



The Legislative Clinic

The Legislative Clinic is an upper-level clinical course that is intended to afford law students a deeper understanding of, and direct involvement with, legislative process, statutory drafting, statutory interpretation, legislative advocacy, ethics, and the role that lawyers play in legislation and public policy.

The Legislative Clinic involves both classroom and legislative fieldwork components.

Each student is required to fulfill a legislative field placement that involves an unpaid internship with an elected member of Congress, a legislative committee, or a non-profit advocacy organization pursuing legislative change. Students are required to devote a minimum of twenty hours per week on legislative work assigned by their placements and to be in Washington, D.C. a minimum of two days per week. While work assignments are entirely up to each legislative placement, the goal is to have students work with members and legislative staff in a mutually beneficial way. In past semesters, students have conducted legislative research, analyzed legislative proposals and pending legislation, helped prepare for committee hearings, contributed to legislative drafting, met with lobbyists, observed caucus meetings, and completed whatever tasks, large or small, that were needed by their respective legislative placements. Since all students are upper-class law students, and often bring with them prior legal, financial, or legislative experience, the goal is to give students as much meaningful responsibility as possible. However, even the smallest of observations or assignments often lead to very rich learning opportunities. Over the years, student evaluations completed by legislative staff have reported a very high degree of satisfaction with the work rendered by Penn Law students in their placements.

Students have fulfilled their legislative placements with many outstanding legislators from around the nation and with important legislative committees. In addition to the offices of individual senators and representatives, placements have included the Senate Judiciary Committee, Senate Finance Committee, Senate Committee on Homeland Security, House Judiciary Committee, House Subcommittee on Courts, the Internet, and Intellectual Property, House Committee on Homeland Security, House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, and the Joint Committee on Taxation, among others. These placements have not only proven to be valuable learning experiences for the students, but also have been the source of valuable assistance to legislative offices in furthering the interests of needed legislation and serving the interests of constituents.

The classroom component of the course utilizes scholarly and practice-based articles, film, outside speakers, drafting exercises, simulations, and fieldwork-driven class discussions to examine important legislative issues.

All legislative placements are for the spring semester. Students begin in January and continue through early May. Since students receive academic credit for this course, they may not be compensated for the work performed in connection with their legislative placements.

Louis S. Rulli
Practice Professor of Law, and
Director of Clinical Programs
University of Pennsylvania Law School

3501 Sansom Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6204
Tel: (215) 898-3203
Fax: (215) 573-6783
lrulli@law.upenn.edu