

“On the Margins: Social Justice, COVID-19, and Vulnerable Communities”

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UCLA School of Law Epstein Program and Critical Race Studies Program

Speaker bios

Sharon Dolovich is Professor of Law at UCLA School of Law, and Director of the [UCLA Prison Law & Policy Program](#). She teaches courses on criminal law, the constitutional law of prisons, and other post-conviction topics, and her scholarship focuses on the law, policy, and theory of prisons and punishment. Dolovich has been a visiting professor at NYU, Harvard, and Georgetown, and a fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study. She served as Deputy General Counsel for the Los Angeles Citizens’ Commission on Jail Violence, which was charged with investigating use of force in the L.A. County Jail and making recommendations for institutional reform. She also has served as an expert witness and as a consultant on myriad prisoners’ rights cases, and has testified before the Commission on Safety and Abuse in America’s Prisons and the National Prison Rape Elimination Commission.

Dolovich’s recent book, *The New Criminal Justice Thinking* (co-edited with Alexandra Natapoff) was published by NYU Press in April 2017 and appeared in paperback in December 2018; her chapter, “Canons of Evasion in Constitutional Criminal Law,” appears in that volume. Dolovich’s article on prison conditions and the Eighth Amendment (“Cruelty, Prison Conditions and the Eighth Amendment,” 84 *NYU L. Rev.* 881 (2009)) has been downloaded over 27,000 times in more than 130 countries worldwide. More about her extensive legal scholarship and research on prison law and related criminal justice issues [here](#).

Karlyn Kurichety (UCLA Law ’16) is the Supervisory Attorney of the Los Angeles office of [Al Otro Lado](#). She oversees legal staff working on a wide range of affirmative and defensive immigration cases including: asylum, bond/parole, U Visa, T Visa, VAWA, family based petitions, cancellation, DACA renewals, adjustment of status, naturalization cases, and appeals before both the BIA and the Ninth Circuit. She provides direct representation to asylum seekers on the detained and non-detained dockets, and also represents affirmative clients who are seeking asylum at the Los Angeles Asylum Office. In addition, Ms. Kurichety works with the Tijuana office of Al Otro Lado to provide pro se support to asylum seekers in the “remain in Mexico” or “MPP” program.

Prior to working at Al Otro Lado, Ms. Kurichety was a Staff Attorney at the Central American Resource Center (CARECEN) in Los Angeles where she worked in the Survivors of Violence Unit and the Deportation Defense Unit. She is a graduate of UCLA School of Law and during law school she worked as an intern for Esperanza’s Legal Orientation Project (LOP) at the Adelanto Detention Center to provide pro se support to detained asylum seekers. Ms. Kurichety has a Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and prior to law school she was a Bilingual Lead Teacher in the Chicago Public School District and a professor of English as a Second Language at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Rachel Torres is the Deputy Political and Civil Rights Director for the [United Food and Commercial Workers \(UFCW\) Local 770](#). Currently she leads the Fair Workweek policy campaign for retail workers to have more control over their work schedules and lives. For over 10 years, she's worked on the major policy issues affecting working people, including raising the minimum wage of hotel workers to \$15, protecting affordable housing against the threat of short term rentals, securing broad community benefits agreements for new development projects, and protecting access to the California coast for all Californians.

She graduated from the University of California Santa Barbara, with a Bachelor's Degree in Philosophy and Law and Society, and a Master's Degree in the Sociology of Law from the International Institute for the Sociology of Law. She currently resides in the Palms community of Los Angeles and fights every day for the rights of grocery, pharmacy, and food delivery drivers to protect their health and safety as essential workers amidst the global Covid-19 pandemic.

Nisha Vyas (UCLA Law '03) is a Senior Attorney with [Western Center on Law and Poverty](#). With a background in community law and fair housing, Nisha's advocacy is rooted in the belief that all persons should have access to safe and affordable housing of their choice.

Prior to joining Western Center, Nisha was the Directing Attorney of Public Counsel's Homelessness Prevention Law Project and responsible for coordinating its direct legal services programs, including eviction defense and benefits advocacy, for people experiencing homelessness and those at imminent risk of homelessness. She also worked with Public Counsel's Community Development Project, where her work included providing counsel to community-based organizations, including legal advice and capacity building support to nonprofit affordable and supportive housing providers, and affirmatively enforcing laws to ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing and protections against displacement in the region. With two Public Counsel colleagues, she was a fellow in the 2017 class of the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law's Racial Justice Training Institute, a national leadership program that equips anti-poverty advocates to address the role that racism plays in causing and perpetuating poverty.

Nisha started her career as a staff attorney, and later, deputy litigation director, with Southern California Housing Rights Center. In 2010, Nisha was a Clinical Lecturer and Teaching Fellow with Stanford's Community Law Clinic, where she taught, trained, and supervised law students in the representation of low-income clients in a variety of housing matters. Nisha sits on the boards of the UCLA Law Alumni Association and Hollywood Community Housing Corporation, and is a past-President of the South Asian Bar Association of Southern California Public Interest Foundation. She is a graduate of UC Berkeley and UCLA School of Law, where she completed the David J. Epstein Program in Public Interest Law and Policy.