

Liman Fellowship Report  
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With the support of the Liman Fellowship, I spent eight weeks this summer assisting the policy team at British Pregnancy Advisory Service (bpas). Bpas is a charity that provides reproductive healthcare services, including abortion care, to more than 70,000 clients a year. Bpas supports women's right to make their own pregnancy choices, and seeks to ensure women have access to safe and legal abortion services. The policy team, based in London, advocates for policies that recognize and protect a woman's right to choose in all aspects of her sexual and reproductive healthcare and to determine her own reproductive future.

My internship with bpas this summer provided me with invaluable hands-on experience advocating for policy and political change, through a variety of strategies. As an activist who has advocated for reproductive rights in the United States, I was excited to learn from the strategies of policy advocacy in the UK, and to in turn use my different experience to bring a fresh take to bpas. My internship absolutely fulfilled this hope. As an intern with the policy team, I researched and tracked key legislation and MPs' (Members' of Parliament) votes, helped to organize and execute grassroots organizing-based campaigns, and wrote about policies to both a professional audience and for public consumption.

My largest project was the research, compilation, and production of a "Parliamentary Scorecard" of MPs' support for policies which promote sexual healthcare and reproductive rights, particularly access to safe abortion care. Having arrived the day before a major election, it was crucial for bpas to have a comprehensive understanding of the composition of the new Parliament in terms of support for reproductive rights. I had worked on a similar effort when I interned for the Human Rights Campaign in the United States and I offered to compile a similar document for bpas. The scorecard I produced is also useful as a tool for constituents to easily understand their MP's record of support (or lack thereof) so they are better able to hold them accountable. My supervisors at bpas provided support, but also trusted me with the independence to make this project my own and run with it.

I had the absolute privilege of assisting the policy team with several highly successful campaigns. In June, we worked to advocate for the right of women from Northern Ireland who travel to England and Wales to obtain an abortion to have that procedure covered on the NHS. With the crucial support of Stella Creasy MP as our major ally in Parliament, we were able to introduce, and have selected for discussion, an amendment to the Queen's Speech calling for this change in policy, which in turn prompted the government to make the policy change. We also campaigned to reduce the highly inflated price of emergency contraception sold by high street chemists—the most notable of which was Boots. After a massive grassroots campaign rallying the public to urge Boots to drop this sexist surcharge, every major druggist (including Boots) drastically reduced the price of emergency contraception, making this vital medication accessible to more women who need it.

I also had the opportunity to write two blog posts on our policy issues for Huffington Post UK. This allowed to me to practice the skill of adapting policy writing for different audiences,

and advocating for policy change in a way that engages public support. Another project I particularly enjoyed was my research and writing of a report on the intersection of disability and reproductive rights. I attended a conference hosted by bpas on the unique difficulties faced by disabled women in terms of accessing sexual and reproductive healthcare. I then spearheaded the writing and production of a report on that conference, and related research, which highlighted the need to center disabled women in reproductive rights advocacy. This intersection was not one with which I had previously had much experience and it was a great opportunity to understand another dimension of reproductive health policy and hone my writing skills at the same time.

One of the most memorable moments of my internship came during our aforementioned campaign for NHS-covered abortion care for Northern Ireland women. On the day that the selected amendments to the Queen's Speech were to be announced, I was tasked with keeping an eye on the live stream of Parliament's proceedings, waiting for the announcement, as I worked on letters to MP's and engaging the public. Suddenly I heard Speaker Bercow come to the floor and begin discussing amendments. I frantically called over the rest of the team and we waited with bated breath to hear the amendments selected for debate. I will never forget the moment he said "amendment d" (ours) and we erupted in cheers.

My internship with bpas was one of the most formative and rewarding experiences of my academic career. Through my work with them, I was able to further hone my policy research and writing skills, particularly in the reproductive rights realm, which I intend to continue to focus on post-graduation. I also gained a comprehensive understanding of how to carry out an effective advocacy campaign, from planning to execution. The advocacy tools I learned with bpas will be invaluable as I move forward with my career, continuing to advocate for reproductive rights both at home and abroad. I am incredibly grateful to the entire policy team at bpas as well as the Liman program for making this fantastic experience possible.