



**CCD Virtual Book Discussion and Author Talk featuring *To Be A Problem: A Black Woman's Survival in the Racist Disability Rights Movement* by Dara Baldwin**

*Speaker Bios*

**Carlean Ponder** serves as the founding director of the Autism Justice Center, an initiative of the Autism Society of America. Ponder is an attorney and civil rights advocate working at the intersection of disability, race, and the criminal justice system. She started her legal career with the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights where she combined federal litigation with public policy advocacy. Next, she served as an appellate attorney for 11 years with the Social Security Administration in its disability adjudication division. During that time, Ponder joined other grassroots advocates to advance initiatives in her local community and the state of Maryland to address a spate of police shootings involving people experiencing a mental health crisis. Prior to joining the Autism Society of America, she combined her legal, grassroots, and public policy experience as Director of Disability Rights for the Arc of the United States, where she championed the rights of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities before Congress and federal agencies. Ponder received her law degree from the University of Illinois and Bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan. Carlean Ponder can be reached at [cponder@autism-society.org](mailto:cponder@autism-society.org). Learn more about the Autism Society of America: <https://autismsociety.org>.

**L. Dara Baldwin** is a debut author with the book *To Be A Problem: A Black Woman's Survival in the Racist Disability Rights Movement* published by Beacon Press released in July 2024. Baldwin is an activist and scholar with over 20 years of experience in policy and social justice work in housing and transportation equity, criminal justice, and many other issue areas. She formerly held the positions of Director of National Policy for the Center for Disability Rights, Inc. (CDR) and Senior Policy Analyst at the National Disability Rights Network (NDRN). Baldwin has a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Rutgers University, Newark, NJ and was a Pi Alpha Alpha honors Graduate with a Masters of Public Administration from Rutgers University the School of Public Affairs and Administration. Baldwin currently runs her own equity consulting firm, DMadrina, LLC, and is an adjunct professor teaching Disability Justice, Equity and Policy at McCourt School of Public Policy at Georgetown University. Contact Baldwin through Beacon House Press: <https://www.beacon.org>.