

November 11, 2009

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

Re: EJA Summer Fellowship at Greater Boston Legal Services

Mr. Ruben,

My experience at Greater Boston Legal Services was an exciting and informative way of spending the summer. Over the ten week period I improved my writing skills, familiarized myself with employment law, and effectively counseled and represented claimants seeking representation at unemployment appeals. I have faith that the experience gained from last summer will enable a successful career in public interest employment law.

The majority of my time at GBLS was spent working with claimants who had been denied unemployment insurance by the state of Massachusetts. The individuals who needed our help were low income persons who resided in or around the Boston area who could not afford an attorney to help them with their cases. From the start of the summer, I quickly realized that this class was comprised of a vast amount of people, most of whom had very genuine cases which needed thoughtful advocacy.

The first client I was assigned was Angel, a chef who was fired for taking a leave of absence to help his pregnant wife deliver their child in El Salvador and then obtain American citizenship for their child. Angel was a hard worker who had never intended to mislead his supervisors. After meeting with Angel several times, we were able to successfully argue against his employer at the appeal that his leave of absence was necessary and as a result, Angel was entitled to unemployment compensation.

My most memorable client was James, an industrious assemblyman who was fired by management after requesting partial unemployment relief. James' chances seemed bleak at first.

At his first appeal, James did not appear with an advocate and as a result could not effectively rebut the doctored evidence presented by his past employer. Luckily, my supervisor and I wrote up a motion to remand the case *de novo* due to an incomplete record (there were inaudible lines during the first appeal). The motion was granted, and James and I then worked on his case so that he may successfully win his next hearing. After weeks of planning, the hearings officer who heard our case granted James relief and he was able to collect over five thousand dollars in unemployment.

Developmentally, the cases I handled this summer enabled me to bridge the gap between learning law and applying law. Counseling clients like Angel and James and then applying their facts, their feelings, and their passion alongside the law which entitled them to such benefits made me feel like a lawyer. This opportunity may not have been possible outside of a public interest law firm because few internships combined all aspects of a lawyer's case like my internship did at Greater Boston Legal Services. For this experience I am extremely grateful, and I hope that I may use this experience productively by pursuing more cases in public interest law.

Andrew Blancato

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