

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

September 3, 2014

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I am writing to thank Equal Justice America for the generous funding it provided me this summer and to describe my internship at the Disability Law Center in Boston, Massachusetts. I am very grateful for the opportunity that EJA provided me to serve individuals with disabilities.

I spent the majority of my summer working on an institutional investigation into Bridgewater State Hospital, which is operated by the Massachusetts Department of Corrections for the treatment of severely mentally ill prisoners. The DLC chose to undertake this investigation due to allegations of excessive use of restraint and seclusions and because of the death of a prisoner in 2009 while that prisoner was under restraint. I contributed to this investigation by reviewing the records of seven patients and contributing to the drafting of the report. This experience truly made me realize how easily mentally ill people in the United States can land in the correctional system and then suffer from severe mistreatment there simply due to lack of family supports or appropriate mental health treatment. Though I did not have the opportunity to personally meet any of the patients of Bridgewater State Hospital, I am enormously proud of the work that the Disability Law Center did to expose the abuse of restraint and seclusion that exacerbates, rather than treats, severe mental illness.

I also had the opportunity to manage a case involving a young child with autism whose private special education school was not abiding by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Regulations regarding his need for an EpiPen to treat a life-threatening allergy. I worked extensively with the client's mother and she revealed that she came to the DLC for legal assistance because she had tried and failed to make the school listen to her concerns and she was truly afraid that the school's negligence of her child's needs could lead to his death in the event that he went into anaphylactic shock during school hours. After extensive negotiations with the school administrator, the school agreed to hire a new school nurse, to hold staff trainings run by a registered nurse on the administration of EpiPens, and to create an individualized medication administration plan for the client. This case was extremely rewarding for me because it allowed me to fulfill what I think is the principle role of a lawyer; I was able to make the school hear the mother's concerns and thus enabled the mother to protect her child. I came to law school so I

could advocate on behalf of people who are unable to enforce their own rights, and I am only more committed to this goal after my experience with this case.

I was also able to gain significant research and writing experience through this internship. After the end of the Bridgewater investigation, I devoted a large portion of my time to updating a chapter of a secondary source that the DLC originally published in 2002. This project allowed me to gain extensive knowledge about Title II of the ADA and related laws, which is relevant to my goal of pursuing a career in disability law. It also gave me a valuable opportunity to polish my research and writing skills. I feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to contribute to a work that will be published later this year and, in doing so, to improve my skills and knowledge base.

My internship at the Disability Law Center was an extremely valuable experience for me and I am exceedingly grateful to Equal Justice America for making it possible. The funding that EJA provided enabled me to support myself while I held this internship and thus brought me closer to my goal of a future career in public interest law.

Sincerely,

Caitlyn Byers
J.D. Candidate, Class of 2015
Boston University School of Law



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August 28, 2014

Katie Toman, Office Manager
Equal Justice America
Building II – Suite 204
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Via email: Katie@equaljusticeamerica.org

Re: Caitlyn Byers

Dear Ms. Toman:

During Ms. Byers' fellowship, I was her supervising attorney. The following is a description of the nature and quality of the work she did at DLC on behalf of our clients. Working in her fellowship, she had an opportunity to work on a wide variety of assignments, where she had a chance to practice and build upon her already impressive legal skills.

She worked with DLC's Director of Advocacy on a number of research and writing assignments, including one involving concerns at sheltered workshops, and helping to revise and update a chapter in a continuing education book on the legal rights of individuals with disabilities in the context of state and local governmental programs (Title II of the ADA). She also had an opportunity to manage an individual case involving a youngster's right to have access to an epi-pen at a private special education school, working alongside the Director of Advocacy. The largest project that Ms. Beyer was able to work on was the Law Center's investigation of abuse at the state's forensic mental health state hospital. Working as part of a team of six attorneys and other law students, she did detailed reviews and analyses of patient's medical records, and helped contribute to the final report on improper policies and practices at that forensic hospital.

The Protection and Advocacy System for Massachusetts

The work of Ms. Byers was consistently of a very high quality. Her research was quite strong and reliable. Her writing was clear and concise. All of the staff who worked with her found her to be a terrific colleague.

We appreciate the support of the Equal Justice America organization which enabled Caitlyn Byers to be an important contributor to the work of the Law Center. It made it possible for us to help more clients by protecting their legal right to live and work in the community.

With sincere appreciation,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stan Eichner", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Stan Eichner
Director of Litigation