

July 8, 2015

Dan Ruben  
Executive Director  
Equal Justice America  
13540 East Boundary Rd., Suite 204  
Midlothian, Virginia 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben:

Thank you for your continued support of the Yale Temporary Restraining Order Project, a student organization at Yale Law School that provides assistance for pro se applicants for family violence restraining orders at the courthouse in New Haven. Equal Justice America generously supported the project by funding the work of the six student directors of the TRO Project. This was my second and final year as a director, and I am grateful for EJA's support.

Along with the other directors, I was responsible for helping to manage operations at an office at the New Haven Superior Courthouse that is staffed by Yale Law School Student volunteers. I set schedules, trained and supervised over 60 volunteers, and helped to coordinate with our supervising attorneys at New Haven Legal Assistance and court staff.

The applicants who come to our office for assistance in applying for restraining orders are victims of intimate partner or family-based violence and face threats of further serious physical violence. Our volunteers provide information to help applicants complete the required paperwork and prepare affidavits detailing their need for a restraining order. We also follow up with applicants to ensure that the restraining order has been served and that the applicants appears for the hearing on the extension of the restraining order. In recent years, we have also assisted our sponsor organization, New Haven Legal Assistance, in policy advocacy efforts to improve Connecticut's process for granting restraining orders.

While much of my work as a student director is managerial or administrative, like all of our project volunteers, I also work shifts at our office in the courthouse, where I work firsthand with applicants for restraining orders. The time I have spent in the TRO Project office has been some of the most eye-opening experiences that I have had in law school. It has taught me about the challenges that are faced by pro se parties who attempt to navigate a confusing court system in a time of great need. It has also convinced me of the importance of ensuring greater access to civil legal aid. I know that, regardless of what path my future career takes, I will be an advocate for increasing access to justice.

I am most grateful to Equal Justice America and to your funders for giving me the opportunity to participate in this valuable project. The fellowship makes it possible for our directors to continue to continue the work of the TRO Project and to provide assistance to many dozens of restraining order applicants each year.

Thanks again for your generous support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jake Siegel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "S".

Jake Siegel  
Yale Law School '15