

EXAMINING THE CLIENT AND THE CAUSE IN THE IMMIGRANTS' RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Sponsored by the WCL International Human Rights Law Clinic

April 9, 2008

11:00 am – 3:00 pm

**American University Washington College of Law
4801 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Room 603, Washington, DC**

For many immigrants' rights advocates, much importance is placed on both "client-centered lawyering" and "cause lawyering." But often in practice, many find that the relationship between legal advocacy and the movement is fraught with choices and tensions that have implications - often difficult to articulate in the midst of all that lawyering entails - for the lawyer's role in a social justice movement. From T/U-visa and asylum claims to wage-hour litigation to promoting comprehensive immigration reform legislation and in other areas of the law, immigrants' rights lawyers cannot escape the branding of "good" and "bad" immigrants. How does the use of the state apparatus to benefit immigrant clients position their lawyers in the broader movement for the rights of all immigrants? Join legal practitioners, academics, and students in exploring the practical and theoretical implications of the tensions in lawyering in/for the immigrants' rights movement.

- 11:00 am – 12:30 pm:** **Opening Discussion:** Discussants from a variety of areas of practice – direct services, community organizing, and academia, among others - will present their experiences and reflections that implicate immigrants' rights: workers' claims, T/U visas, domestic violence, VAWA, asylum, detention-deportation, legislation and lobbying. The discussants' framing of issues will carry into a broader discussion of the tensions in "client-cause spectrum" of lawyering. Confirmed Discussants: **Muneer Ahmad**, WCL Professor; **Jessica Salisbury**, Staff Attorney, CASA of Maryland; **Sunita Patel**, Legal Aid Society of New York; **Jose Javier Rodriguez**, Florida Legal Services, Inc. Facilitator: **Jayesh Rathod**, WCL Practitioner in Residence.
- 12:30 pm – 1:30 pm:** **Keynote Lunch:** Keynote Speaker **Saket Soni**, the Lead Organizer at the New Orleans Workers' Center for Racial Justice, will speak about his experience organizing Indian immigrant H-2B guest workers in their recent walkout in protest of the labor abuses committed by their employer at the Signal International Shipyard in Pascagoula, Mississippi. In his speech, Saket will address the issues of organizing outside the perimeters of legal remedies and some of the intersections and gaps in advocacy in his efforts to uphold the workers' labor rights.
- 1:30 pm – 1:45 pm:** **Coffee Break**
- 1:45 pm – 2:45 pm:** **Breakout Groups:** Discussants and attendees will break into small groups to define "effective practices" for integrating this critical conversation into organizing and other advocacy strategies, into the attorney-client relationship, and into the lawyer-community relationship. The product of these small group efforts will serve as an initial compilation of "effective practices" for lawyers and advocates to be shared and revised.
- 2:45 pm – 3:00 pm:** **Next Steps and Closing Remarks**

General Registration – no charge.

CLE Accreditation (3 credits) will be applied for – *CLE Registration - \$35*

To register, please go to www.wcl.american.edu/secle/registration

For further information, please contact: Office of Special Events & Continuing Legal Education,
American University Washington College of Law

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