

**Brooke Lee Longon**

August 14, 2008

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I wanted to personally thank Equal Justice America for supporting my Summer Fellowship at Greater Boston Legal Services in Boston, MA. I had an outstanding experience as a legal intern in GBLS's Employment Unit. Reflecting back on my work this summer, I am surprised that I managed to accomplish so much in such a short time.

As an intern in GBLS's Employment Unit, I had the opportunity to handle three cases under the supervision of GBLS attorneys- one unemployment benefits case and two tax cases from GBLS's Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic. Additionally, I interviewed potential clients with employment-related disputes and researched and composed memoranda for GBLS attorneys concerning issues in tax, employment and municipal law.

I wanted to briefly share with you my experience representing a client who was wrongfully denied unemployment benefits in an administrative hearing. She was an unemployed single parent of three small children, one of whom had special needs. Because she was denied benefits, she had no income to support her and her family until she secured suitable employment. I researched the client's case, prepared her for direct examination and cross-examination, and delivered a closing argument. Even though her employer was well-represented at the hearing, the hearing was successful for my client, and I was thrilled to learn that she and her family received the unemployment benefits to which she was entitled.

While I was able to help my client achieve this victory, I also learned that many low-income employees in Massachusetts are not represented in unemployment insurance hearings. During the summer, interns at GBLS and summer associates in Boston-based firms provide hundreds of hours of free legal aid to unemployed low-income workers. However, during the normal school year, GBLS is forced to turn away 4 of every 5 deserving clients who seek unemployment insurance representation. As an intern at GBLS, I observed a hearing in which an employee did not have legal representation, and it was clear that he did not understand his burden of proof or the legal questions at issue. During cross examination, he asked his employer several irrelevant questions, many of which were open-ended and gave the employer a chance to further incriminate him. The need for *pro bono* employment law attorneys is especially pressing in a down economy, where layoffs are common and where surplus employment is not readily available. Low-income workers are generally unable absorb the costs of unemployment, and

often securing unemployment benefits could prevent them from losing their home, being evicted, or filing for bankruptcy.

After working at GBLS, I am now much more interested in pursuing a career in public interest law. However, if I decide to pursue a position with a for-profit firm, my work at GBLS definitely opened my eyes to the pressing need for legal services, even in spite of the herculean efforts of public interest attorneys and private attorneys working on a *pro bono* basis. I believe it is not only my obligation to devote a significant amount of time to personally providing *pro bono* services, but also to work to increase access to justice systemically. If I do not pursue a career in public interest law, I hope to work with GBLS or another local legal aid organization to train co-workers who are interested in providing free legal aid year-round.

Again, thank you very much for your support and for giving me the opportunity to have this tremendous learning experience. Best of luck to you and your organization.

Sincerely,

Brooke Lee Longon  
The University of Texas School of Law  
Class of 2010