

August 23, 2012

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I am writing to report on my summer internship at the DC Employment Justice Center (EJC). I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity I had to learn about employment law and serve individuals facing employment-related legal problems.

During my ten weeks with the EJC, I conducted phone calls to previous clients of the EJC's Workers' Rights clinics. I spoke with fifty-three workers about their employment-related legal problems and assessed the outcome of the advice they had received at the clinic. My efforts were focused on the problem of "wage-theft," which occurs when workers are denied wages for the hours they have worked, or are paid less than minimum wage, or are denied overtime pay. Of the fifty-three people with whom I spoke, only seventeen had been able to recover some or all of their unpaid wages since their visit to the EJC's clinic.

Therefore, I spent much of my summer assisting workers in taking the next step with a wage-theft related claim. Sometimes they needed help drafting demand letters to their employer. Other times I helped them file claims at the DC Office of Wage and Hour. In addition to the wage-theft cases, I provided legal advice to many other workers on employment related legal situations. These individuals needed help filing for workers' compensation, or appealing a denial of unemployment benefits, to name a few examples.

In addition to the legal services that I provided, I organized a workers' meeting for workers to share their stories about wage-theft and to discuss some of the administrative problems at the Office of Wage and Hour. I found that workers were encouraged to speak out when they realized how many other people had been through similar situations. I was glad to be able to provide these services and help the working poor recover some of the wages they deserved.

Thank you for making this valuable experience possible.

Sincerely,

Amy Gellatly

J.D. Candidate, May 2014  
American University  
Washington College of Law

Dan Ruben  
Executive Director  
Equal Justice America

Dear Dan Ruben,

I am writing this letter to evaluate Amy Gellatly's fellowship with the D.C Employment Justice Center, which was sponsored in part by the generous support of Equal Justice America. Amy was a fantastic fellow for the D.C. Employment Justice Center. Over the course of the Summer, she accomplished an amazing amount to aid low-income workers in the D.C. metropolitan area.

One of her primary projects was to develop an outreach and organizing plan to engage past EJC clients in evaluating successes and roadblocks for workers with claims for unpaid or underpaid wages under the District's current wage and hour laws. She developed protocols for coordination between the organization's education, organizing, and legal services offices for the successful implementation of this campaign. In addition to developing the story-gathering and data-entry protocol for this campaign, she conducted initial outreach calls to 114 workers, wrote the script for these calls to guide the efforts of two other EJC staff members, spoke with 53 workers, drafted 10 detailed "worker stories," accompanied three workers to document their visits with the Office of Wage Hour, and compiled regular reports of our progress. In addition, she conducted 23 client intakes in the EJC office and at our regular weekly clinics, many of which included detailed followup on ongoing cases.

Amy also planned a meeting for workers from EJC and allied organizations who have experienced wage theft to attend. Over the course of four planning meetings, she planned an agenda and coordinated volunteer involvement and the participation of two partner organizations. She also prepared a fact sheet on wage and hour violations. At the meeting, the workers shared stories about their wage theft experiences, learned about the current law, wrote down the amount of money they had lost as a result of wage theft on a large "receipt," and agreed to start assembling and sharing stories with the media in order to shine a spotlight on this important issue and raise public awareness.

Amy also conducted legislative research on the Unemployment Compensation Reform Amendment Act, the DC Minimum Wage and the DC Payment & Collection statutes and drafted a summary of the evolution of these laws in order to guide our efforts to ensure successful implementation of each law. She also drafted a memorandum on the problem of "independent contractor" misclassification, which helped to clearly explain the problem and summarized some steps other jurisdictions have taken to address the issue.

We are deeply grateful for the assistance the EJA provided in allowing Amy to serve as a law fellow with the D.C. Employment Justice Center this Summer. She was an outstanding addition to our team.

Sincerely,

Ari Weisbard  
Advocacy Manager