

To the world, homelessness and joblessness were viewed as oppression. However, during the spring, before I should have started high school, my mom, little brother, and I escaped our home, leaving my alcoholic father after suffering eight years of verbal, physical, and emotional abuse. I never knew I was trapped until I realized screaming, crying, and physical abuse were not supposed to be a part of your everyday routine. Although we did not have a place to go, waking up in our car in the middle of nowhere and figuring out how to get food and water was better than what we had to leave behind. At that moment, homelessness and joblessness were a witness to our strength, a noble battle to overcome our systematic oppression so that we could redeem our lives until it wasn't.

The summer quickly dissipated, and the fundamental human right to an education hung by a thread. Despite my mother's persistent pleas to the school board, we realized we could not start school until we had an address.

However, I refused to be silent. As my mom continued to apply for jobs, I continued to make the world my classroom. At that moment, my aspirations to pursue a career that would protect the rights of individuals suffering from poverty, homelessness, and abuse arose inside me. For the first time in my life, I saw the law, an entity that should have protected us, function in a way that did not. Yet, this realization made me want to become part of the solution: the solution that creates laws that unifies and protects human rights for all.

Fast forward three years to the summer before I started my senior year of high school, I was invited by the United Nations Foundation to lobby our government for equal access to education for displaced women and girls. As the nature of the bill passed through my lips, "To enhance the transparency, improve the coordination and intensify the impact of assistance to support access to primary and secondary education for displaced children and persons, including women and girls," I realized my greatest strength: my voice was made for those who have been silenced.

Now, two months out of starting law school at the University of Notre Dame, I realized that the laws presiding over us, an entity that I believed was against me, could be for me. It is this reality that ensured I wanted to practice law and create unity within our country by raising each other up.