

# A PASSION FOR JUSTICE AND PROSE

## ROBIN PEGUERO

Chief of Staff for Representative  
Glen Ivey (D-MD-4)

**ROBIN PEGUERO RECOGNIZED HIS TALENT** and passion for writing early. As a dedicated and accomplished attorney, Peguero has used his literary skills to craft compelling cases in the courtroom and the halls of Congress. "I've always been a writer through and through," Peguero said. "As a child on the playground, while others were playing, I was off to a corner with my notebook." To date, Peguero's literary contributions have graced esteemed publications like the Miami Herald, the Harvard Crimson, and the Harvard Law Review. His first novel, a legal thriller titled *With Prejudice*, was published in May 2022.

As an Afro-Latino and first-generation American, Peguero recalls growing up in a working-class neighborhood in Miami. Public service held a central place in the Peguero family's core values, and Peguero notes that his first real interest in politics and public service came in the form of the 2000 presidential election. "I remember just parking myself in front of the television to watch every day and feeling compelled by the case that Vice President Gore was making," Peguero said. That case, *Bush v. Gore*, effectively awarded Florida's electoral votes to George W. Bush, who became the 43rd President of the United States. "That's what really started to get me into government and public service . . . Al Gore was a big inspiration for me." A few years later Peguero found himself leaving Miami for Cambridge to attend Harvard College, where he went from serving as editor-in-chief of his high school newspaper to an editor of the Harvard Crimson.



Photos courtesy of Travis Marshall Photography.

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After college, Peguero opted to take a one year fellowship with the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI), an organization that provides leadership, public service, and policy experiences to outstanding Latino/a/x students and young professionals. From there, Peguero went on to serve for four more years as a Hill staffer, including as a press aide for Congressman Charlie Rangel (D-NY-13) and a speechwriter for Senator Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota.

Peguero credits his time on the Hill as one of the reasons he decided to embark on the path to becoming a lawyer. “I wanted to go back home [to Miami] and serve my community in a more direct way,” Peguero said. But first, he returned to Harvard for law school, where he would serve on Harvard Law Review and as President of the Harvard Defenders (the only legal service organization in Massachusetts representing low-income people for free in criminal show-cause hearings). “Getting to work at the Harvard Defenders and having that sort of interaction with people who had been accused of crimes, being their voice and defending them was really instrumental for me,” Peguero said. “I had always loved writing, but I had to get comfortable speaking contemporaneously off the top of my head.”

After graduating from law school, Peguero returned to his hometown of Miami, where he spent the next seven years serving his community as a criminal prosecutor. Towards the end of his tenure, Peguero spent most of his time focused on handling homicide cases. “I used to say it’s a thankless job because you don’t actually have a client,” Peguero said. “There are times that you have to let [the victim] know you’re not going to be able to get [a specific] result. . . and you just have to remind yourself that what you’re working for is a more noble cause, it’s the pursuit of justice, truth, and public safety, and it’s upholding and trying to reform the criminal justice system.” Through it all, Peguero has maintained his deep conviction and respect for the rule of law.

Like many Americans around the country, Peguero recalled watching the violent attack on the U.S. Capitol on January 6th, 2021. “Having been a Hill staffer myself for four years . . . I felt a certain sense of sadness and personal connection to what the staffers went through and what our country went through,” Peguero said. At the same time, Peguero also noted that the COVID-19 pandemic had affected his world just as it had done with so many Americans across the country. As courtrooms and the justice system reached a near standstill, Peguero found some of his favorite aspects of his job as a prosecutor, storytelling to juries and trial work, had also slowed down as the nation dealt with the unfolding public health crisis. So when the call came from the Chief Investigative Counsel for the Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the Capitol, Peguero—after serving as a prosecutor for seven years back home in Miami—found himself flying back to Washington to serve as Investigative Counsel for the Committee.

“The work that we did on the Committee was very much reminiscent of the work I did as a prosecutor,” Peguero said. “We were interviewing witnesses, reviewing evidence, putting together a story, but we wouldn’t be presenting it before a jury; we’d be presenting it in hearings and ultimately in the report before the American public.” The report, which was published in December 2022, details the work of the committee and its 18-month investigation into the attack on the Capitol and former President Donald Trump. For Peguero, the report also serves as “a warning of how close we came to our democracy falling apart” and a lesson on the threats to democracy that are still apparent today. Since the report’s release, Peguero has transitioned into his current role serving as the chief of staff for Congressman Glen Ivey (D-MD-4). Interestingly, the two share a number of similarities, such as their alma mater, legal experience, and commitment to public service. The Congressman, who once worked as a Hill staffer and prosecutor himself, also worked on the Whitewater investigation during the Clinton administration.

In his current role as chief of staff, Peguero says that he enjoys managing and mentoring staff, contributing to the Congressman’s message and service to constituents, and working on important investigations. Despite the demands of professional life, Peguero finds time to write on nights and weekends and sees writing as a cathartic outlet that allows him to explore complex themes. Among other things, Peguero’s ability to balance his career and passion for writing demonstrates that pursuing personal passions while excelling in a professional field is possible. His accomplishments in both realms highlight the importance of finding fulfillment in various aspects of life.

Peguero’s debut novel, *With Prejudice*, was published in 2022 and tackles the realities of the criminal justice system and the subjective nature of interpreting facts. His second novel, *One in the Chamber*, is set on the Hill and slated to be published in March of 2024.