

Q&A



Interviewee: Lorena Garcia Zermeno, CRHLP Spring Extern



Interviewer: Kelsey Padilla, CRHLP Programs and Communication Coordinator

We're thrilled to welcome one of our spring externs, Lorena Garcia Zermeno, who recently joined the Center. As a second-year law student, Lorena brings a wealth of experience and passion from her former roles at California Latinas for Reproductive Justice and Los Angeles Dependency Lawyers. We sat down with Lorena to get some insight into her journey to the Center, her goals for the spring, and what's inspiring her as she enters this new role.

Q: Can you please tell us a bit about yourself and what initially drew you to apply for an externship with the Center on Reproductive Health, Law, and Policy?

A: I've lived in LA since my family migrated from Mexico at the age of 3 and have deep roots in the Southeast LA area. Prior to law school, I spent over 8 years as a reproductive justice advocate. Having previously followed the important work CRHLP has spearheaded, I was excited for the opportunity to extern with CRHLP as a law student and learn how lawyers and researchers work alongside a range of stakeholders to collectively think of innovative ways to protect and expand reproductive freedom.

Q: How do you hope to use what you will learn here in your future work or studies?

A: As a legal research thinktank, externing with CRHLP has provided me with the unique opportunity to apply legal research and writing skills we learn as first-year students to reproductive health, rights, and justice issues I care deeply about. I hope to use the technical legal skills I'm learning with CRHLP in my future work to fight for ways of dismantling structural forms of reproductive oppression. Externing with CRHLP is also teaching me the importance of coalition building and working across disciplines to create material changes our communities need.

Q: What sort of projects are you working on this spring at the Center? What are you most excited about?

A: I've been assigned multiple projects that I'm really looking forward to. I'm working on a project creating an accessible guide for clinicians related to California's shield laws intended to provide protection against out-of-state investigations and prosecutions for providing reproductive care, including mailing out medication abortion to out-of-state patients. I'm also looking forward to a project about ways California's Reproductive Freedom Amendment to the state constitution could be used as a tool to address maternal health and birth justice problems, where I'll be helping interview advocates, doulas, midwives, and other community partners. I'm the most excited about working with the CRHLP team and having the opportunity to engage directly

In the News

California doctor sent abortion pills to Texas woman. Under a new law, her boyfriend is suing



An abortion-rights activist holds a box of mifepristone tablets in March 2024 as demonstrators from anti-abortion and abortion-rights groups rally outside the Supreme Court in Washington. (Amanda Andrade-Rhoades / Associated Press)



By Hannah Fry
Staff Writer | [Follow](#)

CRHLP Legal and Policy Director Diana Kasdan was featured in a Los Angeles Times article on a lawsuit brought under a first-of-its-kind Texas law targeting abortion pill access and the protections of shield laws in states like California. The case involves a California physician who became the first doctor sued under Texas' new bounty-hunter law that allows private citizens to file civil lawsuits against individuals who prescribe, send, or distribute abortion medication to Texas. Under the new Texas law, any private citizen can sue for up to \$100,000 for each claimed violation of the law. As Diana explains, the new Texas law, and lawsuits like this are part of a broader strategy to get a federal court decision undermining shield law protections for providers offering lawful care. This case is one of several raising questions about how to resolve conflicts of law between ban states and shield states. "These questions have been out there for a long time," Diana said, noting that cases like this one are designed to push those conflicts into federal court and shape how cross-state abortion care is treated nationwide. Read the full article [here](#). To learn more about how states are using shield laws to protect providers and patients and support organizations, visit our [Shield Law Guide](#).

Lawsuit says Arkansas' near-total ban on abortion violates state's constitution

Arkansas' ban took effect when Roe v. Wade struck down in 2022

BY: TESS VRBIN - JANUARY 28, 2026 8:56 AM UPDATED 4:00 PM



Our Legal and Policy Director, Diana Kasdan, was also featured in [new reporting](#) from the Arkansas Advocate on the first legal challenge to Arkansas' near-total abortion ban since Roe v. Wade was overturned. The lawsuit, brought by four women and a physician, argues that Arkansas' abortion ban violates the state constitution's "inalienable rights" guarantee – including protections for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness – and documents the devastating harms caused by the state's punitive abortion laws.

As Diana explains, high courts in other conservative-leaning states, including Utah and North Dakota, have relied on similar state constitutional "inalienable rights" provisions to recognize that pregnant people have a "fundamental right to obtain abortion care to preserve their life and health." While Arkansas has a constitutional provision to prohibit public funding of abortion, Diana noted that the anti-abortion amendment does not determine "the meaning or reach of inalienable rights." Diana also emphasized that while it is too early to predict the outcome of the Arkansas case, it will be an important one to follow.

Policy News



Photo credit: PBS News

LA Lawyer magazine has released its second installment in a two-part series about pregnancy criminalization in California that highlights the persistent gap between the state's expansive reproductive rights protections and the lived realities of pregnant and postpartum people, particularly those navigating poverty, substance use, and racialized systems of surveillance and punishment. [Part one](#) centered on the case of a person charged with murder after their infant's death shortly after birth and the case's dismissal under Assembly Bill 2223, which protects people from criminal and civil penalties based on prenatal conduct and pregnancy outcomes.

[Part two](#) traces how punishment persists despite legal reforms, documenting the continued use of discredited forensic science, nonconsensual drug testing, medical misinformation, and abortion contemplation as evidence in criminal and family regulation proceedings. The series situates these practices within the historical roots of pregnancy criminalization and family policing and shows how they disproportionately harm Black, Indigenous, and low-income families. Together, the articles underscore that while California has constitutionally protected reproductive freedom post-Dobbs, state systems continue to treat pregnancy as a site of suspicion, which undermines reproductive justice by substituting care and support with surveillance, prosecution, and family separation.



Photo credit: Natalie Behring/Getty Images

The Trump administration has formally [withdrawn](#) a Biden-era rule that required federally funded retail pharmacies to stock and dispense misoprostol and methotrexate. These medications are used not only in abortion care but also to treat ectopic pregnancies and chronic autoimmune conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis and lupus. The 2022 rule was intended to prevent sex and disability discrimination in pharmacy access following the fall of *Roe v. Wade*, but its rescission now allows pharmacies to refuse to stock or pharmacists to dispense these drugs, even for non-abortion uses, without losing federal funding.

[Advocates](#) warn the change will further restrict access to lifesaving medications for patients with chronic illnesses, particularly at smaller pharmacies, amid growing criminalization of abortion drugs and heightened provider fear. The rollback is another example of how abortion restrictions are increasingly spilling over into broader health care, disproportionately jeopardizing women's health, especially for Black and Latina women, who already face higher risks from conditions like lupus. Our [Mifepristone Litigation and Federal Action Tracker](#) provides more information about currently pending cases related to mifepristone and the effort to impose greater restrictions on how medication abortion is prescribed and dispensed.

Legal News



Photo credit: Rebecca Noble/Getty Images

An Arizona state judge has ordered the state to stop enforcing abortion restrictions that predate and conflict with a 2024 voter-approved constitutional amendment guaranteeing abortion rights. The ruling blocks burdensome and medically unnecessary laws that imposed waiting periods, mandated ultrasounds, barred abortions sought due to fetal genetic conditions, and prohibited telehealth prescribing and mailing of abortion pills. The court held that these requirements unlawfully interfered with patients' autonomous decision-making, had no medical justification, and created unnecessary obstacles to care in violation of the state's reproductive freedom amendment. To learn more about ongoing litigation and implementation of state reproductive freedom amendments, read our report [The Promise of Reproductive Freedom Amendments](#).

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.

[Demand Grows For Doulas Who Can Help Moms With Addiction](#)

[You Don't Need An Emergency Fund. You Need An Abortion Fund.](#)

[These States Voted To Protect Abortion Rights. Conservative Lawmakers Are Not Standing Down](#)

[The Fake Clinics Taking Over Reproductive Healthcare](#)

[A Pregnant Mother In ICE Detention Says She's Bleeding — And Hasn't Seen A Doctor In Weeks](#)



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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