

Reflection of First Few Weeks at Lift Louisiana: An Exposure to Incarcerated Women's Health Services and Reflection of the Kavanaugh Confirmation

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Hi, everyone! My name is Janna (pronounced John-Uh) Mangasep, and I'm a sophomore majoring in Political Economy with a double minor in Mathematics and SLAMM (School of Liberal Arts Management Minor). I am beyond excited to be interning for Lift Louisiana and being a part of Newcomb College Institute's Reproductive Rights and Reproductive Health internship program! As a former intern under the Mayor's Office of New York City and a former research assistant of tenured professor Celeste Lay in the political science field, I've been involved in work somewhat related to the government for the majority of 2018. However, I hadn't gotten the chance to fully dive into the specific policy areas that I've consistently found myself interested in: women's rights and reproductive justice. While the former entails several causes for concern I could translate into essays and free time spent researching the topic, the latter has been a subject I've longed to serve. Therefore, I can definitely say that accepting the communications intern position at Lift has been the easiest choice I've ever had to make!

So far, my duties at Lift Louisiana have spanned over several topic areas. To begin with, my supervisor, Michelle Erenberg, gave me the assignment of creating an introduction to a report on incarcerated women in Louisiana's reproductive and overall health care services (or the lack thereof). An issue I had been unfortunately ignorant on until now, I've had the educational experience of researching facts across several studies that exemplify our state's failure in supplying these women, pregnant or not, with the appropriate services that they deserve as human beings, services that I believe are a given right no matter the institutionalization of the person. This had led to disappointing facts that only recently came to light in my perspective of women's rights, as I've found many cases in which women were horrendously neglected through the forced and painful shackling of their legs (and sometimes even across the stomach) before, during, and after labor.

Other than this ongoing assignment, I've also been tasked with writing another blog post, specifically for Lift's website, in where I had the autonomy in choosing whatever topic I felt was relevant to Lift's mission. I chose the Kavanaugh hearing and consequential confirmation, an ordeal that has taken a toll on both myself and basically all other women I know. While this has been one of the more personally difficult assignments, it's allowed me to take a fully informed stance on the case that I may have otherwise not completely considered, as it's certainly easier to only think of incidents like these in the passing conversations with other students rather than in an entire blog post.

Overall, my experience in Lift has been exciting, albeit difficult in terms of time management and prioritizing in the context of my other engagements. I'm excited to see what comes next!

(Side note: This recent confirmation of Brett Kavanaugh into the highest court of the land has made plenty of women, including myself, relive traumatic experiences in our sympathy/empathy for Ford's own sexual assault. For other women and survivors of sexual assault, I highly recommend watching the now-viral SNL cold open of Kavanaugh's hearing. It's given me and even my supervisor a good laugh in the midst of this ordeal!)

Janna