## Caitlyn Byers

August 31, 2013

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I am writing to thank you for the funding with which Equal Justice America provided me this summer, which allowed me to devote my summer to working at Greater Boston Legal Services. I found it to be a rewarding and instructive experience and I learned a great deal about both the legal profession and the degree to which underserved populations need its help. I would not have been able to complete this internship without Equal Justice America's assistance and I am extremely thankful that it provided me with the opportunity to do so.

I completed a wide variety of tasks during my time at Greater Boston Legal Services. As an intern in the Elder, Health, and Disability Unit, I concentrated primarily on helping elderly people and people with disabilities to navigate various benefits programs. I conducted three client meetings; spoke frequently with clients and representatives from Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security over the phone; conducted legal research; wrote many client letters; and drafted a memo to be submitted to an Administrative Law Judge. I spent much of my time simply waiting on hold with Medicare or trying to get city officials to return my calls, but all of these tasks benefitted my clients in some way and I enjoyed the opportunity to use my legal skills for their benefit.

The most rewarding aspect of my internship was working with one of my clients who sought our assistance in appealing a negative outcome to her application for Social Security Disability Insurance. She had been denied twice and contacted us after she sent in her appeal to an Administrative Law Judge. She has osteoarthritis, degenerative disc disease, and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, which render her unable to work due to sitting and standing intolerances and compulsions to clean and avoid contact with other people. Because all of her previous jobs were sedentary and because she had been laid off from her last job for reasons unrelated to her disability, hers was a difficult case, but I found it extremely rewarding to build a convincing case for her. I spent hours studying her medical records and speaking to her over the phone and I ultimately wrote a memo advocating for her position, which my supervisor will later submit to the judge that will preside at her hearing. Though I was not at Greater Boston Legal Services long enough to see her case to fruition, I feel confident that I was able to create a convincing argument in her favor and I have high hopes that she will win her case. It means a great deal to me to know that I was able to help her. From the many hours I spent talking with her, I know how badly she needs the income to support both herself and her daughter, and I am grateful that I was able to use the skills that I gained from my first year of law school to help her.

## Caitlyn Byers

I had a fantastic summer at Greater Boston Legal Services, and my time there reaffirmed my desire to work in public interest law in the future. I enjoy knowing that my time and efforts helped people who otherwise would not be able to afford legal representation and that I had a real impact on their lives. I hope to continue working with people with disabilities in the future, and I am grateful that Equal Justice America enabled me to do so this summer.

Sincerely,

Caitlyn Byers

JD Candidate, Class of 2015

Withyn Byers

Boston University School of Law



September 5, 2013

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

> RE: Caitlyn Byers

Dear Mr Ruben:

Caitlyn Byers served as a legal intern in the Elder, Health and Disability Unit of Greater Boston Legal Services from May 28, 2013 to August 9, 2013. I was her direct supervisor and Managing Attorney of the Unit.

Caitlyn is an astute, intelligent and confident young woman who is unafraid to tackle new projects. At the E, H & D Unit she performed a variety of tasks in the areas of Social Security Disability, MassHealth, and Medicare. Caitlyn maintained a case load of approximately 10-15 cases and worked with impressive autonomy. Nevertheless, she knew when to ask questions and accepted criticism with absolute professionalism. Caitlyn is diligent, efficient and analytical in her research. She is good writer. She learns quickly. She is excellent with clients and firm with opposing parties. Although the opportunity did not arise for her to represent a client at an administrative hearing, her oral presentation skills indicated she would do so ably.

Examples of her work include preparing a Social Security Disability case for hearing, including interviewing the client, corresponding and following up on medical requests, verifying information with the client, pursuing more specific evidence with physicians and other medical providers, and writing an excellent brief in support of her client's case. Because Caitlyn did such a fine job putting the case together, we are asking the administrative law judge for a decision on the record. If approved, Caitlyn will have saved the client a year of waiting for a hearing. In another Social Security case, the client had already gone to a hearing and lost and was now appealing to the Appeals Council. Caitlyn interviewed the client and read the record below, rightly concluding that the client was better off reapplying for benefits because the case below lacked a solid basis and revealed a number of discrepancies. In MassHealth, Caitlyn investigated the basis for the denial of a request for prior authorization for a manual wheelchair. The facts in the case were frustratingly convoluted, but Caitlyn pursued the case to establish medical necessity. In Medicare, Caitlyn examined the eligibility of a retired school teacher for a waiver

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of premium penalties despite the fact that the client had enrolled in Medicare several years late. Because Caitlyn has a special interest in the ADA, she was asked to prepare an affidavit in a matter involving ADA violations in a hospital.

In addition to her fast developing skills, Caitlyn is a pleasure to work with – energetic, focused, willing, and with a fine sense of humor.

We were delighted to have Caitlyn in our Unit this past summer. While she did not have the most exciting of assignments, she applied herself diligently and assisted our work and clients in the Unit enormously. We certainly thank you and EJA for supporting her efforts here. Please feel free to call me at 617-603-1534 if you have any questions about this promising young law student.

Sincerely,

Donna McCormick Managing Attorney