

JOANNA STEIN

August 31, 2009

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

Thank you for providing me with funding for my internship in the Employment Unit at Greater Boston Legal Services ("GBLS"). This summer I worked directly with clients to prepare them for administrative hearings regarding unemployment insurance ("UI") benefits and represented one such client at a hearing, conducted legal research and wrote memoranda for attorneys, collaborated on wage and hour cases with an attorney, and attended training sessions pertaining to areas relevant to my work.

The highlight of my summer was having the opportunity to work directly with clients on a day-to-day basis. After a year of sitting passively in law school classes, I enjoyed having the chance to interact with clients and help address their legal needs. I conducted intake of potential clients and helped prepare clients for pending administrative hearings over their receipt of UI benefits. After I met with a potential client who had been denied benefits initially and on appeal, I investigated her case and its legal implications and concluded that GBLS should represent her at a de novo hearing that she had been granted. I met with her multiple times to prepare her for and represented her at the hearing before the Massachusetts Division of Unemployment Assistance ("DUA"), which led the DUA Hearings Department to grant her benefits. Not only was it a rewarding experience to help the client on both a personal and financial level, but her success with GBLS on her side was a first-hand example of how disadvantaged a person is when he or she cannot afford legal representation. The work that GBLS does can truly have a positive life-changing effect on its clients.

In addition to working with clients prior to their hearings at DUA, I worked with clients who were further along in the adjudicatory process regarding their UI benefits claims. I wrote a letter to the Board of Review for DUA on behalf of a client who was appealing a decision by the DUA Hearings Department affirming the client's disqualification from receiving benefits. The process of writing the letter entailed speaking with the client multiple times to ensure that I had a clear grasp of the facts of the case and researching the relevant law. After I submitted the letter, the Board of Review notified the client that it would review his case and its decision is pending. Hopefully, he, like so many other deserving GBLS clients, will benefit from the legal representation that he lacked initially.

When I was not working with clients, I wrote motions and supporting memoranda, and

conducted legal research for pending litigation and ongoing legislative advocacy. One project that I am particularly proud of was conducting research and writing memoranda to assist an attorney who was working to draft a new version of the Massachusetts Maternity Leave Act (“MMLA”). One such memorandum looked into which other states have enacted their own versions of the Family and Medical Leave Act, which of those states extend coverage to part-time workers, and whether the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission’s care-giving guidelines pertain to the same principles as such statutes. Another memorandum looked into the legislative history of the MMLA and statistics on part-time workers from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Ultimately, I compiled all the research into a lengthy memorandum on why a revised MMLA should extend its coverage to part-time workers, and the attorney used that memorandum as a reference in writing a letter to the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination on behalf of GBLS and the Massachusetts AFL-CIO recommending, among other things, that part-time workers be covered by the MMLA.

I very much enjoyed interning at GBLS, and my summer there confirmed my dedication to working in public interest law. I admire the hard work and dedication of the attorneys and support staff in the Employment Unit assisting those who would not have access to legal representation if not for GBLS, and hope to follow in their footsteps one day. I now embark on my second year of law school with a real-life basis for the importance of the work that I eventually will be doing and how that work hopefully will benefit the lives of underprivileged individuals. Thank you for alleviating the financial pressure of volunteering in the public interest sector this summer and thus enabling me to have such a rewarding experience.

Sincerely,

Joanna Stein
Boston College Law School
Class of 2011