Racial Justice Act Symposium
Friday, February 2, 2024

Panelist Biographies

[Assemblymember Ash Kalra](#), Keynote Speaker

Assemblymember Ash Kalra represents California's 25th Assembly District, which encompasses the majority of San José, including downtown and open space areas in southeast Santa Clara County. He was first elected in 2016, becoming the first Indian American to serve in the California Legislature in state history, and was re-elected to his fourth term in 2022.

Assemblymember Kalra is the Chair of the Committee on Judiciary and also serves as a member on the Housing & Community Development, Local Government, and Natural Resources committees. He is Chair Emeritus of the California Legislative Progressive Caucus and works to ensure that key legislative priorities are successfully passed on civil rights, criminal justice, economic and worker justice, environmental justice, and housing justice. Previously, he served as Chair to the Assembly Committee on Labor and Employment and Assembly Committee on Aging and Long-Term Care.

Assemblymember Kalra has dedicated his tenure in public service to equity and social justice issues. To confront racism and systemic bias in our systems of justice, he authored the historic California Racial Justice Act of 2020 (AB 2542), a landmark bill addressing racial discrimination in criminal sentencing and convictions and a follow up bill in 2022 (AB 256) to apply the Act retroactively for persons with past convictions.

As a longstanding champion of a single-payer health care system, Assemblymember Kalra introduced AB 1400 in 2021–the statewide legislation also known as CalCare–which would guarantee comprehensive, high-quality health care for all Californians as a human right. He has advanced a number of issues to assist our aging population, like expanding the Assisted Living Waiver program, and to protect our public health, like reducing worker exposure to lead poisoning. To safeguard nursing home and long-term care facility residents, he authored AB 323 in 2021, which updated citation penalties and standards for negligent care.

Assemblymember Kalra has consistently put forth solutions to help alleviate our housing crisis and encourage compassionate and thoughtful assistance for people experiencing homelessness. In 2019, Assemblymember Kalra authored AB 1745 to extend the authority for the City of San Jose to develop emergency bridge housing communities to help the city's homeless population transition into permanent supportive housing. Assemblymember Kalra secured $2 million in the

state budget to extend the City of San José's eviction diversion program, which has prevented over 100 households from forced eviction by providing targeted gap assistance to low-income households on the brink of eviction and he has secured additional funding for the city's Responsible Landlord Engagement Initiative. Additionally, he authored AB 1469 to allow Valley Water to assist unsheltered people living along streams or other areas near natural water within the district's jurisdiction, to provide solutions or improve outcomes for the unsheltered individuals.

Assemblymember Kalra has established himself as an environmental leader. In 2019, he was the first state lawmaker to commit California to protect 30% of lands and coastal waters by 2030 (AB 3030) in order to preserve biodiversity and combat global warming. In the District, Assemblymember Kalra is a vocal advocate for protecting open spaces like Coyote Valley and has secured $10 million for Santa Clara County to purchase Laguna Seca for permanent land conservation and $1.5 million for Lake Cunningham water quality and shoreline improvements.

He previously served on the San José City Council for eight years and was formerly a Deputy Public Defender for Santa Clara County for 11 years, representing clients in dozens of felony jury trials. As a public defender, he represented indigent clients in both felony and misdemeanor matters, and a majority of his time was spent in drug treatment court where clients were given the opportunity to complete a rehabilitation program and turn their lives around.

Assemblymember Ash Kalra was born in Toronto, Canada, and moved to California as a young child, residing in the same South San José neighborhood where he grew up. He received a Bachelor of Arts in Communication from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and a law degree from Georgetown University.

Professor Colleen Chien, Berkeley Law School

Professor Colleen Chien teaches, mentors students, and conducts cross-disciplinary research on innovation, intellectual property, and the criminal justice system, with a focus on how technology, data, and innovation can be harnessed to achieve their potential for social benefit. Chien is a Faculty Director of the Berkeley Center for Law and Technology, and for the past decade, has also had the honor of working part-time as a public servant, in the Obama White House as a Senior Advisor, Intellectual Property and Innovation and more recently on the Transition Team and senior counselor to the Department of Commerce and Marian Coak distinguished scholar at the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

A graduate of Berkeley Law, Chien is known for her in-depth empirical studies of patent litigation, patent-assertion entities (PAEs) (a term that she coined), the secondary market for patents, and,

in the criminal justice realm, on the "second chance" gap between those eligible for and receiving relief from the criminal justice system. She founded and directs two grant-funded research initiatives: the Innovator Diversity Pilots Initiative, which develops rigorous evidence to boost inclusion in innovation, and the Paper Prisons Initiative, which conducts research to address and advance economic and racial justice through empirical study of the second chance gap in expungement, drivers license suspensions policies, and the California Racial Justice Act. Prior to joining Berkeley Law, Chien was Professor of Law at Santa Clara University School of Law for a decade and a half; she also was a Justin D'Atri Visiting Professor of Law at Columbia University Law School and visiting professor at University of Chicago School of Law.

Chien is among the top 20-cited intellectual property and cyberlaw scholars in the US, and her work has been featured in numerous academic and mainstream venues. Chien is an awardee of the prestigious American Law Institute's Early Career Medal; she also has received the Intellectual Property Vanguard Award, and has been named Eric Yamamoto Emerging Scholar, NLJ Tech Trailblazer, a Tech Law Leader, one of Silicon Valley's "Women of Influence," and one of the 50 Most Influential People in Intellectual Property in the world. Prior to entering academia, Chien did stints as an investigative journalist, strategy consultant, and practicing lawyer (as an associate, then special counsel at Fenwick & West LLP in San Francisco). She graduated from Stanford (Engineering) and Berkeley Law Schools and is a proud Oakland resident along with her husband and their two sons.

Professor William Sundstrom, Santa Clara University

Professor Sundstrom teaches courses in data analysis and econometrics and MBA microeconomics and is co-director of the Leavey School of Business Community Fellows Program

His research applies data analysis to study the determinants of poverty and inequality, the impact of government policies, and the economic history of labor markets, education, and related institutions. He is particularly interested in interdisciplinary research and is currently working with research teams that include scholars in geography, urban planning, and law. Recent research projects include the determinants of food and water insecurity and the impact of climate change in rural Central America; housing and development policies in Silicon Valley; the impact of criminal records and policies intending to mitigate that impact; and the causes and effects of public libraries in the United States.

He has published articles in a number of peer-reviewed journals, including the Journal of Economic History, Explorations in Economic History, the Industrial and Labor Relations Review, the Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization, Information and Culture, Global

Environmental Change, Regional Science and Urban Economics, and World Development. He is co-editor of the book, History Matters: Essays on Economic Growth, Technology, and Demographic Change (Stanford University Press), and has been co-investigator on two National Science Foundation grants.

Professor Sundstrom served as President of the Santa Clara University Faculty Senate during the 2017-2018 academic year, and in 2022 received the Faculty Senate Professor Award, which recognizes one faculty member each year for "outstanding professional achievement during a significant period of time as a faculty member at Santa Clara University."

Professor David Ball, Santa Clara University

Professor W. David Ball works primarily in the field of criminal justice, writing and teaching in the areas of criminal law, criminal procedure, sentencing and corrections. His articles have been published in the Columbia Law Review, the NYU Law Review, the Yale Law and Policy Review, and the ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science. He is the co-author (with Michelle Oberman) of an open-source criminal law casebook.

Ball has been Co-Chair of the Corrections Committee of the American Bar Association's Criminal Justice Section for more than a decade. He has also served as the Chair of the Public Safety Working Group for Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom's Blue Ribbon Commission on Marijuana Law and Policy and was a member of the Santa Clara County Alternatives to Incarceration Taskforce.

Prior to becoming a full time member of the Santa Clara University School of Law faculty in 2009, Ball served as a Social Justice Teaching Fellow at Santa Clara, a Research Fellow at the Stanford Criminal Justice Center, and a law clerk for the Honorable John T. Noonan, Jr., of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit in San Francisco. Before law school he was an actor, writer, and filmmaker in New York City. He graduated with highest distinction from the University of North Carolina, where he was a Morehead-Cain Scholar, and got a second BA from Oxford University, where he was a Rhodes Scholar. In his spare time, he enjoys traveling, photography, and playing with his cat-sized dogs, Nellie and Iris.

Sujung Kim, San Francisco Public Defender office

Sujung Kim (she/her) is the Managing Attorney of the Research Unit at the San Francisco Public Defender's Office. Originally hailing from Seoul via New York City, Sujung graduated from Barnard College in NYC and USF Law School. After two years trying misdemeanor cases at the San Diego Public Defender's Office, Sujung joined the SF Public Defender's Office in 1997. She has tried over 50 misdemeanor, felony and juvenile cases as a public defender. As the current head of the Research Unit, Sujung has led the office's RJA litigation effort for the past three years, filing RJA motions and pretrial writs challenging pretext stops, racially-biased charging of drug sales, one-strike sex enhancement, gun possession and resisting arrest cases. Sujung and her team secured a favorable published decision by the First Appellate District in *Finley v. Superior Court* (2023) 395 Cal.App.5th 12, which held that the prima facie showing to obtain an evidentiary hearing under the RJA is a low threshold.

In her spare time, Sujung tries to keep up with her two college-aged children, and enjoys running, yoga, live music, traveling, following her favorite sports teams, as well as moonlighting at her local bookstore.

Sujung can be reached at: sujung.kim@sfgov.org.

Elizabeth Lashley-Haynes, LA Public Defender office

Elizabeth Lashley-Haynes is a Deputy Public Defender at the Los Angeles County Office of the Public Defender, where she has worked for the last twenty-one years. She leads her office's Racial Justice Unit, which litigates claims of racism and bias on behalf of clients throughout L.A. County. She graduated from Syracuse University with degrees in Sociology and African American Studies, where she spent time in the southern region of Africa doing a comparative study of colonialism, oppression, and emancipation. She graduated from Case Western Reserve School of Law but spent her last year at City University of New York, which happened to be in 2001 where she experienced 9/11 firsthand.

She is the Co-Founder and Past-President of her office's Women Defenders Association, has served on the Racial Justice Committee and is a Board Member on the National Legal Aid and Defenders Association's Defender Council. In her free time, she is very involved in her community - serving on governing boards of her church, schools, and non-profits. She enjoys community service such as organizing free

lunch programs for Learning Works Charter School and running an Angel Tree holiday gifts drive for hundreds of unaccompanied migrant children in southern CA. She is passionate about fighting for justice in the courtroom and the community.

Karina Alvarez, Santa Clara Public Defender office

Karina Alvarez is the Racial Justice Attorney for the Santa Clara County Public Defender's Office. Currently, she handles RJA data collection, data analysis, expert collaboration, and case preparation. She has been a public defender for almost eight years and past assignments include misdemeanor trials, felony trial team, and conservatorships. She is on the DEIB (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging) committee and enjoys mentoring new attorneys.

Jane Brown, Alameda Public Defender office

Jane Brown began her journey to becoming an Assistant Public Defender and racial justice warrior/advocate in high school where she won a college contest for the best journalism piece regarding a young Black man who was wrongly convicted of a serious crime and sentenced to life in prison. She was further inspired by the community and her mother's tireless advocacy for the young man, who eventually had his conviction overturned and was released from prison. After obtaining her law degree from UC Davis with several honors in public interest law, Jane joined the Alameda County Public Defender's Office. During her 22-year public defender career, Jane has recruited, mentored and supervised law clerks and attorneys and tried all levels of cases including serious felonies and capital cases. In addition to fighting for clients, Jane advocates for her colleagues as their union President. Jane is also currently the Co-Chair of her office's Racial Justice Committee. She regularly conducts trainings on racial justice issues within the criminal system and believes if we all examine our positionality in the world, we can understand the positive impact we can have and how we can better serve our communities. Jane is currently the head of the homicide team and supports her colleagues in using the Racial Justice Act to fight for clients.

Marc Zilversmit, Appellate specialist/private practitioner

Marc J. Zilversmit is a Certified Specialist in both Criminal Law and Appellate Law with over 35 years of experience in criminal defense practice, specializing in appeals. A graduate of Stanford Law School and Haverford College, Mr. Zilversmit clerked for Chief Judge Alfred T. Goodwin of the Ninth Circuit and served five years as a Los Angeles deputy public defender before entering private practice. After moving to San Francisco, Mr. Zilversmit joined the practice of California Appellate Hall of Fame Attorney, Dennis Riordan. He later began his own practice while continuing to work with Mr. Riordan until his death last year.

Some career highlights include:
• *People v. Trulove*: reversal on appeal of Jamal Trulove's murder conviction. Trulove was later acquitted at trial, and successfully sued the police for framing him, and went on to a role in "Last Black Man in San Francisco" and other movies
• *United States v. McIntosh*: Ninth Circuit held that medical marijuana dispensaries, growers and patients are immune from federal prosecution so long as they comply with State medical marijuana laws
• *In re Marcus W.*: established that juveniles in transfer hearings have the right to challenge the reliability of the evidence presented, and that transfer hearings must be based only on reliable evidence
• *United States v. Shabani*: appeared in the United States Supreme Court
• One of his cases recently appeared as a clue in Jeopardy!

Lisa Romo, Office of the State Public Defender

Lisa Romo first joined the Office of the State Public Defender (OSPD) in 1989. She was a staff attorney at the California Appellate Project (CAP) from 1995-1999. Lisa was in private practice between 1999 and 2013, representing capital clients in post-conviction litigation at the state and federal levels, as well as juveniles in their delinquency appeals. Lisa rejoined OSPD in 2013 and from 2020-2022 was the Director of Systemic Issues Litigation. In May 2022, Lisa moved to OSPD's IDID (Indigent Defense Improvement Division), where she primarily works on issues relating to the California Racial Justice Act (AB 2542). She received her J.D. from Berkeley Law.

Morgan Zamora, Ella Baker Center

Morgan Zamora is a Bay Area native that holds undergraduate degrees in Social Work and Ethnic Studies as well as a J.D. from the University of California Law San Francisco (formerly UC Hastings College of the Law). As Prison Advocacy Coordinator for the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, Morgan assists in managing the organization's Prison Mail Program as well as supports policy and implementation of the state's resentencing laws, including the California Racial Justice Act. In this role, she helps educate communities most directly impacted on the ways in which these laws and regulations impact their pathways to freedom.

[**Professor Mia Bird**, UC Berkeley Goldman School of Public Policy](#)

Mia Bird is a Assistant Adjunct Professor at the Goldman School of Public Policy. Her research focuses on criminal justice reform and the intersections of criminal justice, health, and social safety net policies. Prior to joining the Berkeley faculty, she spent seven years at the Public Policy Institute of California as a research fellow. At PPIC she founded and directed the creation of a criminal justice data system that standardized and integrated individual-level data from 12 county justice systems, representing 60 percent of the state population, with data from state-level correctional and justice systems. These data allowed for the monitoring and evaluation of the effects of a wave of criminal justice reforms in California. In several counties, she also linked these data to health insurance enrollment, allowing for research on the effects of the Affordable Care Act on recidivism outcomes for those involved with the criminal justice system. Her work has been funded by Arnold Ventures, The California Endowment, The California Wellness Foundation, The National Institute of Justice, and The Russell Sage Foundation. Bird has been published in the ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Criminology and Public Policy, and the Criminal Justice Policy Review. She consults widely with research centers and organizations working on criminal justice issues in California. Bird holds a PhD in public policy, an MA in demography, and an MPP from the University of California, Berkeley. Prior to her graduate studies, Bird worked as a research associate with the Institute for Women's Policy Research and American Institutes for Research, as well as in the office of the late Senator Ted Kennedy.

Professor Jeffrey Fagan, Columbia Law School

Jeffrey Fagan is a leading expert on policing, crime, gun control, and race whose scholarly research is influential in setting public policy.

A prolific scholar, Fagan has served on the editorial boards of academic journals, provided expert testimony, and is a sought-after commentator on policing, race, and the death penalty. His work includes scholarship on capital punishment; the legal socialization of adolescents; neighborhoods and crime; and juvenile crime and punishment. Fagan's research on the New York Police Department's stop-and-frisk practices—which found that more than 30 percent of the stops were legally unjustified or questionable— was central to a 2013 federal court decision that found the policy unconstitutional.

Fagan, who has taught at Columbia Law since 2001, also holds the position of Professor of Epidemiology at the Mailman School of Public Health and has been a visiting professor at Yale Law School. He has received awards and fellowships from institutions including the Russell Sage Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the Open Society Institute's Soros Justice Fellowship. He serves on the editorial boards of several journals on criminology and law and is a past editor of the *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency.*

Fagan has served on the Committee on Law and Justice of the National Academies of Science and the 2004 National Research Council panel that examined policing in the United States. He was a member of the MacArthur Foundation's Research Network on Adolescent Development and Juvenile Justice and was a founding member of the National Consortium on Violence Research. He has been an expert witness on capital punishment to the U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. He is a fellow of the American Society of Criminology and served on its executive board for three years.

At Columbia, Fagan directed the Law School's Center for Crime, Community, and Law and served on the steering committee of the Columbia Center for Youth Violence Prevention at the Mailman School of Public Health.

[Professor Jack Glaser](#), [UC Berkeley Goldman School of Public Policy](#)

Jack Glaser is a social psychologist whose primary research interest is in stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination. He studies these intergroup biases at multiple levels of analysis. For example, he investigates the *unconscious* operation of stereotypes and prejudice using computerized reaction time methods, and is investigating the implications of such subtle forms of bias in law enforcement. In particular, he is interested in *racial profiling*, especially as it relates to the psychology of stereotyping, and the self-fulfilling effects of such stereotype-based discrimination. Additionally, Professor Glaser has conducted research on a very extreme manifestation of intergroup bias - hate crime - and has carried out analyses of historical data as well as racist rhetoric on the Internet to challenge assumptions about economic predictors of intergroup violence. Professor Glaser is working with the [Center for Policing Equity](#) as one of the principal investigators on a National Science Foundation- and Google-funded project to build a *[National Justice Database](#)* of police stops and use of force incidents. He is the author of *Suspect Race: Causes & Consequences of Racial Profiling.*

Alex Carney, PhD, founder PDQuery

Alex Carney is an artificial intelligence researcher at OpenAI, and cofounder of PDQuery, a non-profit which matches public defenders with early career STEM volunteers for pro bono technical consultations. He has testified several times as a math and data analysis expert witness for Racial Justice Act motions. Alex obtained a PhD in math from UC Berkeley in 2019, and prior to that earned masters degrees in math at Cambridge and in science and technology studies at University College London while studying in the UK as a Marshall Scholar.

Sean Garcia-Leys, Exec. Director Peace & Justice Law Center

Sean Garcia-Leys is a civil rights attorney and public safety advocate who works to end law enforcement's counterproductive gang suppression strategies and to support a robust implementation of the California Racial Justice Act. He is Co-Executive Director of the Peace and Justice Law Center in Orange County, California.

He has successfully helped rewrite California's anti-gang penal code statute, ended gang injunctions in LA and Ventura counties; was instrumental in reducing the number of people in the CalGang database from 200,000 to 24,000 and ending LAPD's participation in CalGang; and has testified as a gang expert in immigration court where he has successfully helped stop deportations.

His research has been published by Oxford University Press and in white papers by the UC Irvine Law School and the Urban Peace Institute that are cited in academic publications and legislative findings, and he is a frequent source for the news media regarding gang policing.

He is the recipient of the 2017 Chicano Hero award from Chicanxs Unidxs and the 2018 Equal Justice award from the ACLU of Southern California.

Before becoming an attorney, Sean worked as a high school teacher in Watts and East LA, and as a labor organizer. In addition to his work with the PJLC, Sean is also a Commissioner of the Los Angeles County Probation Oversight Commission.

Evan Kuluk, Contra Costa County Public Defender office

Evan Kuluk is a felony trial attorney with the Contra Costa Alternate Defender Office. He has been a deputy public defender for 16 years. Evan serves on the Board of the California Public Defender Association, and chairs CPDA's Racial Justice Committee. In October 2022, Evan won a post-conviction Racial Justice Act challenge for his client Gary Bryant based on the use of rap lyrics and racially coded language at trial, securing a new trial order vacating his client's murder conviction and life sentence. In May 2023, Evan won a pre-trial Racial Justice Act challenge for his client Eric Windom based on disparate over-charging of Black defendants with gang murder special circumstances carrying life without parole.

Emi MacLean, ACLU NorCal

Emi MacLean is a Senior Staff Attorney for the Criminal Justice Program at the ACLU of Northern California where she focuses on criminal justice litigation. As part of this work, she is helping to coordinate an effort to access prosecutorial information across the state for the purpose of implementation California's Racial Justice Act. She is also counsel for plaintiffs in *UFW Foundation v. Kern*, a legal challenge to Kern County's misdemeanor plea mill; *Ramos v. Mayorkas*, a successful challenge to the Trump Administration's planned termination of humanitarian Temporary Protected Status for over 400,000 people; and *Zepeda Rivas v. Jennings*, a successful federal class action challenging conditions of confinement during the COVID pandemic.

Previously Emi served as a deputy public defender at the San Francisco Office of the Public Defender where she represented noncitizens in removal proceedings; an attorney and co-legal director with the National Day Laborer Organizing Network; an adjunct professor with the Immigrant Rights Clinics at the University of California at Irvine and UCLA; a legal officer with the Open Society Justice Initiative; and a staff attorney at the Center for Constitutional Rights in the organization's Guantanamo Global Justice Initiative.

Moderators

Chesa Boudin, Executive Director, Criminal Law & Justice Center
Ariane Walter, Berkeley Law, J.D. '24
Alex MacLennan, Berkeley Law, J.D. '24
Hannah Trumbull, Berkeley Law, J.D. '25
Maripau Paz, Berkeley Law, J.D. '24

Volunteers

Nikki Baim, Berkeley Law, J.D. '25	Alicia Kuang, U.C. Berkeley
David Koeller, Berkeley Law, J.D. '25	Audrey Byrne, U.C. Berkeley
Kaleb Indra, Berkeley Law, J.D. '26	Arshi Chawla, U.C. Berkeley
Becca Goren, Berkeley Law, J.D. '26	Alonzo Harvey, U.C. Berkeley
Nupoor Jain Goyal, Berkeley Law, J.D. '26	Miles Rhoe, U.C. Berkeley
Quinn MacRae, Berkeley Law, J.D. '26	Clara Hinsdale, U.C. Berkeley
	Brianna Vasquez, U.C. Berkeley