who was wrongfully labeled a terrorist by the federal government and denied religious and medical accommodations while detained. Won release from detention and settlement on medical care claims.)
- *Corbier v. Watson, et al.*, No. 16-cv-257 (S.D. Ill. filed 2016) (Civil rights suit on behalf of the family of a man who committed suicide at a county jail. Resulted in an offer of judgement from the county for \$850,000 in 2019.)
- *White v. Watson, et al.*, No. 16-cv-560 (S.D. Ill. filed 2016) (Civil rights suit on behalf of the family of a man who committed suicide at a county jail. Won a jury verdict against the individual defendant officer and eventually settled for \$850,000 in 2019.)
- *Outlaw v. City of Cahokia, et al.*, No. 16-cv-456 (S.D. Ill. filed 2016) (Civil rights suit on behalf of a man who was wrongfully charged and incarcerated after a coerced false confession. Resulted in a settlement.)
- *Vonperbandt v. Baldwin, et al.*, No. 16-cv-2674 (N.D. Ill. filed 2016) (Prisoner rights case dealing with a first amendment violation. Resulted in a settlement.)

- *In re Appointment of Special Prosecutor*, No. 16 MR 00005 (Cir. Ct. Ck. Cty. filed 2016) (Petition seeking appointment of an independent prosecutor to investigate the police killing of Laquan McDonald and pursue criminal charges against the officers involved in the cover up. Successfully won the appointment of a special prosecutor.)
- *Fontano v. Godinez et al.*, No. 12-cv-3042 (C.D. Ill. filed 2011) (Civil rights suit against prison officials who retaliated against a prisoner after he reported that he was sexually assaulted by his cellmate. Case settled right before closing arguments at trial in 2016.)
- *Strong v. Tessmann, et al.*, No. 16-cv-4885 (N.D. Ill. filed 2016) (Civil rights suit on behalf of a man who was wrongfully convicted following a fraudulent investigation by the Lake County, Illinois Major Crimes Task Force and spent over a decade in prison. Resulted in a settlement of \$9 million in 2017.)
- *Swift v. City of Chicago, et al.*, 12-L-012995 (Cir. Ct. Ck. Cty filed 2012) (Civil rights suit on behalf of a man who was wrongfully convicted as a teenager and later exonerated by DNA evidence after almost 15 years in prison (member of the “Englewood Four”) against Chicago police officers and prosecutors. Resulted in a settlement of over \$12 million in June 2017.)
- *Mitchell v. Kirchmeier, et al.*, No. 19-cv-149 (D.N.D. filed 2019) (Civil rights suit on behalf of a Navajo tribal member who was severely injured by a law enforcement officer who shot him with a bean bag pellet in his eye while he was peacefully protesting with other water protectors the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL).)
- *Protesters in Support of Black Lives, et al. v. City of Chicago, et al.*, No. 20-cv-6851 (N.D. Ill. filed 2020) (Civil rights suit on behalf of 60 plaintiffs who were abused by police while protesting anti-Black police violence at various demonstrations throughout Chicago during the summer of 2020.)

## EDUCATION

**Stanford Law School**, JD, June 2013

*Activities*: Stanford Journal of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, Managing Editor for Training; Stanford Latino Law Students Association, Board Member; Street Law, Volunteer; Pro bono distinction

**Yale University**, BA in Political Science, May 2010

*Honors*: Cum Laude, Distinction in the Major

## HONORS AND AWARDS

- Award for Excellence in Pro Bono Service, U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois and Federal Bar Association (2017)
- BOLD Campaign Award, Grassroots Collaborative People’s Gala, Award for work in the campaign to shut down the Cook County Sheriff’s Department’s Regional Gang Intelligence Database (2019)

## APPOINTMENT

- Commissioner, Illinois Torture Inquiry and Relief Commission (March 2021 – Present)

## SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

- *Locked Up and Locked Out Neighbors: The Battle for Health Equity for Incarcerated People in Illinois*, Legal Advocacy Panel Speaker, DePaul University’s Criminalization of Our Neighbors Programming Series, Chicago, IL (March 2021)

- *Erase the Gang Database Roundtable: A Reflection on Our Wins & Challenges After Suing the City of Chicago*, Panel Speaker, Erase the Database Coalition Webinar, Chicago, IL (September 2020)
- *Litigating Civil Rights Claims for Transgender Prisoners & How to Win Damages in Prisoner Civil Rights Cases*, Panel Speaker, Chicago National Police Accountability Project (NPAP), Chicago, IL (March 2020)
- *Fighting Solitary Confinement in Illinois, Rethinking Solitary Confinement*, Panel Moderator, Northwestern University Law Review Symposium, Chicago, IL (November 2019)
- *Building Power Through Litigation*, Panel Speaker, National Police Accountability Project (NPAP), Durham, NC (October 2019)
- *OUTLaw Queer in the Criminal Justice System: Strawberry Hampton's Case*, Panel Speaker, Northwestern Pritzker School of Law, Chicago, IL (October 2019)
- *Surveillance, Predictive Policing, and Electronic Aggregation of Criminal Justice Data*, Panel Speaker, NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund's 2018 Annual Civil Rights Training Institute, Leesburg, VA (October 2018)
- *OUTLaw LGBTQ Issues Within the Criminal Justice System*, Panel Speaker, Northwestern Pritzker School of Law, Chicago, IL (October 2018)
- *Social Justice Panel: Race to Justice, Post-Show Conversation for Lettie*, Panel Speaker, Victory Gardens, Chicago, IL (April 2018)
- *Teach-in: Chicago's Gang Database: The Constitutional Implications*, Chicago, IL (October 2017)
- *Policing and Criminalization Issues in Latino/a Communities*, Panel Speaker, Hispanic National Bar Association Annual Convention, Kansas City, MO (September 2017)
- *Litigating Race*, Panel Moderator, Roderick and Solange MacArthur Justice Center De-Incarceration Through Civil Rights Litigation Conference, Chicago, IL (April 2016)
- *The Trailblazers: Professionals Panel*, Panel Speaker, Pathway to the Legal Profession Law School Admissions Conference, Northwestern Pritzker School of Law, Chicago, IL (March 2017)

## **PUBLICATION**

- *We Have Nothing to Lose But Our Chains: Fighting for Justice and Securing Freedom for Imprisoned Trans Women*. Article co-authored with Sheila A. Bedi. 36 Civil Rights Litigation and Attorney Fees Annual Handbook by the National Police Accountability Project, 595-616 (Dec. 2020)

## **MEDIA COVERAGE**

- Elizabeth Weill-Greenberg, "Chicago's Gang Database Can Have 'Devastating' Consequences, but There's No Way to be Removed From It," THE APPEAL, Dec. 18, 2019
- Sarah Karp, "Chicago Mom Accuses School Police of Labeling Her Son a Gang Member," WBEZ Interview, Apr. 10, 2019
- WVON, Radio interview with Perri Small discussing the Chicago Police Department's Gang Database, Jan. 23, 2019
- Angie Leventis Lourgos, "Transgender Inmate Moved to Illinois Women's Prison After Alleging Years of Abuse," CHICAGO TRIBUNE, Dec. 27, 2018
- Rachel Hinton, "Transgender Inmate Who Alleged Abuse Has Been Moved To Women's Prison," CHICAGO SUN-TIMES, Dec. 27, 2018
- Angie Leventis Lourgos, "Judge Orders Training on Transgender Issues for all Illinois Prison Staff Amid Inmate Lawsuit," CHICAGO TRIBUNE, Nov. 9, 2018

- Annie Sweeney, “Nearly 33,000 Juveniles Arrested Over Last Two Decades Labeled as Gang Members by Chicago Police,” CHICAGO TRIBUNE, Aug. 9, 2018
- WVON, Radio interview with Cliff Kelly discussing the Chicago Police Department’s Gang Database, Jun. 20, 2018
- Annie Sweeney, “Lawsuit Alleges Chicago Police Department’s Massive Gang Database Discriminatory, Inaccurate,” CHICAGO TRIBUNE, Jun. 20, 2018
- Mick Dumke, “Chicago’s Gang Database Isn’t Just About Gangs,” ProPublica Illinois, Apr. 20, 2018
- Jacqueline Serrato, “Chicago Gang Database Under Review by Oversight Agency,” CHICAGO TRIBUNE, Apr. 13, 2018
- Maryam Saleh, “Chicago’s Promise, Caught in a Gang Dragnet and Detained by ICE, an Immigrant Tests the Limits of a Sanctuary City,” THE INTERCEPT, Jan. 2018
- Katharine Swindells, “Forced to Strip and Beaten – Horrific Testimony From a Trans Woman in a Male Prison,” PINKNEWS, Dec. 7, 2017
- Jeanne Kuang, “Chicago Police Admission Casts Doubt on Validity of Gang Database,” INJUSTICEWATCH, Dec. 6, 2017
- Ben Schamisso, “A Detained Immigrant’s 2 Battles: Suing ICE While Fighting Deportation,” NEWSY, July 25, 2017
- Nereida Moreno, “Immigrant Sues Chicago Police for Placing His Name in Gang Database,” CHICAGO TRIBUNE, July 11, 2017

## **ADMISSIONS TO PRACTICE**

State of New York	May 2014
State of Illinois	November 2014
United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois	December 2015
United States District Court for the Southern District of Illinois	March 2016
United States District Court for the Central District of Illinois	April 2016
United States District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin	April 2019
United States District Court for the District of North Dakota	June 2019
United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit	January 2019
United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit	January 2021