

VALERIE L. COLLINS

valerie.collins@howard.edu

EDUCATION

Howard University School of Law, Washington, D.C.
Juris Doctor, *Magna Cum Laude*

May 2009

Activities: *Editor-in-Chief*, Howard Law Journal
Secretary, American Constitution Society
Member, Black Law Students Association
President, Outlaw
Secretary, American Civil Liberties Union

Honors: *Salutatorian*, Class of 2009
Sonnenschein Public Interest Scholar, 2007

Awards: *CALI Awards for Excellence for the Future* (for highest grade in class):
Adoption Law
Advanced Legal Research
Civil Rights
Civil Procedure
Constitutional Law I
Criminal Procedure I
Criminal Procedure II
Criminal Law
International Law
Legal Methods
Best Brief 2007, Luke Charles Moore Intramural Moot Court Competition

American University, Washington, D.C.
Bachelor of Arts, Communications, Law, Economics & Government

May 2002

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant, Appellate Legal Writing, Charles Hamilton Houston Moot Court Team, Howard University School of Law, 2010 – 2019.

Guest Lecturer, Labor Law, Sturm Collage of Law, Denver, February 2021.

PROFESSIONAL LEGAL EXPERIENCE

Towards Justice, Denver, CO.
Litigation Attorney, April 2020 – present

- *Prison Labor Reform* – Representing a class of all people incarcerated by the state of Colorado in a groundbreaking legal challenge to forced labor following the elimination

VALERIE L. COLLINS

valerie.collins@howard.edu

of the exception clause. Serves as an advisor and strategist to state public interest legal organizations pursuing similar litigation.

- *Agricultural Workers* – Organized a broad coalition in support of the Agricultural Worker Bill of Rights, which provided a minimum wage, overtime, access rights, and the right to organize for agricultural workers. Served as a subject-matter expert for bill sponsors, the lobbying team, and coalition partners. Personally lobbied dozens of Colorado lawmakers in support of the bill. Also represents Jobs with Justice in a rulemaking challenge to the overtime standard.
- *Workplace Heat and Cold Protections* – Drafted a state bill proposing workplace temperature standards. Advocated for strong standards at the state level and before the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.
- *Whistleblower Protections* – Represented Denver Health Workers United before the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment in a complaint that alleged Denver Health unlawfully discriminated against employees who publicly criticized Denver Health's COVID-19 employment practices and diversity initiatives.
- *Wage Theft* – Represented workers before the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment in wage theft complaints against current and former employers.
- *Discriminatory Workplace Practices* – Represented workers before the Colorado Civil Rights Division regarding race-based employment discrimination.
- *Collective Action* – Represented workers who were discharged after engaging in protected concerted activity before the National Labor Relations Board.
- *Anti-Trafficking* – Represented two classes of foreign healthcare workers alleging violations of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act based on oppressive contract terms that severely limited employee mobility.
- *COVID-19 Pandemic* – Represented warehouse employees in an injunctive lawsuit against Amazon based on unsafe working conditions; meatpacking employees who were forced to work in unsafe conditions; and warehouse employees for uncompensated health screening time.

National Labor Relations Board, Washington, D.C.

Appellate Attorney, July 2014 – February 2020

- Primary author of dozens of appellate briefs in various courts of appeal, including cases against CitiGroup, Chipotle, Flamingo Las Vegas, Time Warner Cable, Cooper Tire, Burger King, and Dish Network.

VALERIE L. COLLINS

valerie.collins@howard.edu

- Presented dozens of oral arguments on behalf of the agency in the Second, Third, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, Eighth, Tenth, and D.C. Circuits.

Jones Day, Washington, D.C.

Litigation Associate, October 2011 – July 2014

- Diverse practice focused on commercial litigation, business interruption insurance, and pro bono litigation. Researched and wrote legal memoranda, conducted expert interviews, drafted pleadings, and participated in all stages of discovery.
- Prepared an extensive asylum application for a Serbian client seeking asylum based on ongoing persecution of the LGBT community. Notwithstanding a challenging timeliness dispute regarding the client's application, the government conceded the client's application, which the judge declared was "the right thing to do."
- Drafted a Sixth Circuit merits brief and a Supreme Court petition for a *writ of certiorari* in a case where the Court held that a defendant may not challenge the denial of his request to represent himself after entering an unconditional guilty plea. *Werth v. Bell*, 692 F.3d 486 (6th Cir. 2012), *cert. denied*, 568 U.S. 1230 (2013).

Professor Andrew Taslitz, Howard University School of Law, Washington, D.C.

Research Assistant, August 2008 – April 2009

- Andrew E. Taslitz, *Fourth Amendment Federalism and the Silencing of the American Poor*, 85 Chi.-Kent L. Rev. 277, 284 (2010).

Step toe & Johnson, Washington, D.C.

Summer Associate, May 2008 – July 2008

- Researched and wrote legal memoranda on international arbitration and civil procedure.
- Drafted pleadings and participated in all stages of discovery.

Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs, Washington, D.C.

Legal Intern, July 2008 – August 2008

- Researched, wrote legal memoranda, and drafted pleadings on workplace disability discrimination.

Professor Josephine Ross, Howard University School of Law, Washington, D.C.

Research Assistant, May 2007 – August 2007

- Josephine Ross, *Crawford's Short-Lived Revolution: How Davis v. Washington Reins in Crawford's Reach*, 83 N.D. L. Rev. 387 (2007).

VALERIE L. COLLINS

valerie.collins@howard.edu

JUDICIAL CLERKSHIPS

Judge Andre M. Davis, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, Baltimore, Md.
Law Clerk, August 2010 – August 2011

Judge Royce C. Lamberth, U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia,
Washington, D.C.
Law Clerk, August 2009 – August 2010

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

Panelist, *Using State Courts to Effect Change*, *Prison Law and Advocacy Conference*, Georgia State University College of Law, October 18, 2024.

Panelist, *De-Siloing Economic Impact of the Prison Industry*, University of Colorado, Just Wages, October 2023.

Presenter, *Wage Theft Continuing Legal Education, Access to Justice*, September 18, 2023.

Panelist, *Agricultural Exceptionalism and Worker Rights*, University of Colorado, Just Wages, October 2022.

Panelist, *Revisiting the Scope of Protected Activity*, American Bar Association Section of Labor and Employment Law Conference, November 13, 2021.

Panelist, *How We Organize, How We Win: State-Level Action to Gain Labor Rights and Build Worker Power*, *Economic Policy Institute, Economic Analysis and Research Network Annual Conference*, September 29, 2021.

Presenter, *Worker Rights During the COVID-19 Pandemic*, *Boulder County Pandemic Response and Recovery Organization*, April 29, 2021.

Presenter, *Worker Rights During the COVID-19 Pandemic*, *Boulder County Latino Chamber of Commerce*, February 3, 2021, available at <https://youtu.be/moDlNU3VM7I>.

Presenter, *Legislative Advocacy Strategies Beyond Individual Representation*, *National Farmworkers Conference*, November 9, 2021.

Presenter, *Colorado Labor and Employment Law Primer*, *Roundtable Hosted by Towards Justice, Valley Settlement, and Manaus*, September 23, 2020.

Presenter, *Colorado Agricultural Worker Rights*, *Featured Presentation at Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition's Annual Policy Meeting*, July 19, 2020.

VALERIE L. COLLINS

valerie.collins@howard.edu

PUBLICATIONS

Camouflaged Legitimacy: Civil Commitment, Property Rights, and Legal Isolation, 52 HOW. L.J. 407 (2009).

Occupational Safety and Health Law, Chapter: COVID-19 Pandemic, Private Litigation; (Bloomberg) Fifth Ed. 2024.

SCHOLARSHIP CITED

In re T.W., 991 N.W.2d 280 (Neb. 2023) (citing *Camouflaged Legitimacy: Civil Commitment, Property Rights, and Legal Isolation*, 52 HOW. L.J. 407 (2009)).

Gabriel Arkles, *Marriage and Mass Incarceration*, 37 N.Y.U. Rev. L. & Soc. Change 13, 19 (2013) (citing *Camouflaged Legitimacy: Civil Commitment, Property Rights, and Legal Isolation*, 52 HOW. L.J. 407 (2009)).

Morgan Stanley, *Gun Control Is Not Enough: The Need to Address Mental Illness to Prevent Incidences of Mass Public Violence*, 15 Scholar: St. Mary's L. Rev. & Soc. Just. 875, 880 (2013) (citing *Camouflaged Legitimacy: Civil Commitment, Property Rights, and Legal Isolation*, 52 HOW. L.J. 407 (2009)).

TESTIMONY

Opposing Agricultural Worker Service Providers' Access to Private Property, Colorado Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, March 7, 2025.

Opposing Criminal Penalty Controlled Substance Supplier, Colorado Senate Judiciary Committee, March 22, 2023.

Supporting Meaningful Agricultural Worker Overtime Standards, Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, August 24, 2021.

Supporting the Agricultural Worker Bill of Rights, Colorado House State, Civic, Military, and Veterans Affairs Committee, June 3, 2021.

Supporting the Agricultural Worker Bill of Rights, Colorado Senate Business, Labor, and Technology Committee, March 17, 2021.

Supporting Denver Health and the Public Health Emergency Whistleblower Act, Denver City Council, November 23, 2020.

VALERIE L. COLLINS

valerie.collins@howard.edu

SELECTED MEDIA

Colorado Bill Would Put Workplace Safety Rules in State Law Amid Federal Enforcement Gaps, Colorado Newsline, February 20, 2026, available at <https://coloradonewsline.com/briefs/colorado-workplace-safety-rules/>.

Colorado Bill Would Roll Back Farmworker Protections in Response to Supreme Court Ruling, Colorado Newsline and Montrose Daily Press, February 27, 2025, available at <https://coloradonewsline.com/2025/02/27/colorado-bill-would-roll-back-farmworker-protections-in-response-to-supreme-court-ruling/>.

Incarcerated Men Allege They Were Cut Off From Loved Ones and Lost Privileges in Forced Labor Suit, Colorado Public Radio, July 16, 2024, available at <https://www.cpr.org/2024/07/16/colorado-inmates-allege-punishments-forced-labor-lawsuit/>.

Colorado Banned Forced Prison Labor Five Years Ago; Prisoners Say It Is Still Happening, PBS All Things Considered, November 13, 2023, available at <https://www.npr.org/2023/11/13/1210564359/slavery-prison-forced-labor-movement>.

Amazon Delivery Drivers in Colorado Peed in Bottles, Pooped in Bags to Keep Jobs, Lawsuit Says, 9News Denver, May 23, 2023, available at <https://www.cpr.org/2023/05/23/amazon-lawsuit-delivery-drivers-quotas/>.

Colorado Senate Panel Advances Farmworker Wages, Rights Bill, CBS Denver, March 18, 2021, available at <https://denver.cbslocal.com/2021/03/18/colorado-senate-panel-advances-farmworker-wages-rights-bill/>.

Bill on Ag. Worker Rights Wins Approval From Senate Committee Despite Opposition From Polis Administration, Colorado Politics, March 17, 2021, available at https://www.coloradopolitics.com/news/bill-on-ag-workers-rights-wins-approval-from-senate-committee-despite-opposition-from-polis-administration/article_83cb6126-8773-11eb-b880-f72cbce643c9.html.

Complaint Alleges Denver Health Prevented Employees from Speaking Out Against Racism, COVID-19, 9News Denver, Aired November 24, 2020, available at <https://www.9news.com/article/news/health/coronavirus/denver-health-systemic-racism-covid-19-whistleblower-complaint/73-057d1e8a-df65-420d-a04d-096c7b41f0ff>.

Denver Health Retaliated Against Those Who Spoke Out About Systemic Racism and COVID-19, whistleblower complaint alleges, Denver Post, November 24, 2020, available at <https://www.denverpost.com/2020/11/24/denver-health-whistleblower-complaint-covid-racism/>.

Dollar General Must Recognize Unionization of Missouri Store, Eighth Circuit Rules, February 13, 2020, available at

VALERIE L. COLLINS

valerie.collins@howard.edu

<https://www.courthousenews.com/dollar-general-must-recognize-unionization-of-missouri-store-eighth-circuit-rules/>.

ASSOCIATIONS

The Appellate Project, Volunteer and Mentor, *profiled at* <https://theappellateproject.org/news-and-voices/all-posts/valerie-collins>.

ADMISSIONS

State Bar Admissions:

Maryland
Colorado

U.S. District Court Admissions:

U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia
U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland

U.S. Circuit Courts of Appeal Admissions:

U.S. Court of Appeal for the Second Circuit
U.S. Court of Appeal for the Third Circuit
U.S. Court of Appeal for the Fourth Circuit
U.S. Court of Appeal for the Sixth Circuit
U.S. Court of Appeal for the Eighth Circuit
U.S. Court of Appeal for the Tenth Circuit
U.S. Court of Appeal for the Eleventh Circuit
U.S. Court of Appeal for the District of Columbia Circuit