

RABIA S. BELT

106 Mosher Way ♦ Palo Alto, CA 94304
734-308-7252 ♦ belt@law.stanford.edu

APPOINTMENTS

STANFORD LAW SCHOOL

Assistant Professor, 2016-present
Fellow, 2015-16

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY

Councilmember [President Obama Appointee], 2016-2019

- One of nine Councilmembers for the independent federal agency charged with advising the President, Congress, and other federal agencies regarding policies that affect people with disabilities.

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY LAW CENTER

Visiting Assistant Professor/Visiting Researcher, 2014-15
Research Academic Fellow, 2012-2014

EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Ph.D. in American Culture (history track), 2015

- **Dissertation:** Mental Disability and the Right to Vote
 - **Committee:** Philip Deloria (chair), Susanna Blumenthal, Martha Jones, Matt Lassiter, Martin Pernick, Rebecca Scott

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

M.A. in American Culture, 2011

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LAW SCHOOL

J.D. *cum laude*, 2009

- **Executive Articles Editor:** *Michigan Law Review*, Volume 106

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

A.B. *cum laude* in Social Studies (Philosophy, Politics & Economics), 2003

- **Senior Thesis:** Feminist Writing in a Foucauldian Age [High Honors]
- **Activities:** *Perspective: Harvard-Radcliffe's Liberal Monthly* (Managing Editor); Coalition Against Sexual Violence (Founder); Mental Health Awareness and Advocacy Group (President); Black Students Association (Member)

PUBLICATIONS

Book

Disabling Democracy in America: Disability, Citizenship, Suffrage and the Law, 1819-1920
[book project, in progress]

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Nearly forty states disfranchise people based on their mental status. Despite the patchwork of laws limiting the voting rights of people with mental disabilities, one of America's largest minority groups, few researchers have investigated the constitutional strategy utilized for disenfranchisement or the subsequent legal challenges that arose. Through a fine-grained analysis of constitutional and legislative debates, court cases, trade documents, newspapers, and petitions, from the beginning of these suffrage restrictions to the enactment of the 19th Amendment, I describe a "common sense" disability model – the methodology behind barring people with alleged mental disabilities from the franchise. I consider how and why state legislators prohibited individuals' right to vote based on mental capacity in state statutes and constitutions. I show that two groups – African Americans and women – were labeled as unfit for suffrage and full political citizenship because of their assumed mental deficiencies, and how each of these groups deployed their own definitions of mental capacity as they fought for the franchise. I then examine the subsequent court and congressional challenges involving people alleged to have voted despite their being judged to lack the necessary mental capacity. I conclude by reflecting on the changed landscape of the twentieth century, as statutory provisions such as the American with Disabilities Act and the Voting Rights Act, and political movements such as the disability rights movement challenged the exclusion of the disempowered from the franchise.

Articles

Ballots for Bullets?: Disabled Veterans and the Right to Vote, 69 Stan. L. Rev. 435 (2017).

The piece excavates and reveals previously unexamined cases that disfranchised Civil War veterans who lived in soldiers' homes. This disfranchisement calls into question the superior position of disabled veterans in American culture and politics and the role of dependency in governing voting.

Contemporary Voting Rights Controversies Through the Lens of Disability, 68 Stan. L. Rev. 1491 (2016).

This article examines the state of disability access to voting in the lead-up to the 2016 election, revealing an election problem that has been lurking in the background for far too long. Current debates about access to voting and voter restrictions often ignore the current legal landscape's disparate effect on those with disabilities. We tend to think of problems of voting and disability, if we think of them at all, as classic issues of physical access. But in fact, the contemporary problems with respect to voting that preoccupy election lawyers are also heavily implicated by disability as well and moreover are central to the inquiry. This article reveals those hidden disability implications of our contemporary election law problems.

When God Demands Blood: Unusual Minds and the Troubled Juridical Ties of Religion, Madness, and Culpability, 69 UNIV. OF MIAMI L. REV. 755 (2015).

The deific decree doctrine allows criminal defendants who believe that God commanded them to kill to plead not guilty by reason of insanity to murder. This Article argues that the deific decree doctrine is too closely tied to artificial limits on insanity imposed by 19th century developments in the mental health profession and criminal law. The doctrine unacceptably privileges certain mentally ill criminal defendants whose delusions fit within an outdated model that is not psychiatrically valid.

"And then comes life": The Intersection of Race, Poverty, and Disability in HBO's The Wire, 13 RUTGERS RACE & THE L. REV., 1 (2012).

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While *The Wire* does an admirable job in depicting the struggles of poor black Baltimore, it underrepresents the importance of disability in the lives of poor people and in particular poor people of color, and how disability benefits and traditional welfare benefits are structured along different legal tracks. This misleading account as a consequence undervalues the significance of elements of disability such as rehabilitation and health care and the aftermath of violence.

Disability: The Last Marriage Equality Frontier [in progress, available at http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2653117]

Obergefell emphasizes the importance of marriage for dignity and emotional well-being as well as recognizing all the economic and legal benefits that accrue to marriage. The marriage equality movement in general aims to end economic disadvantage and cultural stigma towards nontraditional families. Families with disabilities should also fulfill this mandate. Suggested remedies include removing the marriage penalty for receiving federal disability benefits, increased training and accommodation for supporting parents with disabilities, and specialized care, housing, and laws for people with mental disabilities who wish to have sex, parent, or marry.

“An Awful Tragedy”: Commonwealth v. Rogers and the Hidden History of the M’Naghten Insanity Defense. [in progress] Scholars have largely overlooked *Rogers* for its historical importance, though this 1843 Massachusetts case originated the *M’Naghten* standard of insanity within the United States. This Article demonstrates the importance of investigating the development of psychiatry during the antebellum era, the interplay between psychiatry and the legal professions, the role of state courts in shaping criminal law, and the influence of social welfare and carceral institutions in criminal jurisprudence.

Reviews, Op-eds and Shorter Works

“Minding American Law,” JOTWELL, November 3, 2016 (Review of Susanna Blumenthal’s *Law and the Modern Mind: Consciousness and Responsibility in American Legal Culture*).

“Removing Barriers to Voting for Americans with Disabilities Through Automatic Registration,” *Huffington Post*, August 4, 2016.

Voter registration imposes multiple hurdles for voters with disabilities. That problem is exacerbated by the frequent failure of public-assistance agencies to prioritize accessible voter registration options, despite being required to by the National Voter Registration Act. Automatic registration could help voters with disabilities in particular by decreasing our voting system’s reliance on paper forms and allowing them to register while already interacting with a government agency, rather than requiring a separate trip.

“Caucusing with a Disability,” *Legal Aggregate*, April 5, 2016.

Accessibility problems built into the caucus process not only disenfranchise voters with disabilities, but also violate the law. Yet, neither national political party offers guidelines on caucusing with a disability. Accessibility measures in the caucus process would shore up democratic legitimacy, reduce stigma, and ensure full democratic participation for one of the country’s largest minority groups. If we cannot accommodate everyone, it may instead be time to ask whether the benefits of this system are worth the costs to inclusive participation, or whether caucuses should be abandoned altogether.

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SELECTED HONORS

INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL

- Richards Disability Scholar-in-Residence, University of Iowa Law School, 2017
- Hurst Institute for Legal History Workshop, 2015
- Kathryn Preyer Scholar Award for the Best Paper by an Early Career Scholar, American Society for Legal History, 2014
- Law and Humanities Junior Scholar Workshop Alternate [One of two non-tenure track applicants selected], 2014
- Gene Wise-Warren Susman Prize for the Best Graduate Student Paper Presented at the Annual American Studies Association Meeting, 2013
- Georgetown Law Center Research Academic Fellowship, 2012-2014
- Pearce Fellowship in the History of Medicine, 2011
- Ford Motor Company Law School Leadership Award, 2005
- Preston, Gates & Ellis 1L National Minority Fellowship, 2005
- Preyer Scholar Award, Honorable Mention, American Society for Legal History, 2010

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

- Certificate of Recognition, James T. Neubacher Award, Council of Disability Concerns, 2016
- Proquest Distinguished Dissertation Award, Honorable Mention, 2016
- Best Dissertation, American Culture Department, 2015-16
- Rackham Predoctoral Fellowship, University of Michigan, 2014-15
- Rackham Merit Award, University of Michigan, 2005-2014
- Michigan Award, University of Michigan Law School, 2007
- Legal Practice Program Best Oralist Award, University of Michigan Law School, 2005
- O'Sullivan, Clifford Legal Scholarship, University of Michigan Law School, 2004

HARVARD

- Carol P. Pforzheimer Award for Outstanding Research Project, Harvard University, 2001
- Radcliffe Research Award, Harvard University, 2001

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Stanford Law School

Assistant Professor

- Disability Law, 2016

Georgetown University Law Center

Visiting Assistant Professor

- Co-Professor, Property (2014-15; David Super)

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American Culture Department, University of Michigan

Graduate Student Instructor

- American Culture/History 367: American Indian History (Winter 2010)
- American Culture 217: Introduction to Native American Studies (Fall 2009)
- American Culture 399: Race, Racism and Ethnicity (Winter 2008)
- American Culture/History 374: The Politics and Culture of the '60s (Fall 2007)

LEGAL EXPERIENCE

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN PEDIATRIC ADVOCACY INITIATIVE, Summer 2008

Student Attorney

- Legally represented low-income clients on divorce, public benefits, custody, housing, landlord-tenant, and education matters
- Argued cases in Washtenaw County Trial Court, County of Wayne Circuit Court, and Social Security Office of Disability Adjudication and Review

OFFICE OF THE MONITOR FOR *PIGFORD V. GLICKMAN & BREWINGTON V. GLICKMAN*, 2006-07

Research Intern

- Researched and wrote memo on legal implications of archiving case records for landmark class action racial discrimination lawsuit between the US Department of Agriculture and African-American farmers

SOUTH AFRICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (SAHRC), Summer 2006

Parliamentary Intern

- Conducted legal research and wrote SAHRC submissions to Parliament on Bills Combating Human Trafficking and Sexual Offenses
- Created nationwide working group of non-governmental organizations, healthcare providers, and advocacy groups focusing on mental health and human rights
- Conducted review of South African prison system for SAHRC and Kenyan Human Rights Commission

PRESTON, GATES & ELLIS, LLP (NOW K&L GATES, LLP), Summers 2005, 2006

Summer Associate

- Performed pro bono client work for Transition House of Seattle
- Received Preston, Gates & Ellis, LLP 1L National Minority Fellowship, awarded to one law student in a nation-wide competition

MICHIGAN STATE APPELLATE DEFENDER'S OFFICE, 2005-06

Research and Editorial Assistant

- Performed motion and chapter drafting, copy-editing, and cite-checking for Motions Book on Criminal Procedure for Michigan Public Defenders

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VOTING RIGHTS INITIATIVE, 2004

Researcher

- Researched and summarized Voting Rights Act cases for database

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

The Reconstruction Amendments in Law, Politics, and History, Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA (April 2017).

Disfranchisement, Past and Present, Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA (April 2017).

Disabling the Black Vote: Black Suffrage Activism and Disability in the Long 19th Century, 11th Annual Lutie A. Lytle Black Female Law Faculty Workshop, University of Michigan Law School (July 2017); Junior Criminal Professors Working Group, University of Chicago Law School (June 2017); Culp Conference, Duke Law School (May 2017); Emancipations, Reconstructions, and Revolutions Conference, CUNY Graduate Center and the University of Pennsylvania McNeil Center (February 2017).

Parents with Disabilities, White House Forum on the Civil Rights of Parents with Disabilities (May 2016).

Seeing Insanity Through the Law's Eyes, Hearing the Inarticulate Summer Research and Writing Retreat, The Prindle Institute for Ethics (June 2016).

Voting in the Shadow of the Institution, Urban History Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL (October 2016); Junior Criminal Professors Working Group, Harvard Law School (May 2016).

Outcasts from the Vote: Disability and the Woman Suffrage Movement Over the Long 19th Century, International Congress on Law and Mental Health, Prague (July 2017); The Historical Women's Movement Workshop, University of Pennsylvania (May 2017); Richards Disability-in-Scholar Residence Presentation, University of Iowa Law School (March 2017); Faculty Workshop, University of California, Irvine Law School (February 2017); Seminar in Disability, Culture and Society, Columbia University (November 2016); Legal History Workshop, University of Pennsylvania Law School (November 2016); Program in Law and Public Affairs, Princeton University (November 2016); Disability Studies Initiative, Emory University (October 2016); Critical Disability Studies Program, Purdue University (November 2016); Center for the Study of Law & Society Speaker Series, University of California, Berkeley (October 2016); American Culture Department Faculty Workshop, University of Michigan (September 2016); 10th Annual Lutie A. Lytle Black Female Law Faculty Workshop, University of Iowa Law School (July 2016); Law and Society Association Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA (May 2016); Culp Colloquium, Duke University School of Law (May 2016).

Building Diversity in the Disability Rights Movement, Jacobus tenBroek Disability Law Symposium (March 2016).

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Disability Law – An Overview. Stanford Law School Anti-Discrimination Law Class (November 2015).

Disability Law and Reproductive Justice. University of California, Berkeley, Reproductive Law Class (November 2015).

The Future of the ADA. Smithsonian Institute 25th Anniversary of the ADA Celebration (July 2015).

Race and Disability: Why Are They Strange Bedfellows? 8th Annual Lutie A. Lytle Black Female Law Faculty Workshop, Vanderbilt Law School (July 2015).

Race, Gender and Sexual Orientation Stereotypes in Use of Force Cases. Beating Mental Illness: A Dialogue on Race, Gender and Disability Stereotypes in Use of Force Cases, USC Gould School of Law (April 2016).

Disability Challenges to Sociolegal Studies. West Coast Law and Society Retreat, University of California, Irvine (January 2016.)

The Americans with Disabilities Act at 25: What Did We Do Right, What Did We Do Wrong, and Where Should We Go Next? Stanford Law School (March 2016).

Ballots for Bullets? The Disfranchisement of Civil War Veterans. Yale Law School (March 2016); University of California, Davis, Law School (January 2016); American Association of Law Schools (January 2016); University of Toledo (October 2015); International Conference on Law and Mental Health, Vienna, Austria (July 2015); Law and Society Association Annual Meeting (June 2015); Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting (June 2015); 7th Annual Lutie A. Lytle Black Female Law Faculty Workshop, University of Wisconsin (June 2014); Georgetown Faculty Summer Workshop Series (June 2014); Duke Law School Emerging Scholar Conference (May 2014).

Leroy Pitzer – Citizen, Voter, Lunatic? Conference in Citizenship Studies, Center for the Study of Citizenship, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI (March 2014); Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA (April 2013); Americanist History Workshop, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI (March 2013).

Killing by the Command of God: Insanity, Religion, or Murder? Fellows Collaborative, Georgetown University Law Center, Washington DC (February 2014).

What Does Citizenship Mean for People with Mental Disabilities? American Studies Annual Meeting, Washington, DC (November 2013); Law and Society Association Annual Meeting, Boston, MA (June 2013); 18th Annual Mid-Atlantic People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference, University of Pennsylvania Law School, Philadelphia, PA (January 2013); Berkeley Law Disability Rights Symposium, University of California Berkeley Law School, Berkeley, CA (March 2012); Association for the Study of Law, Culture and Humanities Graduate Student Workshop, Texas Wesleyan School of Law, Fort Worth, TX (March 2012); Law Research Lunch, University of Michigan Law School, Ann Arbor, MI (January 2010).

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Disabling Democracy in America: Disability, Citizenship, Suffrage, and the Law, 1830-1920.

6th Annual Lutie A. Lytle Black Female Law Faculty Workshop, Suffolk University Law School, Boston, MA (June 2012); Kentucky Historical Society Fellowship Talk Spring Series, Louisville, KY (May 2012); Spring Academy in American Studies, Heidelberg Center for American Studies, Heidelberg, Germany (March 2012); History of Psychology and Psychiatry Postgraduate Conference, Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine, University College London, (March 2011); The Question of Rights in U.S. Society Conference, San Francisco State University, San Francisco, CA (September 2010).

Disability and Native American Voting Rights. 5th Annual Critical Race Studies Symposium, University of California at Los Angeles Law School, Los Angeles, CA (April 2011).

The Intersection of Race, Disability, and Poverty in HBO's *The Wire*. 3rd Annual African-American Studies Spring Symposium at the University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, TX (April 2010); Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association Annual Conference, St. Louis, MO (April 2010); Mid-America American Studies Association Conference, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS (March 2010); 4th Annual Critical Race Studies Symposium, University of California at Los Angeles Law School, Los Angeles, CA (March 2010); Earl Lewis Honorary Panel, Students of Color at Rackham 20th Anniversary Conference, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MA (February 2010).

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- American Association of Law Schools [Executive Committee: Law and Disability, Aging and the Law, Election Law, 2015-present]
- American Historical Association
- American Society for Law, Culture, and the Humanities, [Program Committee, 2015]
- American Society for Legal History [Preyer Prize Committee, 2016-present]
- American Studies Association
- Disability Rights Bar Association, [Board of Directors, 2015-present]
- JOTWELL: Journal of Things We Like Lots [Contributing Editor, Legal History Section, 2016-present]
- Law and Society Association
- Organization of American Historians
- Society for Disability Studies
- Edward A. Bouchet Graduate Honor Society