

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I am writing to you on one of my final days at Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS). I came here more than a month ago following my first year at Boston College Law School. While at GBLS, I have worked with attorneys and staff in the Consumer Rights Unit, which primarily works with low-income clients in home mortgage foreclosures, both pre- and post-eviction, as well as bankruptcy. Over the weeks I have been at GLBS I have been able to not only help the attorneys and staff with their work on behalf of clients, but have also been able to expand my legal knowledge and skillset outside of what is learned in the classroom.

While at GBLS, I have seen the lengths that the staff have gone through to meet the needs of their clients. The Consumer Rights Unit sees clients that are in threat of losing the most basic need – their home. I have seen staff work tirelessly to not only solve client's legal needs, but also to help them with basic services. One client, an elderly woman who was the victim of a property scam, had no running water for months before she came to GBLS seeking help to retain ownership of her family home. She had trusted a family friend to clear up back taxes and other issues she had been having with her home, and signed over her deed to the family friend so that he could supposedly help her. He did nothing of the sort and is still contesting ownership, while also attempting to sell the property from underneath her. The attorneys interviewing her during the initial meeting worked with the city's water department to get her water turned on during the duration of this ownership battle. This is only one instance of the great care and attention the staff of GBLS has paid to clients in need of help.

I have also been able to learn a great deal about trial preparation and case management. I got to work with the staff attorneys in research, writing, and discovery on several cases. I also interacted with clients and helped staff in producing motions for court. I accompanied attorneys from GBLS to several hearings and saw not only the differences between various judges at different levels of Massachusetts state court, but also got to see how lawyering in the court room is often very different from how it is portrayed in the media. The judges at the district court level deal with many cases in rapid succession and must quickly make decisions about cases of which they have little familiarity. A good legal services lawyer can ensure that their client is able to understand what is going on in the moment, but can also work with the judge to ensure that proper time and notice is given to their clients.

Because of Equal Justice America's support, I was able to gain invaluable experience working in an area of law that is interesting and rewarding, while also helping to serve the low-income people of Boston. Without the support of Equal Justice America, I do not know whether or not I would be able to have had this experience at the beginning of my legal career.

Sincerely,

Dustin Dove

J.D. Candidate 2018
Boston College Law School