August 18, 2012

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I spent this summer at Greater Boston Legal Services (GLBS) in the Elder, Health, and Disability Law Unit, successfully advocating for low-income, elderly clients regarding denials of subsidized housing, disability benefits, social security, and food stamps. I am so grateful for your funding, because it allowed me to spend this summer doing work I absolutely love, work that is challenging, interesting, and meaningful. Work that matters.

One of my first clients taught me how some landlords and even our government will act cruelly and illegally without any evident concern for the lives and livelihoods they ruin. This elderly woman was a breast cancer patient living in subsidized housing, where her rent is 30 percent of her income and the government pays the other portion to make the landlord whole. This summer, she had to have to two major surgeries for the cancer, and the recovery time was 12 weeks. Early in June, her landlord raised the rent and the government refused to pay more. Thus, even though she had never missed a rent payment, the landlord tried to evict an elderly cancer patient while she was recovering from two major surgeries.

Fortunately, the law was firmly on her side. I wrote letters and made phone calls to the government and the landlord explaining their obligations under disability law, landlord/tenant law, and subsidized housing law. The government rethought its position and the client signed a new lease, enabling her to continue living in her home, paying the same rent, for the next year at least. This was one of my first cases, and I was shocked at how quickly I was able to help the client. Even though the law was firmly on my side, I assumed the landlord and housing authority would just ignore it. To my delight, I was wrong.

A different client's case, however, proved to be painfully slow, and served as a forceful reminder of how important patient and persistent advocacy is. This elderly man had health insurance, but when he was out of the country, he broke his hip and had hip replacement surgery. His insurance (Medicaid) would not pay for a surgery out of the country, so his son paid for the surgery, and the client signed a promissory note to pay his son \$200 per month until the debt was repaid. When he got home, the client applied for food stamps. When calculating a food stamp benefit, the government considers applicants' other expenses. Medical expenses are deducted, but debts to a third party are not. My client's \$200 monthly payments were classified as debt to a third party, like a credit card company, not a medical expense, like hospital payments. This meant he and his wife received about \$150 less per month in food stamps. We appealed this decision.

Massachusetts regulations state that they must decide an appeal within 90 days of the appeal being filed, but at 100 days after the appeal filing, the government had not even scheduled a

hearing. After many letters and phone calls to the food stamp agency in which I repeatedly explained that they had delayed to the point of unlawfulness and took them through the client's legal appeal, the government decided to reinstate the client's food stamps. He had been without that money for months, and so received back benefits, i.e. all the food stamp benefits he should have been receiving and didn't. Unfortunately, one cannot eat retroactively, so back benefits for food stamps are of little comfort, but perhaps, the client cheerfully told me, he and his family would enjoy a summer lobster dinner!

Unlike the first case I explained, this one took almost the entirety of my summer. I spoke with dozens of people, passed from department to department. Like the first case, though, it took the strength of my legal arguments combined with polite and firmly persistent advocacy to win.

Unfortunately, the best advocate that low-income clients are offered is often some version of me: a kid in her early 20s figuring it out as I go along. The best I can offer is a willingness to work hard, figure out the best legal argument I can, and persistently advocate for the client with every mechanism I can find. To my surprise, that combination of creativity and passion, expertly guided by an delightfully bright, knowledgeable, and approachable team of attorneys, can change people's lives in deep, meaningful ways. This summer has given me an incredible opportunity to do work I love and work that matters, and it would not have been possible without Equal Justice America funding. Thank you very much for your support.

Sincerely,

Minutel Multique Elizabeth McIntyre

Boston University School of Law

Class of 2014



August 20, 2012

Mr. Dan Ruben Equal Justice America 13540 East Boundary Road Midlothian, VA 23112

RE: Elizabeth McIntyre

Dear Mr. Ruben,

Elizabeth McIntyre worked as a legal intern in the Elder, Health, and Disability unit of Greater Boston Legal Services from May, 2011 until August, 2011. Her assignments included conducting client interviews on the phone and in person, providing legal advice and counsel to elderly callers and their caregivers, performing legal research, and drafting various written documents including legal advice letters to clients. She also interacted with clients, elder agency providers, court personnel, and state and federal agency employees. In addition, she wrote a legal memorandum for a Social Security Administration disability hearing and represented a client at a hearing at a local housing authority.

Elizabeth has advocacy skills and experience which are extraordinary for a first year law student. She worked on several cases involving complex legal and factual issues and in each case she came up with thoughtful and creative approaches to the issues. She showed great patience and perseverance in investigating cases and formulating and carrying out successful advocacy strategies to achieve her clients' goals. She was a quick study and was very skilled at synthesizing and presenting complex legal research. For example, she did an excellent job of investigating and analyzing aspects of the federal health care reform law and presented her detailed analysis at our unit's case review.

Elizabeth showed great initiative and was a real self-starter. She eagerly volunteered for extra work assignments which was of great benefit to our staff and clients. She also exhibited great sensitivity and compassion for our clients and really understood the myriad problems that our clients face every day. She was very reliable and performed her work in a timely fashion. She worked on a variety of issues affecting our elderly clients and managed her time in a beneficial way which allowed her to meet her responsibilities in the cases she was assigned. She was also quick to grasp the nature of her assignments and required little supervision.

Elizabeth was one of the most gifted law students that we have ever supervised. She is highly intelligent, determined, hard working, professional, and very responsible. In her time here she managed to work on a large number of cases and was an incredibly valuable resource to our unit and to our clients. She was a pleasure to work with and we enjoyed having her here this Summer. We would be happy to provide any further information if you require it. Please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely

Betsey Crimmins Senior Attorney

Wynn Gerhard Senior Attorney