

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAM
SARAH ROSTOM – FINAL REPORT

This summer, I worked as a legal intern with the Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA) in the national security program area. CCLA is an independent, national, non-partisan organization that fights for the human rights, civil liberties and democratic freedoms of all people across Canada. From litigation to speaking before legislative committees to classroom presentations about rights and freedoms, CCLA works to protect the rights and freedoms entrenched in Canada's constitution.

Throughout my first year of law school, I discovered that I had a deep interest in constitutional law, particularly questions concerning national security, fundamental freedoms and equality. I was aware of the kind of work I was hoping to engage in, and what better place to engage in it than at the Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA)?

While at the CCLA, I had the opportunity to work on a range of issues, some international and some domestic. I enjoyed this overlap, and the opportunity to make comparisons and connections. Almost immediately after I arrived at CCLA, I received my first assignment: researching and drafting a memorandum on the Toronto Police Service's (TPS) piloting of body-worn cameras. I had the pleasure of attending a conference on behalf of the CCLA's Executive Director and General Counsel, Sukanya Pillay on the use of body-worn cameras, where the Deputy Chief of the TPS, Deputy Chief Sloly, addressed participants on the benefits and potential drawbacks of body-worn cameras.

I drafted a number of memos while at the CCLA that varied in complexity and duration, the two most notable being memos concerning Charter challenges the CCLA had launched or anticipated launching. One of these was the CCLA and Canadian Journalist for Free Expression's (CJFE) Charter challenge against key sections of Bill C-51, the Anti-terrorism Act, 2015: <https://ccla.org/ccla-and-cjfe-mounting-charter-challenge-against-bill-c-51/>. I had the opportunity to edit an initial draft of the application, conduct case law research and draft memos to strengthen particular arguments in the application (in addition to working on footnotes, but that comes with its perks!).

The second Charter challenge I worked on was the CCLA and the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies' (CAEFS) Charter challenge against the legislative provisions that allow for solitary confinement: <https://ccla.org/ccla-and-canadian-association-of-elizabeth-fry-societies-launch-lawsuit-challenging-solitary-confinement-in-prisons-2/>. I worked on a memo that summarized the international law and international legal norms and conventions concerning solitary confinement, which allowed me to make connections between domestic constitutional law and international law more broadly.

In addition to litigation and research, CCLA responds to a wide range of enquiries from the public, which are sent to CCLA via email, mail, telephone, and occasionally fax. Along with five other interns, we collectively managed the public enquiries account for much of the summer. After researching an enquiry, consulting with CCLA staff and drafting replies, I responded to a

wide range of questions via email, mail and telephone about issues people were facing that implicated their civil liberties.

It was a truly incredible feeling to work on issues that are of such pressing concern for Canadians. This was perhaps the greatest advantage of working at the CCLA: I knew that the Charter challenges I worked on, the enquiries from the public that I answered, and the research I conducted was actually responsive to Canadians' concerns and struggles. This was immensely fulfilling and rewarding, and above all, it was a reminder of why I have chosen to study law.