

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

August 25, 2011

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I am indebted to Equal Justice America for helping to fund my summer 2011 internship at the Center for Children's Law and Policy (CCLP) in Washington, D.C. CCLP is a public interest law and policy organization that aims to reform the juvenile justice system. Because the system is actually made up of countless smaller systems at the local and state levels, a lot of the work CCLP does is focused around bringing sensible reforms to localities. CCLP engages in research, training, technical assistance, legislative advocacy, and litigation. Currently, through the Models for Change program funded by the MacArthur Foundation, CCLP works to reduce Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) within the juvenile justice system. It is also writing all of the policies for District of Columbia's Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS). CCLP's third major ongoing project involves continuing to provide technical assistance and training to localities regarding best practices for juvenile justice reform, as set forth by the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI).

CCLP works on children's issues, but its core focus is juvenile justice. Thus, while I wrote memos on a recent school search case and researched the recent SCOTUS decision of *JDB v. North Carolina* pertaining to Miranda rights for youth, most of my work involved helping to reform juvenile justice systems. I researched and wrote a memo on Louisiana's policy of preventing incarcerated youth from receiving mail, a clear violation of their First Amendment and Due Process rights. I drafted a reporting form for DYRS to note suspicions of child abuse and neglect within DYRS facilities. I participated in meetings with DYRS staff to clarify the way force is used against incarcerated youth and to completely reshape the policy to expand the rights of confined LGBT youth. I took raw data from a wide range of cities including Bridgeport, CT, and Jefferson Parish, LA, to determine the problems DMC poses in those jurisdictions.

Working at CCLP was a unique experience that provided me with the broad picture of juvenile justice that I hoped to obtain when I first accepted the offer. I learned about the importance of data. Juvenile justice advocates often urge reform without having the most accurate information in front of them. This prevents them from knowing which programs are most effective at helping kids, reducing recidivism, and keeping communities safe. I was also quite fortunate to participate in more than ten meetings with DYRS staff. I went in to the meetings with mixed feelings about adults that worked with incarcerated youth. In St. Louis, I considered the staff of the Juvenile Detention Center to be a group of passionate, intelligent people who genuinely cared about the children under their care. But I have also heard many stories about prison unions railing against leading juvenile justice reformers, such as Gladys Carrion in New York, because

of allegedly soft stances on juvenile violence in facilities. But the DYRS staff I spoke with had real concerns about the youth in their care and it was a pleasure to work with them. We crafted sound policies that were both progressive and protective of all involved. Working with the staff made me think more critically about the place of conditions litigation in America. There are still countless jurisdictions that disregard the rights of and literally abuse confined youth. Litigation is oftentimes the only way to enact change in those areas. But in places where reforms are underway, or where staff members themselves see the need for change, litigation can often get in the way of working cooperatively with reform organizations such as CCLP. Cooperation, I found, is one of the quickest ways to obtain change. It makes friends instead of enemies—and this is a solid grounding to promote future progressive reforms that may have been more slow to develop through more aggressive, directly legal routes.

Again, Equal Justice America's support made my internship possible, and I am forever thankful to the organization. I hope you will continue to fund students passionate about public interest law, and that they will have as rewarding an experience as I had.

Sincerely,

David A. Shapiro
Brooklyn Law School

August 19, 2011

Katie Toman
Office Manager
Equal Justice America
13540 East Broadway Road
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Midlothian, VA 23112

RE: David Shapiro's End-of-Summer Evaluation

Dear Ms. Toman,

I am writing to provide an evaluation of David Shapiro's time with the Center for Children's Law and Policy this summer. We are very grateful to Equal Justice America for funding David's summer fellowship with our organization.

Our staff was excited about having David join us this summer because of his long history of working with and on behalf of children. As an undergraduate, he spent four years volunteering in the St. Louis Juvenile Detention Center, mentoring youth and working with staff to increase programming. He has also worked as an intern for the Juvenile Rights Practice at the New York City Legal Aid Society and has directly represented youth in suspension hearings in New York City.

David's broad range of experiences helped him bring a high level of enthusiasm and curiosity to his work this summer. David worked on a range of projects with our staff. We are currently working with administrators at the District of Columbia's juvenile justice agency to help draft new policies in a range of key areas, including child abuse reporting, use of force by staff, use of restraints and isolation, and sexual misconduct prevention. David spent a substantial part of the summer conducting legal research to support the development of these policies. He also attended stakeholder meetings with agency officials to help understand the many considerations and viewpoints that must be reconciled when crafting policies in these areas.

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Our staff integrated David into many other areas of our work as well. For example, we are working in Bridgeport and Hartford, Connecticut, to help local officials identify and reduce racial and ethnic disparities in their juvenile justice systems. David helped to analyze and summarize diversion data from Bridgeport. He also developed a tracking tool to increase the quality and scope of information that the city could collect. Officials in Bridgeport were very impressed with that tracking tool and are planning to utilize it going forward.

David also assisted with a number of smaller research assignments on conditions of confinement, school discipline, and other juvenile justice reform efforts around the country. He was also able to attend conferences and federal hearings on juvenile justice-related issues during his fellowship, and we could rely on him to come back with informative notes from the meetings.

Throughout the summer, David contributed to our staff meetings and office discussions in meaningful ways, and he regularly sought out new assignments from our staff. David always completed his work in a timely manner. Some of his first drafts clearly needed editing. Fortunately, he was receptive to the feedback that we offered and often produced a much more refined second draft.

We hope that David's experiences with us this summer and the feedback that he received will help him as he moves forward with his legal education and career. We are pleased that he is pursuing public interest postgraduate fellowships in the field of juvenile justice reform.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like additional information on David's time with us this summer. Thank you again for supporting law students in their pursuit of public interest careers.

Sincerely,

Jason Szanyi
Staff Attorney