

Dear Mr. Dan Ruben,

I am a 2L at Columbia Law School and I am writing to thank you and Equal Justice America for helping to support my summer internship at New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG) Immigration Protection Unit. During my summer, I was exposed to immigration law for the first time, and was able to work on about 20 cases with clients from start to finish. I filed applications with clients for immigration relief, staffed clinics for Temporary Protection Status (TPS) clients, and conducted research for my supervising attorneys. I also got to work on my legal writing by drafting a Motion to Reconsider with one of my supervising attorneys. My experience this summer reinforced my desire to work in public interest law, with a focus on immigration work.

I was most inspired by my work with clients this summer. One particularly memorable experience was working with an eighteen-year-old client at a TPS clinic. She was visibly distraught when she came in to speak with me, and slowly began sharing with me how she overcame homelessness and family violence to persevere in school. She expressed how much it would mean to her to get some kind of immigration relief to be able to work in this country where she spent most of her life, and in order to find stability. I interviewed her and after many follow-up conversations with her and her instructors, filed a late TPS renewal application for her, which included an affidavit that I helped her draft. She was so thankful to me and to NYLAG for helping her, and she continued to be in touch with me throughout the summer. I was really touched by her story and found myself continuing to brainstorm more permanent relief for her.

I was also really inspired by working with clients who were seeking VAWA (Violence Against Women Act) relief. These were women who suffered domestic violence from their US Citizen husbands, and who were seeking immigration relief on that basis. I had to interview them

on really personal topics in order to help them craft their affidavits and to prove both abuse and bona fide marriage. One client was barely older than me and came from my same background, which was particularly poignant to me. As I worked with these clients to put their applications together, over a period of months, I felt like I got to know them more and more, and they opened up to me about their stories. It was incredibly fulfilling to file both of their applications before leaving the internship, and to help them express their stories while also gaining immigration status. One of the clients I worked with had a young son and was raising him on her own, so the ability to get work authorization meant the freedom to support him. For the other client, it meant the opportunity to pursue a Master's Degree in the United States. For both of these VAWA clients who I worked with, their VAWA applications gave them a sense of restored justice for the pain they endured. These clients inspired me to consider a career at the intersection of immigration and family law, and working with domestic violence victims. As a first step towards that goal, I am currently writing my Note for my Journal on VAWA and how it can be improved to better provide relief for people like my clients.

I want to express my deepest gratitude for the opportunity to work with these clients, to help them in their cases, and to be inspired by them in this critical point in my legal education. I think back to my clients frequently as I navigate the academic challenges of my 2L year and think about my future career.

Sincerely,

Anna Baron

Columbia Law School Class of 2019

October 17, 2017

Equal Justice America

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a Senior Staff Attorney at the New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG) Immigrant Protection Unit. This past summer, I served as Anna Baron's supervisor for her summer internship. Anna assisted me in a range of immigration cases, including TPS renewal, DACA, and naturalization applications. She also worked with two clients who were seeking relief under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which is a more evidence-intensive application and requires a deeper connection to clients. Anna helped clients fill out their applications for immigration relief, and worked with the VAWA clients on telling their stories about the domestic violence they suffered at the hands of their U.S. citizen spouses. With one of our VAWA clients, Anna saw that the client cared most about getting her employment authorization as soon as possible, and when Anna relayed this to me, we ended up changing our case strategy entirely. With this same client, Anna also worked to find proof of the U.S. spouse's citizenship, which she ultimately found in U.S. voting records. After she started working on the first VAWA case, Anna became attune to the strengths and weaknesses in the second VAWA case assigned to her, and was able to come to me with the analysis of the case. With Anna's continuous work with these two clients, their personal and supporting affidavits became much

stronger. Anna was able to file both applications with the USCIS before finishing her summer at NYLAG.

I am sure Anna appreciates the help that EJA provided to make her summer at NYLAG a reality. Anna was exposed to many clients and gained skills in telling client narratives in a compelling way. She also was able to get a taste of many different types of immigration cases, and the steps necessary to secure immigration relief. I appreciated Anna's help this summer, and hope her summer with us will play an important role in her legal career in the public interest.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [HDrook@nylag.org](mailto:HDrook@nylag.org).

Sincerely,



Helen Drook

Senior Staff Attorney

NYLAG Immigrant Protection Unit