

August 31, 2012

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

This past summer I was a law clerk for the Texas Civil Rights Project (TCRP) in Austin, Texas. My clerkship was full time from May 30th to August 21st. My supervising attorneys were Wayne Krause Yang and Abby Frank, though I worked on projects with other attorneys as well.

During my clerkship I performed legal research and writing in several areas of civil rights law, particularly disability rights and official misconduct. I interviewed clients and regularly participated in the office's intake process. For my cases I drafted pleadings, motions, briefs, and other materials, and served as my clients' primary contact.

My time was mostly spent on four disability rights cases and an official misconduct case. I felt a great deal of ownership over the disability cases – although I strategized and edited drafts with a supervising attorney, I was the one communicating with the clients and preparing all the necessary documents for court. I developed a personal rapport with my clients and felt responsible for helping them resolve their difficulties.

One particularly meaningful client, whose troubles eventually led to three separate suits, was a man with a mobility impairment who lives in a small Texas town. In spite of federal and state requirements, he consistently had difficulty accessing stores due to unauthorized vehicles blocking designated accessible parking spaces. After his efforts to improve enforcement by speaking with store managers, customer service representatives, and even city police and other officials were frustrated, he finally turned to us. Although his claims are not yet resolved, I am proud to state that an internal city debate has been sparked over enforcement of disability rights ordinances.

While parking spaces may seem rather mundane, this issue was profoundly important in the life of my client. Being able to help him, even by simply listening to his frustrations and expressing support, meant a great deal to both of us; being able to advocate on his behalf and, hopefully, remedy his difficulty was an even more tremendous feeling. Working with him and with TCRP reminded me of why I came to law school and cemented my commitment to public service law.

Sincerely,

Catherine A. Wagner
University of Texas School of Law (graduation expected May 2014)

TEXAS CIVIL RIGHTS PROJECT

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Austin, TX 78741-3438
512-474-5073 (telephone) 512-474-0726 (fax)
web: TexasCivilRightsProject.org

August 30, 2012

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I am writing with my evaluation of Catherine Wagner, an Equal Justice America fellowship recipient for summer 2012. Catherine worked with the Texas Civil Rights Project (TCRP) full-time from May 30th to August 21st. During her clerkship, Catherine performed legal research and writing in several areas of civil rights law, including disability rights and official misconduct. She interviewed and kept in touch with clients and drafted pleadings, motions, and other materials for her cases. She also worked on memos and briefs on a variety of legal questions and contributed to a human rights report on language access in civil proceedings in Texas.

Though Catherine has only completed a year of law school, her legal writing was at the level of a practicing attorney. Her quick learning and critical thinking skills allowed her to transition smoothly into a valuable member of the TCRP team, and she showed herself to be extraordinarily dedicated to TCRP's mission and our clients. In addition to her level of commitment, Catherine impressed us with her maturity and sense of personal responsibility. It was clear that she understood her clients' needs and appreciated the gravity of her role in helping them to resolve their difficulties. While she was always eager to take on new projects, she managed her time well and was realistic in her commitments.

Finally, Catherine displayed a passion for her work and a daily enthusiasm that made her a pleasure to have in the office. Her warmth, sense of humor, and general positive attitude earned her friendships among the staff and glowing reviews from attorneys with whom she worked. We are happy that Catherine chose to spend her summer at TCRP and grateful to Equal Justice America for enabling her to do so.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions about Catherine or her work at TCRP.

Sincerely,



Abby Frank
Staff Attorney