## Victor Absil

August 7, 2017

Dan Ruben Executive Director at Equal Justice America 1340 East Boundary Road Midlothian, Virginia 23112, Building II-Suite 204

Dear Dan Ruben,

Over the course of the summer, I was able to help several clients through intakes, research and writing, legal advice and advocacy. I helped to prevent wrongful evictions, attain reconsideration for denials of public housing, recoup supplemental security income benefits and other public benefits through administrative hearings. I advocated and presented to many elderly people in the community in order to further awareness about elder abuse and the rights that elderly and disabled people have. Finally, I helped my supervising attorney to author a user-friendly guide to public housing and evictions, and contributed to the Elder Abuse Prevention Project's blog which, has a relatively large following.

Ms. Jane (not real name) is an elderly woman with Agoraphobia whose only source of income is her Supplemental Security Income. She receives \$735/month to use for bills and living expenses. The Social Security office sent her a letter telling her that she owed over \$10,000 in overpayments due to being over the asset limit for several payments over the course of two years. I was able to show through her bank records that she was not in fact over asset for most alleged overpayments, but rather SSA counted the payments as part of her asset immediately upon receiving them. Further, I demonstrated in a reconsideration hearing that Jane met the

qualifications for a waiver of the remaining amount. Jane's entire overpayment is now waived

and she is once again receiving her benefits.

Even researching narrow issues that arose daily and that did not require a large time commitment

provided direction for a person facing a difficult situation. For example, when an elderly

homeless man named Edward was denied from public housing, his social worker sent me a copy

of the denial letter. Public housing candidates are placed on a waitlist that often lasts for years

before being considered for housing. The reason given for the denial was "other". This

unspecific reason was buried among more specific options for the Housing Authority to check

off. After researching HUD requirements, I learned that the Housing Authority is required to

give a specific reason for a denial. Using this information, Edward was able to secure a meeting

with the Housing Authority and be reconsidered for an apartment.

The Equal Justice America fellowship has helped enable me to work at Greater Boston Legal

Services this summer. As a result, I have gained valuable experience working for a public

interest organization and have assisted several people who were facing difficult situations in life.

Thank you for your assistance in allowing me to take advantage of the opportunity to further my

career and help others in our communities.

Sincerely,

Victor Absil

Boston University School of Law, Class of 2019



August 23, 2017

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

RE: Victor Absil

Dear Mr. Ruben,

Victor Absil worked as an Americorp JD with the Elder Abuse Prevention Project of Greater Boston Legal Services from May, 2017 until the end of July, 2017. During his time here, Victor worked on a broad array of elder justice cases. He also participated in several outreach events on elder abuse prevention and attended an event on World Elder Abuse Awareness Day hosted by our Cambridge elder abuse prevention coalition.

Victor's casework included assisting several elders who were at risk of eviction due to either self neglect issues or because an adult child was at the root of the legal problem. He represented an elder at a hearing at a public housing authority and at a Social Security Administration hearing. He also worked on several financial exploitation cases which allowed him to gain an understanding of who financially exploits elders and how perpetrators operate.

Victor is a very effective legal writer. His written work consisted of legal research and writing, legal advice letters, legal memorandums, a legal research project, a blog post, and a booklet that he and I developed together and that he did the bulk of the work on. The booklet is a simplified overview of the eviction process designed to assist lay people such as members of our elder abuse prevention coalitions, protective services workers, and other providers in the aging services network or local healthcare networks. The booklet is currently being vetted and we hope to have it available online soon. This is a tremendous accomplishment by Victor as it will truly help lay advocates assist elders trying to preserve their affordable housing.

Victor has a quiet demeanor and was initially somewhat reluctant to participate in oral presentations. We started by having him observe our Elder Justice Fellows, Dvora Walker and Sheba Varughese, at presentations. Once he felt comfortable we scheduled a presentation to a group of older adults in which all three of our law students participated. Victor did a great job and definitely gained confidence in his ability to do presentations. After this presentation he was asked to present a case in which he had a favorable outcome at our weekly case review. Again, he did a great job and gained both experience and confidence.

Victor was very diligent, hard working, and professional. He completed all of his work assignments on time. He used his time wisely and asked for more work when he needed it. He always offered to pitch in and help and was very kind and considerate to our clients. He grew professionally in his relatively short time here and was a pleasure to work with.

Sincerely,

Betsey Crimmins Senior Attorney