

CIII Learning Lab: The Move to End Detention
September 12, 2019
Speaker Bios

[Eleni Wolfe-Roubatis](#), Executive Director, Immigrant Legal Defense

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Eleni has been recognized both locally and nationally for her service to immigrant communities. Prior to co-founding ILD in 2019, Eleni grew the immigrant rights unit of a local non-profit, Centro Legal de la Raza, from 2 attorneys to a staff of 38. During her tenure as directing attorney, which lasted from October 2013 to April 2019, Eleni secured and managed over 50 public and private foundation grants annually, including large grants from the California Department of Social Services and the Vera Institute of Justice. After Trump's election, Eleni successfully advocated with local government and private funders to establish the Alameda County Immigration Legal & Education Partnership (ACILEP), a network that provides legal representation and rapid response services to immigrants in removal proceedings. Eleni was also instrumental in establishing the California Collaborative for Immigrant Justice (CCIJ), a collective of Bay Area legal service providers dedicated to providing high-quality free legal services to immigrants detained in the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Immigration Court. Both ACILEP and CCIJ are viewed as model programs that have greatly advanced the goal of providing universal representation to immigrants facing deportation, including those who have had contact with the criminal justice system. Prior to relocating to California from Chicago, Eleni worked for 8 years in the National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC)'s Detention Project in positions that demanded complex immigration litigation, multidisciplinary advocacy expertise, and management of creative, cutting-edge legal programs. Eleni has extensive experience providing direct representation for detained and non-detained individuals in removal proceedings, and has supervised, mentored and trained attorneys, paralegals and law students throughout her career. Eleni also conducts seminars for immigration and criminal defense attorneys on topics including the immigration consequences of criminal offenses for non-citizens, advanced issues in representing detained individuals and representation of individuals with mental health issues. Eleni is regularly interviewed in the Spanish and English press on a variety of topics related to immigration law and policy. Eleni holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Johns Hopkins University, and a Juris Doctor degree from DePaul University College of Law. Eleni is a recipient of the national 2016 Michael Maggio Pro Bono Service Award for her work in establishing an innovative pro bono legal services program for detained immigrants. Her team also received the 2017 East Bay La Raza Association's Tag Team Luchadores Award for outstanding representation of unaccompanied minors and families seeking asylum. Eleni is admitted to practice in Illinois and is a member of AILA and the NLG's National Immigration Project.

[Rev. Deborah Lee](#), Executive Director, Interfaith Movement For Humanity Integrity

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Rev. Deborah Lee ensures that we as an organization stay true to our mission, vision and values and are responsive to our partners and network, and works with Board of Directors to ensure the long-term sustainability of the organization.

Rev. Deborah Lee became the Executive Director of the Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity in 2018. Prior to becoming Executive Director, Rev. Lee served since 2009 as the Program Director for the Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity (and under its predecessor names: Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights and CLUE-CA). In that role, Rev. Lee built up the Immigrant Justice program of the organization, engaging dozens of congregations in Northern California to become Sanctuary congregations and to respond to the wave of migrant youth and families and the detention and deportation crisis. Her work has been recognized as innovative and impactful with awards from the United Nation's Association of the East Bay, East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy, and the national United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministry.

Rev. Lee has worked at the intersection of faith and social justice for over 25 years in popular education, community organizing and advocacy connecting issues of race, gender, economic justice, anti-militarism, LGBTQ inclusion and immigrant rights. She has consistently sought to strengthen the voice and role of faith communities in today's social movements.

Rev. Lee is the daughter of immigrants and part of the Chinese diaspora that has taken her family through Southeast Asia, Mexico and now the United States. She is a proud parent, partner, soccer player and tai chi practitioner.

[Grisel Ruiz](#), Supervising Attorney, Immigrant Legal Resource Center

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Grisel Ruiz is a Supervising Attorney in San Francisco where she focuses on the intersection between immigration law and criminal law. This includes advising attorneys and advocates on the immigration consequences of criminal offenses, training on removal defense, and supporting local and statewide campaigns to push back on immigration enforcement. In addition to technical assistance, training, and campaign support in these areas, Grisel also helps lead the ILRC's state legislative work. Grisel is currently the Board Chair for Freedom for Immigrants (formerly CIVIC), a nonprofit that advocates for detained immigrants.

Prior to working with the ILRC, Grisel was a litigation associate at Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP and a Stimson Fellow housed at the UC Davis Law School Immigration Clinic and California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation. As a legal fellow, she co-founded "Know Your Rights" programs at local immigration detention centers, for which she received an award from Cosmo for Latinas.

Grisel is an immigrant herself and earned her law degree from the University of Chicago where she received the Tony Patiño Fellowship. She received her undergraduate degree from the University of Notre Dame, where she dual majored in Political Science and Spanish Literature. Grisel is admitted to the bar in California and is fluent in Spanish.

[Hamid Yazdan Panah](#), Regional Director, California Collaborative for Immigrant Justice

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Hamid Yazdan Panah is the Regional Director for the NCRIDN, and was involved in the development and launch of the network. Prior to joining the NCRIDN, Hamid was a solo immigration attorney in Berkeley, CA. Hamid has a background in advocacy and organizing in the Iranian diaspora, and has written extensively on the human rights abuses and the mistreatment of ethnic minorities in Iran. As a refugee, Hamid is committed to ensuring due process and civil rights for immigrants in the United States and beyond.

[Jackie Gonzalez](#), California Collaborative for Immigrant Justice

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Jackie Gonzalez is the Policy Director for the California Collaborative for Immigrant Justice based in Sacramento. Most recently, she served as the Immigration Program Policy Director at Centro Legal de la Raza which houses one of the state's largest removal defense programs in the state of California. Prior to that, Jackie was the Legal Director for the Deportation Defense and Legal Advocacy Program at Dolores Street Community Services in San Francisco, California, where her work focused primarily on deportation defense for individuals facing imminent removal. In that capacity, she supervised and trained staff attorneys, paralegals, and law students in removal defense, including representation of children and families on the expedited dockets.

She also served as the lead attorney for the San Francisco Immigrant Legal and Education Network (SFILN) where she worked with partner agencies to advocate for local pro-immigrant legislation. Jackie externed for the San Francisco Executive Office for Immigration Review during law school, helped represent detained immigrant youth as an intern at Legal Services for Children, and worked as a Deportation Defense Fellow at Van Der Hout, Brigagliano & Nightingale LLP. Jackie received her undergraduate degree from Harvard University and her law degree from the University of California, Berkeley School of Law.

[Kate Clark](#), Senior Director of Immigration Services and lead Immigration Attorney, Jewish Family Services San Diego

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Kate Clark currently serves as the Senior Director of Immigration Services and lead Immigration Attorney at Jewish Family Service of San Diego. In these roles, she advocates on behalf of San Diego's newest refugees and asylees and assists the immigrant community-at-large to apply for various immigration benefits. Ms. Clark is a founding member of the San Diego Rapid Response Network and sits on the SDRRN Steering Committee. While heading JFS's Immigration Department, Ms. Clark is committed to carrying out the SDRRN's central mission, to ensure that no one in our community stands alone. Kate Clark is a graduate of California Western School of Law and San Diego State University. Ms. Clark remains very involved with California Western. As an adjunct professor, she has taught the Distinguished Advocate Summer Appellate Boot Camp and International Law courses.

[Sandy Valenciano](#), Statewide Coordinator, California Immigrant Youth Justice Alliance

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Sandy (pronouns: she/they) is an undocumented criminal justice strategist, who organizes at the intersection of criminal justice and immigrant rights with abolition practices. She has organized grassroots efforts to build community defense groups to stop the detention and deportation of immigrant communities with criminal convictions. Sandy has organized and led campaign victories such as the TRUST Act, Health for undocumented young adults, TRUTH Act, Due Process for All, Dignity Not Detention Act (SB29), and AB 103. Being part of the Kate Steinle response team that transformed a tragedy in San Francisco, Sandy has developed statewide and local power analysis, and has built strategic response models to combat criminalizing policies. Sandy was raised in the Bay Area since the age of 4 and graduated from Sonoma State University in 2015. Sandy practices conflict mediation transformation models to bring accessible healing practices into trauma impacted communities.

[Silky Shah](#), Executive Director, Detention Watch Network

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Silky Shah is the Executive Director of Detention Watch Network (DWN), a national coalition dedicated to abolishing immigration detention in the US. She has worked as an organizer on issues related to immigration detention, mass incarceration, and racial and migrant justice for over 15 years. In her time at DWN she has helped transform the organization into a national leader in the immigrant rights movement, leading campaigns to expose the system and building the capacity of grassroots members to take action. Prior to joining DWN in 2009 Silky worked at Grassroots Leadership in Texas fighting the expansion of immigrant jails on the US-Mexico border and at the independent news program, Democracy Now!, in New York.

Rini Chakraborty, Senior Program Officer, Four Freedoms Fund

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Rini Chakraborty is the Senior Program Officer at NEO Philanthropy's Four Freedoms Fund. She manages the Response to Harsh Enforcement initiative, which seeks to drastically reduce the number of immigrants who are detained and deported and to strengthen the field of cross-movement organizations challenging the criminalization of immigrants.

Rini's career spans more than two decades fighting for and advancing the rights of immigrants, communities of color, and low-wage workers striving to achieve justice. After passage of the 1996 immigration and welfare laws, she led a statewide immigrant rights collaborative in California, where she crafted movement-building strategies, developed innovative legislative solutions, and spearheaded trailblazing campaigns that restored health and welfare programs for immigrants (the first successful campaign to do so in the nation); won in-state tuition for undocumented students; and propelled the Golden State to be a national leader and model for other states on immigrant justice. She also served as Senior Policy Analyst with the ACLU of Southern California, where she challenged post-9.11 policies and attacks against MASA communities; and as Executive Director of Sweatshop Watch, where she helped establish an unprecedented consortium of national "sweat-free" cities and states. Prior to joining FFF,

Rini was Amnesty International USA's Western Regional Director for Amnesty's largest region, where she devised and directed priority campaigns on death penalty abolition, migrant rights, criminal justice reforms, and international human rights.

Talia Inlender, Public Counsel Contact:

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Talia Inlender is a Supervising Senior Staff Attorney in the Immigrants' Rights Project at Public Counsel in Los Angeles, where she manages the agency's work on behalf of people in immigration detention and deported veterans. In this role, Talia works with people incarcerated by immigration authorities including asylum seekers, lawful permanent residents, and non-residents with deep family and community ties to the United States, among others. Talia also trains and supervises attorneys, legal fellows, and law students representing detained immigrants in their immigration proceedings. Talia has herself litigated cases on behalf of immigrants before Immigration Judges; the Board of Immigration Appeals; and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Talia's portfolio also includes impact litigation on behalf of immigrants. She is co-counsel on *Franco-Gonzalez v. Holder*, the first lawsuit to establish a right to government-appointed counsel for a class of immigrants with serious mental disabilities, *F.L.B. v. Lynch* and *C.J.L.G. v. Barr*, lawsuits to vindicate children's right to counsel in immigration proceedings, and *International Refugee Assistance Project v. Kelly*, a lawsuit challenging the detention of an Afghan family entering on Special Immigrant Visas during the Muslim ban. Talia is a former judicial clerk to the Honorable Stephen Reinhardt on the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. She is a graduate of Wesleyan University (B.A. 2001) and Yale Law School (J.D. 2007).