

KIRSTEN L. WIDNER

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ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE, August 1, 2020 – present
Assistant Professor of Political Science

EMORY UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW, 2007 – 2013

Initially hired as a Post-Graduate Fellow in Law, 2007

Appointed as Clinical Instructor / Director of Policy and Advocacy, January 2010

EDUCATION

EMORY UNIVERSITY, DEPT. OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, Ph.D., 2020

UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO SCHOOL OF LAW, J.D., *cum laude*, 2007

UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO, B.S. in Organizational Behavior, *college honors*,
2002

PUBLICATIONS

PEER REVIEWED

Books

The Haves and Have-Nots in Supreme Court Representation and Participation, 2016 to 2021 (with Anna Gunderson) (Cambridge Elements in American Politics 2024), doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009394352>.

Race, Gender, and Political Representation: Toward a More Intersectional Approach (with Beth Reingold and Kerry L. Haynie) (Oxford University Press 2021), doi: <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197502174.001.0001>.
Recipient of the Richard F. Fenno prize for best book in legislative studies 2021.

Chapters in Edited Volumes

"Friending the Court: Interest Group Amicus Coalitions and Activity at the US Supreme Court" (with Hannah Arning), in *Interest Group Politics*, 11th Ed. (Bloomsbury Academic, Anthony Nownes, editor) (*forthcoming*).

Political Science Journal Articles

"The Prosecutor Paradox: Understanding the Public's Low Knowledge About Chief Local Prosecutors" (with Joshua Boston, Anna Gunderson, and David Miller), *Journal of Law and Courts*, 2026, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/jlc.2026.10017>

"Mixed Signals? Rethinking How Ideology and Institutional Motivations Shape the Solicitor General's Positions" (with Elizabeth Lane), *Political Research Quarterly*, 2025, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/10659129251348456>.

"Lobbying in Public: Interest Group Activity on Social Media" (with Maggie MacDonald and Anna Gunderson), *Interest Groups & Advocacy*, 2025, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41309-024-00224-8>.

"Exploring Interest Group Social Media Activity on Facebook and Twitter" (with Maggie MacDonald and Anna Gunderson), *Journal of Quantitative Description: Digital Media*, 2024, doi: <https://doi.org/10.51685/jqd.2024.014>.

"Pursuing Change or Pursuing Credit? Litigation and Credit Claiming on Social Media" (with Maggie MacDonald and Anna Gunderson), *Journal of Law and Courts* 2023, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/jlc.2022.16>.

"The Supreme Court and the Limits of Descriptive Representation," *Polity* 2023; 55(2): 380-388, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1086/724167> .

"Legislating at the Intersections: Race, Gender, and Representation" (with Beth Reingold and Rachel Harmon), *Political Research Quarterly*, 2020; 73(4):819-33, doi: [10.1177/106591291985840](https://doi.org/10.1177/106591291985840).

Book Reviews and Responses

"Supreme Bias: Gender and Race in the U.S. Supreme Court Confirmation Hearings, Christina L. Boyd, Paul M. Collins, Jr., and Lori A. Ringhand," *Political Science Quarterly*, 2024, doi: [10.1093/psquar/qqae102](https://doi.org/10.1093/psquar/qqae102).

"Congress and the First Civil Rights Era, 1861-1918. By Jeffery A. Jenkins & Justin Peck. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021. 332 pp., \$35.00 Paper/\$105.00 Cloth." *The Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics*, 1-2, 2022 doi:[10.1017/rep.2021.36](https://doi.org/10.1017/rep.2021.36).

"Author's Response: Race, Gender, and Political Representation: Toward a More Intersectional Approach" (with Beth Reingold and Kerry Haynie), *Journal of Women Politics & Policy*, 43(1), 112-116, 2022, doi:[10.1080/1554477X.2022.1996841](https://doi.org/10.1080/1554477X.2022.1996841).

OTHER

Law Review Articles

"Building Resilience by Removing Barriers: Addressing Structural Impediments to Advocacy by Nonprofit Organizations on Behalf of the Unenfranchised" (with Heather Kolinsky) 92 *U. Cin. L. Rev.* 786 (2024).

"In Defense of the Black/White Binary: Reclaiming a Tradition of Civil Rights Scholarship" (with Roy L. Brooks), *Berkeley J. Afr.-Am. L. & Pol'y*, 2010; 12:107-44. Anthologized in *Critical Race Theory: The Cutting Edge* (Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic eds., 3d ed.) (2013, Temple University Press).

"Comment, Continuing the Evolution: Why California Should Amend Family Code Section 8616.5 to Allow Visitation in All Postadoption Contact Agreements," *San Diego L. Rev.* 2007; 44:355-86.

Public Scholarship

"Women of color won congressional seats in record numbers. How will they legislate?" *The Monkey Cage* blog at the *Washington Post*, available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/11/24/women-color-won-congressional-seats-record-numbers-how-will-they-legislate/>.

"More than Voting," *Atlanta Lawyer* (Nov. 2012).

PAPERS UNDER REVIEW

For the Love of God: Coalitions and Causes in Amicus Brief Participation by Religious Organizations (with Hannah Arning).

WORKING PAPERS

"Separating Prosecutor from Policy: How Platforms and Prosecutor Identity Impact Representation and Trust in the Criminal Legal System" (with Joshua Boston, Anna Gunderson, and David Miller).

"Excuse me" – Race and Intersectionality of Interruptions at the U.S. Supreme Court (with Elizabeth Lane).

Interrupted Interruptions? How COVID Protocols Changed (and Didn't Change) Gendered and Raced Patterns of Interruptions in Supreme Court Oral Argument (with Devon Thurman and Gavin Buerhing).

Gender, Institutions, and Deliberation: Can Rule Changes Reduce Gender-Based Interruptions during Supreme Court Oral Arguments? (with John Szmer and Ellie McCutchen).

Put Me In, Coach: Gender and Oral Argument Assignment (with Tao Dumas and Shane Gleason).

Death and Discretion: The Effect of Prosecutors' Electoral Considerations on the Decision to Seek the Death Penalty (with Matthew Cooper and Hemant Sharma).

Attorney Race, Intersectional Identity, and Success at the U.S. Supreme Court (with Elizabeth Lane).

Fear and Loathing on Social Media: How Interest Group Use Emotion to Mobilize Followers (with Justin Rose, Maggie MacDonald, and Anna Gunderson).

Who Do You Trust? Voter Evaluations of Candidates' Intersectional Identities (with Elizabeth Wiener; recipient of American Political Science Association Section on Women, Gender, and Politics Small Grant, Spring 2022).

The Political Determinants of Successful Gun Violence Legislation (with Sarah Shalf).

Untangling the Effects of Ideology and Identity on the Representation of Marginalized Group Interests (with Beth Reingold and Kerry Haynie).

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

Book Panel: Supreme Bias: Gender and Race in U.S. Supreme Court Confirmation, invited panelist at U.S. Supreme Court Nominations & Confirmations: Yesterday, Today, & Tomorrow at the University of Georgia, February 2024.

The Haves and Have-Nots in the Era of Trump Judges: Representation and Participation at the Supreme Court, 2016 to 2021. Invited presentation at University of South Carolina, October 2022.

The Have and Have-Nots in the Era of Trump Judges: Representation at the Supreme Court, 2016-2020 (with Anna Gunderson), invited presentation at Cultivating Networks & Innovative Scholarship in Law & Courts Workshop, June 2022.

OTHER SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

Gender, Institutions, and Deliberation: Can Rule Changes Reduce Gender-Based Interruptions during Supreme Court Oral Arguments? (with John Szmer and Ellie McCutchen), Southern Political Science Association Conference, January 2025.

Separating Prosecutor from Policy: How Platforms and Prosecutor Identity Impact Representation and Trust in the Criminal Justice System (with Joshua Boston, Anna Gunderson, and David Miller), Southern Political Science Association Conference, January 2025.

Mixed Signals? How Ideology and Institutional Motivations Shape OSG Positions (with Elizabeth Lane), American Political Science Conference, September 2024.

Mixed Signals? How Ideology and Institutional Motivations Shape OSG Positions (with Elizabeth Lane), Southern Political Science Association Conference, January 2024.

The Haves and Have-Nots in the Era of Trump Justice: Representation and Participation at the Supreme Court, 2016 to 2021 (with Anna Gunderson), Southern Political Science Association Conference, January 2024.

Attorney Race and Intersectional Identity and Success at the U.S. Supreme Court (with Elizabeth Lane), American Political Science Association Conference, September 2023.

Fear and Loathing on Social Media: How Interest Groups Use Emotion to Mobilize (with Justin Rose, Maggie MacDonald, and Anna Gunderson), Midwest Political Science Association Conference, April 2023.

The Haves and Have-Nots in the Era of Trump Judges: Representation and Amicus Briefs at the Supreme Court, 2016 to 2021 (with Anna Gunderson), Southern Political Science Conference, January 2023.

The Haves and Have-Nots in the Era of Trump Judges (with Anna Gunderson), American Political Science Association Conference, September 2022.

Never Again? The Political Determinant of Gun Violence Prevention Legislation (with Sarah Shalf), Midwest Political Science Association Conference, April 2022.

Untangling the Effects of Ideology and Identity on the Representation of Marginalized Group Interests (with Beth Reingold and Kerry Haynie), Midwest Political Science Association Conference, April 2022.

Interrupting Dynamics: How the Supreme Court's Switch to Teleconferences During COVID Altered Patterns of Interruptions (with Devon Thurman and Gavin Buehring), Southern Political Science Association Conference, January 2022.

Pursuing Change or Pursuing Credit? Litigation and Credit Claiming on Social Media (with Maggie MacDonald and Anna Gunderson), Midwest Political Science Association Conference, April 2021.

Pursuing Change or Pursuing Credit? Litigation and Credit Claiming on Social Media (with Maggie MacDonald and Anna Gunderson), Southern Political Science Association Conference, January 2021.

Lobbying Inside (and) Out: Interest Group Behavior on Social Media (with Maggie MacDonald and Anna Gunderson), American Political Science Association Conference, September 2020.

Explorations in Intersectional Policymaking (with Kerry L. Haynie and Beth Reingold), American Political Science Association Conference, August 2019.

Structural Inequality Among Nonprofits: How Choice of Constituency Constrains Organizational Options, Southern Political Science Association Conference, January 2019.

Advocacy for the Powerless: How Interest Groups Approach the Representation of Non-Voters, American Political Science Association Conference, September 2018.

Advocacy for the Powerless: How Interest Groups Approach the Representation of Non-Voters, Midwest Political Science Association Conference, April 2018.

*Intersecting Issues? Race, Gender, and Race*Gender in State Policymaking* (with Beth Reingold and Rachel Harmon), American Political Science Conference, September 2017.

Policy Pioneers and Social Control (with Anna Gunderson), Midwest Political Science Association Conference, April 2017.

Rule Choice in the U.S. Courts of Appeals, Midwest Political Science Association Conference, April, 2016.

Advocating for Children of Incarcerated Parents, National Association of Counsel for Children Conference, Atlanta, August 2013.

The Least of These: Children, Animals, and Competition for Compassion, An Uncomfortable Conversation: Human Use of Animals Workshop at Emory Law School, March 2012.

Panelist, *Women, Families and Communities*, BLSA Conference, Atlanta, March 2012.

Promoting Financial Security for Children Aging Out of Foster Care, Georgia CASA Conference, March 2012.

Helping Foster Youth Keep What Little They Have, Youth Law Conference, Georgia, November 2011.

Increasing Civic Engagement, Georgia Association for Women Lawyers CLE, Atlanta Georgia, October 2011.

Improving Children's Mental Health Through Juvenile Code Reform, Carter Center Mental Health Forum, May 2011.

Considerations During Direct and Cross Examination of Children (with Temika Murray), Council of Juvenile Court Judges Conference, May 2011.

Panelist, *Human Trafficking and the Law*, John Marshall Law School, February 2011.

Panelist, *Human Trafficking and Violence Against Women*, Georgia Women's Assembly, November 2010.

Legislative Reform to Protect Runaway and Homeless Youth, State Bar of Georgia Continuing Education Program, November 2010.

The Child Witness on Direct and Cross (with Temika Murray), Youth Law Conference, Atlanta GA, October 2010.

Recent Case Law on Children and the Internet, Practicing Law in the Digital Age CLE, State Bar of Georgia Young Lawyers Division, June 2010.

Moderator, *Georgia Attorney General Candidates Debate*, State Bar of Georgia Young Lawyers Division, April 2010.

Interviewing Child Clients, Youth Law Conference, Atlanta Georgia, November 2009.

Panelist, *Human Trafficking as a Human Rights Violation*, Emory Public Interest Committee Conference, October 2009.

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Child Abuse and Neglect Conference, November 2008.

Representing Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (with Katherine Mullen and Melanie Shapiro), National Association of Counsel for Children Conference, August 2008.

Issues Affecting Youth in Long-Term Foster Care, part of CLE seminar "From Model Code to Legislative Action: Changing Children's Law in Georgia," ICLE, Georgia, May 2008.

MEDIA

["The Have and Have-Nots in Supreme Court Representation and Participation, 2016-2021"](#) on *New Books in Political Science* podcast, October 31, 2024

["Race, Gender, and Political Representation: Toward a More Intersectional Approach"](#) on *New Books in Political Science* podcast, January 31, 2022

AWARDS, GRANTS, AND FELLOWSHIPS

2022 Grant from of American Political Science Association Section on Women, Gender, and Politics Small Grant for *Who Do You Trust? Voter Evaluations of Candidates' Intersectional Identities* (with Elizabeth Wiener)

2021 Richard F. Fenno Prize for *Race, Gender, and Political Representation: Toward a More Intersectional Approach*

Mellon Humanities Ph.D. Interventions Grant, Summer 2018

Scholars Strategy Network Graduate Fellow, Fall 2016- Spring 2018

Scholarly Inquiry and Research at Emory (SIRE) Fellow, 2019 - 2020

TEACHING

University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Judicial Process and Policy Making

Law in American Society

Constitutional Law: Sources of Power and Restraint

Constitutional Law: Civil Rights and Liberties

Comparative Public Policy: Ideas, Interests, and Institutions

Introduction to Political Philosophy

Ancient and Medieval Political Thought

Gender and Politics

Gender, Politics, and the Law

Emory University, Department of Political Science

Public Policy (Fall 2019)

Supreme Court (co-taught with Micheal Giles, Fall 2016)

Intro to American Politics (grader, Spring 2017 and Spring 2018)

Intro to International Relations (teaching assistant, Spring 2016)

Emory University, School of Law

Public Policy Clinic (2007 - 2013)

Legislative Advocacy Clinic (2007 - 2013)

Child Welfare Law & Policy Seminar (2007 - 2013)

SERVICE

University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Mock Trial Team Advisor 2024 - present

Advisory Committee, 2020-2021, 2022-2024

American Politics Search Committee, Fall 2024

Department Head Search Committee, Spring 2022

International Relations Search Committee, Fall 2021

Professional Associations

APSA Law and Courts Section Best Article Award Committee Member 2026

SPSA Finance Committee Member 2024

SPSA Marian Irish Award Committee Member 2023

Richard F. Fenno Prize Committee Member 2022

APSA Law and Courts Section Teaching Award Committee Member 2022

Emory University, School of Law

Public Interest Law Committee Member

Experiential Education Committee Member

Mock Trial Coach

Moot Court Judge

Professionalism Program Instructor

University of San Diego, School of Law

San Diego Law Review, Executive Comments Editor & Symposium Coordinator

Moot Court, National Team Member and Coach

Academic Success Fellow, Property Law

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Active member in good standing, State Bar of Georgia

Inactive member in good standing, State Bar of California

Member, American Political Science Association, Midwest Political Science Association, and Southern Political Science Association

Member and 2016-2018 Georgia Chapter Graduate Fellow, Scholars Strategy Network

Exam grader, Supreme Court of Georgia Office of Bar Admissions, August 2013 - 2022, 2024-present

Policy Mentor, Georgia Women's Policy Institute, 2013 - 2020