



# Centro Legal de la Raza

*Working for Justice  
Strengthening Community  
Since 1969*

August 8, 2016

Dan Ruben  
Executive Director  
Equal Justice America  
[Delivered by email to [katie@equaljusticeamerica.org](mailto:katie@equaljusticeamerica.org)]

**RE: Supervisor Evaluation Letter for Marco Castanos**

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I am the Workers' Rights Program Director at Centro Legal de la Raza. In that capacity, I served as Marco's primary supervisor this summer, and I am pleased to offer this evaluation of Marco's fellowship with Centro Legal.

Centro Legal is a legal aid organization in Oakland, California that has served low-income residents of the Bay Area since 1969. Our practice areas include housing, employment, and immigration. With just two attorneys in our Workers' Rights Program, we serve hundreds of low-wage workers every year. This summer, Marco Castanos—the Workers' Rights Program's only summer law clerk—helped us expand our capacity to advance the rights of the workers we serve.

Marco was a fantastic fellow. From the start of his fellowship with Centro Legal, he showed a deep understanding of the role we play as a legal services provider. He quickly proved himself to be a responsible, thorough, and sensitive advocate for the clients who walk through our doors. Marco arrived at Centro Legal with a demonstrated commitment to public service generally, and to workers' rights in particular. His prior experience working with Spanish-speaking workers paired with his ability to quickly learn the substantive legal framework of California employment law made Marco an asset to our team from his first week as a fellow.

Under my supervision, Marco met with clients during our regular evening legal services clinics, helping to provide advice and counsel, and more extensive legal services to workers facing discrimination, retaliation, and wage and hour violations. Marco also worked with staff attorneys to prepare for administrative hearings by conducting legal research, writing briefs, and negotiating settlement agreements. Under attorney supervision, Marco also represented workers in administrative conferences and in one hearing before the California Division of Labor Standards Enforcement. Marco's successful representation in the hearing resulted in a several thousand dollar judgment for one of our clients.

Although this summer fellowship provided Marco his first significant exposure to California employment law and the relevant legal procedures, he quickly came to understand the substantive law and the procedural quirks. In our clinic consultation model, Marco often had only a short time after conducting an intake with clients to provide legal advice. When Marco consulted with senior attorneys prior to providing this advice, he had already thoroughly evaluated the legal and factual issues and was able to propose creative solutions, rather than solely follow directions from us.

Marco also stepped up on several occasions to provide workshops and know-your-rights trainings for low-wage workers. He was a skilled public speaker and was able to present legal rights information in an engaging and effective way.

In short, we were very pleased to have Marco join Centro Legal de la Raza as a summer law clerk. I would like to convey our thanks to Equal Justice America for supporting his fellowship with us. I am confident that Marco will move on to be a strong public interest advocate, and I was happy to have this chance to work with him to offer training and support as he builds his public interest career.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at [dschoonmaker@centrolegal.org](mailto:dschoonmaker@centrolegal.org) or (510) 274-2418 if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Derek Schoonmaker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Derek" and last name "Schoonmaker" clearly distinguishable.

Derek Schoonmaker