Japan has long struggled to raise its consistently low birth rate, which many have blamed on a gendered work culture that overwhelmingly places the burden of domestic work onto women. The Japanese government is seeking to solve this problem by encouraging men to take a more active role in parenting, and in 2021 enacted an amendment to its Child Care and Family Leave Law (CCFLL) aimed at increasing the number of men who take paternity leave. Holding back increased utilization of paternity leave is a perception amongst Japanese men that doing so will be looked down upon by their peers. The government hopes that new regulatory obligations on employers will help to reduce this stigma. However, the updated CCFLL contains few enforcement mechanisms, and the Japanese government has historically been lax in enforcing workplace discrimination laws. Ultimately, these factors may prevent the CCFLL from reaching its full intended potential.

When we look at the status quo and history of female law professors in the U.S. and Japan, it shows that unlike the U.S., Japan has not experienced great improvement regarding inclusiveness of women into law studies. Although it seems that Japan has made some efforts to encourage more women to enter the field of law, women in law studies are still facing unique challenges. For instance, in many universities, female law professors are still less than 20%. In my talk, I will explore their challenges and discuss how we can encourage more women to be included in law studies.