

August 30, 2014

Dan Ruben
Equal Justice America
Building II, Suite 204
13540 East Boundary Road
Midlothian, VA 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I am grateful to Equal Justice America for funding my summer internship. This past summer, I worked at the Immigrant Defense Project in New York, NY, which helps immigrants that have been arrested or convicted of crimes in the United States. This summer, IDP allowed me to work on various aspects of their work, including litigation, community education, policy, and advising clients.

To further IDP's litigation goals, I researched and wrote a memo regarding the "Particularly Serious Crime" bar individuals face when apply for asylum. The memo proposed various strategies to aid immigrants' pursuit of asylum. Additionally, I wrote a memo that argued certain New York Controlled Substance convictions would not be a conviction for the purposes of immigration because the New York statute is broader than the Federal statute. As an aspiring public interest litigator, this taught me invaluable lessons about the strategic choices that attorneys should make.

Additionally, I was able to help IDP further their policy and community education outreach goals. Over the summer, I researched the immigration consequences for common arrests juveniles face on school grounds, the criminal bars to Special Immigrant Juvenile Status and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. This research was to inform discussions of how policies could be changed to better impact non-citizen youth. Furthermore, I taught a Know-Your-Rights training about the immigration consequences of certain offenses for non-citizens in the United States. Through this work, I was able to develop information that could impact the lives of numerous individuals in the United States.

In addition to the litigation and policy work, I staffed IDP's immigration hotline that provides advice to non-citizens and attorneys about the intersection of immigration and criminal law. The client's issues ranged from being initially arrested for a crime and wanting to know the consequences of potential pleas to individuals that had already been deported due to a criminal conviction. In each case, I identified the potential issues each client faced and worked with my supervisor to develop solutions.

My experiences over the summer were invaluable. I am grateful to the attorneys at IDP that taught me about litigation, the intersection of criminal law and immigration law, and the various means to provide client-center advocacy through litigation, policy, and direct services.

Again, I thank Equal Justice America for supporting my summer at IDP. I know my experiences will impact my future work as a public interest lawyer.

Sincerely,

Amanda Barfield
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