

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America
Building II, Suite 201
13540 East Boundary Road
Midlothian, VA 23112

Dear Mr. Dan Ruben,

Thank you so much for the opportunity to work and thrive at the Equal Justice Center this summer. This summer, I advocated for low-income and undocumented workers in primarily lawsuits concerning unpaid minimum wage and overtime through the FLSA. I also got to work on a case that involved reasonable accommodation under the ADA, one that touched upon child labor, and another that had to do with a workplace sexual harassment case. I worked with a small team of highly dedicated attorneys on these cases. The scope of my involvement varied case by case, and by the end of the summer, I was able to conduct interviews with clients, research caselaw, draft petitions and a motion for summary judgment, and create a damages model for one of my cases.

In one case, the EJC was working closely with an individual who had been assaulted at their workplace. At the time I was with the organization, we were still in the early stages of the case and exploring the contours of the claims we could bring on their behalf. I spent many hours on the phone with this client, talking through the timeline of events that led up to her assault, and discussing the injustice she experienced at the hands of her employer. In preparation for the case, I read up on trauma-informed interviewing skills, because I wanted to make sure that I did the best by her and did not re-traumatize her in the process. It was an incredible experience to be able to affirm her story and her bravery while also setting the ball in motion as to her recovery.

In another case I was assigned to this summer, I joined the case as my team was responding to a motion for summary judgment that was submitted by the employer. In this case, the employer had not accommodated for our client's disability, which she had obtained while on the job site. Advocating for this client in this case meant doing a lot of legal research in a short period of time. I dove into caselaw concerning the ADA to refute every single one of the employer's claims against our client. I was able to work closely with my supervising attorneys during this effort and was inspired by their drive and passionate advocacy. We worked a lot of long days to get this response motion in on time, and I was proud of the final product that we finally submitted.

Finally, I worked all summer on a case involving unpaid overtime wages and an unpaid bonus to one of our clients. The case was a “bread and butter” EJC case, which meant that the supervising attorneys were comfortable with letting me take the reins in a lot of the work that had to be done. On this case, I was able to refine the claim we had against her employer, submit initial discovery protocols, and draft a damages model for our client. I even got the opportunity to get onto the phone with opposing counsel and begin negotiating a settlement on my client’s behalf! It was an incredible experience, especially since I was able to build a good relationship with my client and practice my legal Spanish along the way.

I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to be a fellow with Equal Justice America. The fellowship allowed me to dive head-first into my summer activities without having to worry about living expenses or other stressful matters. I had an incredible summer with the EJC, which reaffirmed my commitment to work in civil litigation, and which created in me a deep drive to help low-wage workers in their civil disputes. Employment law is so important, as there is a clear power-divide between employers (even if employers are single individuals and not corporations) and the employees that they rely upon to make a living.

Thank you again!

Best,

Adrienne Allen

University of Texas School of Law
Class of 2024