

STERLING K. JOHNSON, JD, MA

2007 S Beechwood, Philadelphia, PA 19145 | sterling.johnson@temple.edu | (215) 391 - 6536

STERLING JOHNSON

EDUCATION

Temple University (Full-time student) (Scheduled to graduate 2025)

Ph.D. Candidate

Teaching Assistant: Urban Dynamics

University of California Hastings College of Law, San Francisco, CA (2012)

Juris Doctor

Passed N.J. Bar (2013) currently inactive

George Washington University, Washington, DC (2009)

Master of Arts, Geography

American University, Washington, DC (2007)

Bachelor of Arts, International Studies

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

FAIR HOUSING RIGHTS CENTER IN SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA Philadelphia, PA

Director of Enforcement

November 2018 - August 2020

- Investigate claims of discrimination based on the federal Fair Housing Act and its protected classes: race, sex, color, national origin, familial status, and disability
- Conduct outreach and education at community events, including to vulnerable communities like queer and trans communities, and black and latinx communities in Philadelphia.
- Represent individuals in cases where a person has alleged discrimination at HUD administrative hearings.
- Negotiate, manage and report on all program activities for federal Department of Housing and Urban Development contract.
- Advocate at the city, state and federal level for affordable and accessible housing, including universal right to counsel legislation.

MENTAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIPS

Philadelphia, PA

Program Manager - Advocacy Division

June 2017 - November 2018

- Supervise advocates that provide case management services for participants, including support for housing, criminal justice, and healthcare issues.
- Conduct outreach at community events, including to vulnerable communities like queer and trans communities, and black and latino communities in Philadelphia.
- Represents the interests of people with mental health conditions on coalitions on issues at federal, state, and local level: housing, healthcare, harm reduction, deinstitutionalization, combatting involuntary treatment.
- Conduct trainings on advocacy issues in the community: History of the War on Drugs, and History of Asylums and Institutionalization.
- Convinced organization to provide public support for safe consumption spaces.

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LEGAL SCIENCE, LLC

Legal Research Analyst

Philadelphia, PA

February 2015 - June 2017

- Conduct legal research on state, county and city statutory codes for website, pdaps.org and websites in development, daps.org and cityhealth.org.
- Assisted administering NIH contracts with duties that include planning and delivering monthly reports.
- Assist in writing contract and scope of work for new clients, including project planning.

PUBLIC HEALTH LAW RESEARCH, TEMPLE UNIVERSITY

Senior Legal Research Associate

Philadelphia, PA

October 2013 - February 2015

- Conducted legal research on public health related topics: for example, medical marijuana, syringe exchange laws, traumatic brain injuries, and civil commitment laws.
- Created legal datasets, research protocols and completed bill tracking and updating for website, lawatlas.org.

OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER, NEW JERSEY

Law Clerk

Woodbury, NJ

November 2012 - May 2013

- Interviewed clients and argued 3-4 bail motions on a weekly basis.
- Drafted memos and briefs on criminal law issues, including motions to disclose confidential informants, motions to appeal pretrial intervention determination, and motions to challenge eyewitness identification.

AIDS HOUSING ALLIANCE/ Q FOUNDATION

Housing Advocate

San Francisco, CA

July 2011 - August 2012

- Completed intake assessments and client follow-ups with caseload of 250 persons over year.
- Gained expertise on city programs by referring client to programs like, Shelter Plus Care, City of San Francisco, Swords to Ploughshares and Catholic Charities for emergency housing and healthcare needs.
- Collected and organized client information in preparation for HUD program audits.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Program Analyst

Washington, DC

June 2008 - July 2010

- Prepared FOIA correspondence which included: acknowledgement letters, time extension letters, requests for clarification and fee assurance, and interim and final response letters.
- Coordinated and tracked FOIA and Privacy Act requests to ensure that responses were timely and in compliance with the law.

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VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Philadelphia Housing Action (2020 - Present)

- Led Philadelphia encampment protest and housing takeover during summer of 2020.
- Advocated for sealing eviction records (resolution passed in 2020).

Angels in Motion, Philadelphia, PA (Board Member) (2019 - 2021)

- Joined board of organization of mothers and families committed to harm reduction in Philadelphia and surrounding counties.

Creative Resilience Collective, Philadelphia, PA (2017 - Present)

- Mental health and artist collective looking at speculative aspects of wellness and being.
- Organizing Harm Reduction/Transformative Justice Study Group for Summer 2019.

Philadelphia Tenants' Union, Philadelphia, PA (2017 - 2020)

- Canvassing in Philadelphia neighborhoods to talk about tenants rights.
- Organizing tenants and providing support for them to tell their story.
- Provided compromise which led to passage of Just Cause of legislation.

ACT UP Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA (2017 - 2019)

- Conducting outreach to homeless encampments near open air drug market.
- Supporting advocacy effort for a safe consumption site or supervised injection site in Philadelphia.
- Advocacy led to compromise which gave \$70 million over five years to Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

PRO-ACT (Recovery organization), Philadelphia, PA (2015 - 2017)

- Research on overdose issues in Pennsylvania.
- Program development for Philadelphia's pre-arrest diversion program.
- Organized advocacy to help pass recovery housing legislation.

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JOURNAL ARTICLES

Johnson, S. (2023). Philadelphia Housing Action: Covid-19 pandemic and negotiating our survival. *Partecipazione e conflitto*, 16(1), 115-118.

Bennetch, J. & Johnson, S. (2022). Housing for Everyone: The Fight for Housing Justice. In C. Rogers & F. Muhammad (Eds.), *How we stay free: Notes on a Black uprising* (pp. 49–58). Common Notions. Accessed <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VD5Bep6bJFSIKLYwYGspxysYE9ZCEn5i/view>.

Johnson, S. (2022). Marronage and Philadelphia's Housing Justice Fight. *Radical Housing Journal*, 4(1).

Beletsky, L., & Johnson, S. (2020). Fighting the coronavirus & protecting the unhoused: Policies & polling. *Northeastern University School of Law Research Paper*, (376-2020).

Johnson, S., & Beletsky, L. (2020). Helping people transition from incarceration to society during a pandemic. *Northeastern University School of Law Research Paper*, (375-2020).

Johnson, S., & Beletsky, L. (2020). The Role of Overdose Prevention Sites in Coronavirus Response. *Northeastern University School of Law Research Paper*, (374-2020).

Wahbi, R. N., Johnson, S., & Beletsky, L. (2020). From Crisis Response to Harm Prevention: The Role of Integrated Service Facilities. *Northeastern University School of Law Research Paper*, (388-2020).

OP-ED ARTICLES

- Johnson, Sterling. Tree planting can't achieve climate justice without renter protections and AC access. August 21, 2021. *Philadelphia Inquirer*. <https://www.inquirer.com/opinion/commentary/philadelphia-trees-neighborhoods-income-gentrification-20210812.html>
- Johnson, Sterling and Jen Bennetch. Biden's plan could be disastrous for low-income homeowners in Philly. April 13, 2021. *Philadelphia Inquirer*. <https://www.inquirer.com/opinion/commentary/low-income-housing-philadelphia-biden-american-jobs-plan-20210413.html>
- Johnson, Sterling and Wiley Cunningham. The city and state need to do more to help Philly's homeless population. What about empty dorms? April 17, 2020. *Philadelphia Inquirer*. <https://www.inquirer.com/opinion/commentary/coronavirus-covid-philadelphia-homeless-housing-quarantine-20200417.html>
- Johnson, Sterling. Philly needs better bill to promote community benefit agreements for fair development. January 7, 2020. *Philadelphia Inquirer*. <https://www.inquirer.com/opinion/commentary/philadelphia-community-benefit-agreements-bill-20200107.html>
- Bauer-Reese, Jillian and Sterling Johnson. For Philly safe injection sites to be inclusive, start

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by allowing crack. February 20, 2018. *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

<https://www.inquirer.com/philly/opinion/commentary/philadelphia-safe-injection-sites-comprehensive-user-engagement-sites-cues-opioids-heroin-crack-cocaine-opinion-20180220.html>

- Bauer-Reese, Jillian and Sterling Johnson. City Council once adopted a resolution to consider giving people free crack. Let's bring it back. September 19, 2018. *Philadelphia Inquirer*.
<https://www.inquirer.com/philly/opinion/commentary/legalize-crack-heroin-harm-reduction-addiction-opioids-20180919.html>

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

2017 RX Summit, Atlanta, GA April 17-19

Beyond Mapping: Insights from Policy Surveillance of Rx Drug Abuse Laws

Presenters: Scott Burris & Sterling Johnson

2018 Harm Reduction Coalition Conference

New Orleans, LA October 17-21

LEAD and Black harm reduction

Presenters: Sterling Johnson

2019 Coercive Treatment—Moving Beyond “For Your Own Good” Conference

San Francisco, CA May 16-17

Facilitated Group Discussion

Presenters: Sterling Johnson & Katharine Celentano

2021 Association of American Geographers

Seattle, WA April 7

Covid-19, Digital Activism and the Changing Dynamics of Social Movements

Presenters: Sterling Johnson, Dairon Morejon Perez, Hilal Kara & Martina Jakubchik-Paloheimo

2022 Association of American Geographers

Virtual, Feb 26

Organizing for Housing Justice in a Pandemic 4

Presenters: Sterling Johnson, Dani Aiello, Miranda Strominger

2023 Association of American Geographers

Denver, March 24

Reparative Geographies

Presenters: Elsa Noterman, Elise Quinn, Anna Livia Brand, Sterling Johnson, Danika Cooper

TESTIMONY

- May 2016. Testimony for Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) Program. Philadelphia City Council Chambers.
- November 2017. Testimony for Inclusionary (Mixed-Income) Housing Bill. Philadelphia City Council Chambers.
- February 2018. Testimony for Good Cause Legislation. Philadelphia City Council Chambers.

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- March 2018. Testimony on Opioid Crisis. Philadelphia City Council Chambers.
- February 2019. Testimony on Opioid Crisis. McPherson Library, Philadelphia, PA

PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Substance Use x Covid Data Collaborative

Virtual, May 23, 2023

Confronting the Drug War: Drug User-Oriented Harm Reduction and Drug Policy

Presenters: Nancy Campbell, Sterling Johnson, Anne Kveim Lie, and Nicole Luongo

MEDIA

The Next World - Free The Land: Sterling Johnson and Jenn Bennetch, Philadelphia Housing Action

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/263094/6615106-free-the-land-sterling-johnson-and-jenn-bennetch-philadelphia-housing-action>

Philly Families Faced With Eviction Are Rising Up, Refusing to Leave Their Homes

<https://truthout.org/audio/philly-families-faced-with-eviction-are-rising-up-refusing-to-leave-their-homes/>