

Within a month of our initial arrival in the United States, I saw strangers in a blue car pick up my mother. As a twelve-year-old child, I did not understand what was happening, but fear and confusion gripped me. My mother was picked up by her employers to work at the only job she could find in America with very limited English — a live-in domestic worker caring for children and the elderly — for \$5 an hour. Weeks passed when I wished to hug her before bed, and instead cried myself to sleep. In order to help my family pay our bills, I also worked at a souvenir shop on weekends for \$40 a day for years, standing 8 hours straight with a 10-minute lunch break while attending school full-time. I would later learn that by leveraging legal language, a new language I came to understand through my lived experiences, I would become the advocate my mother and other workers so desperately needed.

During college, my passion for protecting low-income immigrant women led me to the Wellesley Centers for Women and the National Domestic Workers Alliance, where I worked directly with marginalized communities. Like my mother, whom I could see twice a month, I discovered that other workers shared similar experiences and had to leave their children behind. This instilled a desire in me to explore the root causes of unfair labor practices and to understand what we, as a society, can do to prevent them. I wanted to learn the language I lacked as a child and uplift women's lives like my mother. When asked about the changes workers hoped for, what struck me most was how everyone attributed their exploitation to their socioeconomic status and language barriers. However, the care these workers and my mother provide is essential for survival. Through conducting research, analyzing policies, and working with community organizers, I reaffirmed to the workers that systemic barriers should never have prevented my twelve-year-old self or any child from hugging their mothers every day. Rather, these exploitations are a result of the historical exclusion of domestic workers from labor laws and the legal system's failure to protect under-resourced communities. It is with this intimate and

personal understanding of the domestic worker crisis that I hope to further explore the issues currently leaving marginalized women vulnerable to exploitation and find solutions through the legal lens.

As I navigate different stages of my life, I realize each space I encounter has its own specialized language. A legal education is imperative for me to translate these complexities and make the justice system accessible to all. During my senior year of college, administrators attempted to use legal jargon to discourage me from speaking up about the challenges I faced while studying abroad. I felt intimidated, but I pushed through my anxiety of being a non-native English speaker and advocated for myself and other first-generation and low-income (FGLI) students who were disproportionately impacted by unexpected institutional fees. After discussing with my peers, seeking faculty advice, and organizing supporting documents, I successfully convinced our study abroad office to revise its program structure by including a visa workshop, strengthening student support, and increasing financial aid for FGLI students. I have learned how to be a fearless advocate and organizer who brings the purposely silenced voices to light — skills I will continue to hone during law school and beyond.

Upon graduating from college, my first job exposed me to yet another language in the healthcare system, inhibiting access to care for those who need it most. I watched as life-saving drugs were seen as money-making windfalls by powerful manufacturers and lobbyists. My work experience fueled my determination to make the healthcare system accessible to all and to emphasize the needs of underrepresented communities through their voices and humanized data. Instead of litigations focusing on minimizing settlements, reducing patients to mere numbers, and finger-pointing at other parties, I want to prevent harm from happening in the first place. In law school, I hope to learn how to utilize regulations to prioritize the public's well-being above

everything else. I am eager to support marginalized communities through an intersectional approach involving human rights, labor, and healthcare laws.

Being the first in different spaces — acclimating to a new country, learning a language, navigating college as a first-generation student, and working in the private sector — can be intimidating. Still, these experiences have taught me to stand proud of my unique identity. At each stage of my life — whether I was learning English, applying for college, or now law school — my mentors have translated the language and paved the way step by step for me. I, too, am determined to bring the voices, grit, and humility of my community into each new space I encounter, and to create an inclusive environment for future generations of leaders in law who come after me. As an FGLI student and the first in my family to attend law school, the Terry Bryant Scholarship will help me achieve my dreams by providing crucial financial support and mentorship from leaders who share my background and goals.

Language in the law can be intimidating and exclusionary, but it can also be an equally powerful tool empowering women like my mother and me to speak up. Uplifting my voice and those in my community contributes to the fight for our long-deserved rights and heals the scars caused by injustice. I see the law as both a universal language and a useful framework for providing basic forms of protection for everyone. I aspire to become an advocate who uses this language to navigate between different systems and increase accessibility, so other children will not experience the absence of their mother's goodnight hugs. With a legal education, I am determined to bring the voices of my community — both recipients and givers of care — into the center of decision-making spaces.