



# 2015 ANNUAL UPDATE

## BLF Welcomes New Post-Graduate Fellow

*Tasha Hill begins fellowship at the ACLU*



We are thrilled to welcome our newest BLF fellow, Tasha Hill, who recently started her project at the ACLU of Southern California, "Reducing LGBTIQ Criminalization and Discriminatory Incarceration in California Counties." Tasha is working to reduce discriminatory police profiling of LGBT people, and end discriminatory conditions of confinement in county jails. LGBT people are around three times more likely to be incarcerated than their straight or cisgender peers. Once incarcerated, LGB people are 10 times more likely and transgender people are 20 times more likely to be sexually assaulted than other inmates. LGBTIQ inmates are often placed in segregation with little access to rehabilitative services, and

transgender people are often denied hormone therapy or put in solitary as a condition of receiving treatment. Tasha will provide "Know Your Rights" information to at-risk LGBT people, publicize abuses by law enforcement, develop community coalition partnerships, and work to reform Sheriffs' Offices through staff training, policy advocacy, and targeted litigation and agency enforcement.

Tasha brings substantial professional advocacy experience to her work with vulnerable LGBT populations, having served for over a decade as deputy and executive director for LGBT organizations in Las Vegas, Colorado Springs, and Washington, D.C. Tasha is a 2014 graduate of the UCLA School of Law, where she co-founded the Criminal Justice Society and was instrumental in bringing a California prison parole curriculum to UCLA. During law school summers, Tasha interned for Lambda Legal and the ACLU of Southern California, focusing on criminal justice issues and marriage equality. Prior to her fellowship, she clerked for the Central District of California.



# Two New Phoenix Fellows Arrive at Berkeley Law

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BLF is proud to announce our two new Phoenix Fellows—Hamza Jaka and Paul Monge Rodriguez—who entered Berkeley Law as part of the Class of 2018. BLF’s Phoenix Fellowship provides tuition support and two summers of public interest funding to outstanding students of color.



**Hamza Jaka** is a graduate of the University of California, Berkeley, with a Bachelor’s Degree in Linguistics, and enters Berkeley Law hoping to become an employment attorney and policymaker. Hamza has been an active leader in Disability and Human Rights in the US and abroad. He was



co-chair of the Kids As Self Advocates (KASA) Advisory Board for two years and a board member for the past seven years. He has interned for the US Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (through the AAPD internship program), working on youth and minority employment issues, and has interned with the Wisconsin State Council on Independent Living, examining housing policy. He was featured as a young leader to watch by the

State Department for Black History Month. As co-president of the UC Berkeley Disabled Students Union from 2010-2013, Hamza handled disability affairs for UC Berkeley students.

**Paul Monge Rodriguez** is a first-generation college graduate and the son of immigrant parents from El Salvador. Growing up in El Salvador and resettling in the Bay Area, Paul went on to pursue his BA in Global Studies and Sociology at the University of California, Santa Barbara. There he focused on social justice advocacy around worker, immigrant and LGBTQ rights, served as president of the university’s student body, and graduated *summa cum laude*.



After a year in NYC government working as a policy analyst for Mayor Michael Bloomberg to design anti-recidivism interventions for young men of color leaving the justice system, Paul returned to San Francisco to work as a political organizer for the region’s largest public sector labor union, SEIU Local 1021. Paul has worked to address issues of educational inequity within public schools as a campaign director for Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth, a non-profit organization with a 30-year legacy of advocating of low-income communities of color in San Francisco. Additionally, he has served as a Commissioner on the San Francisco Youth Commission where he was appointed by Mayor Ed Lee to represent the unmet needs of San Francisco’s children, youth and their families. Paul holds a Masters in Public Policy from the Harvard University Kennedy School of Government.

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