

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

Thanks to the gracious assistance of Equal Justice America through the spring and summer of 2011, I have been able to devote much of my time to working at an excellent legal services organization, Community Legal Services, Inc. (CLS) in Philadelphia.

As far as legal services organizations go, CLS is fairly unique, in that since it does not accept Legal Services Corporation funds, it is not prohibited from engaging in either policy advocacy or class action litigation. Nonetheless, CLS does not simply advocate in Harrisburg or Washington, nor does it simply file big lawsuits on behalf of low-income individuals. Indeed, CLS also devotes considerable resources to direct services work in each of its many practice areas. By giving CLS a clear view of the myriad, significant problems its clients face, CLS' direct services work enables it to tailor its advocacy to those problems and, thereby, engage in more effective anti-poverty advocacy.

Since I walked through CLS' doors in January, I have been privileged to have an excellent supervisor – Senior Attorney Richard Weishaupt – and assistant supervisors – Staff Attorneys Michael Froehlich and Kristen Dama – who have allowed me to do various types of challenging, engaging, and inspiring work and have provided me with excellent guidance along the way. Indeed, I have worked on the following projects: summary judgment briefs and reply briefs on behalf of SSI claimants appealing to federal court; administrative appeals on behalf of SSI and SSDI claimants, appeals concerning various other public benefits at the state level, including CCIS (childcare subsidy appeals) in Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court and state administrative appeals, assisting eligible individuals apply for various benefits, policy drafting and advocacy on matters before Pennsylvania state and Philadelphia city government (including Philadelphia's newly-implemented policy of collecting outstanding costs and fines from criminal defendants, which has often impacted former defendants' eligibility for benefits) and impact litigation-related tasks, including researching sovereign immunity and administrative exhaustion and briefing those issues in response to a motion to dismiss a class action lawsuit brought on behalf of all Pennsylvania SSI recipients, a Title VI compliance investigation, and research of methods for challenging elimination of state-provided services necessary for effective utilization of public benefits.

Through working on each of the abovementioned projects, I have received superb support from Rich, Mike, and Kristen. For any question I have had or difficulty I have encountered in my work, they have been there to assist me. With their guidance, I have not only gained extensive knowledge of the public benefits landscape and civil social justice lawyering, I have also had the opportunity to provide much needed support to

individual clients, low-income communities, and disadvantaged individuals throughout my home state of Pennsylvania.

Undoubtedly, this experience will positively shape my future studies at Harvard Law School and, moreover, will be an invaluable asset for my future endeavors as a public interest lawyer. But most importantly, the knowledge that my work at CLS has materially improved the lives of those who rarely see justice has endowed my daily life with deep meaning and significance. In brief, my experiences at CLS have reaffirmed my commitment to social justice lawyering and to advocacy on behalf of, in Michael Harrington's words, the Other America. There is much work to be done, and I cannot wait to do it.

Without the support of Equal Justice America, I would not have been able to devote myself to my work at Community Legal Services. For enabling me to have the best professional experience I have yet had, I cannot thank you and your donors enough.

Sincerely,

Jon Cioschi
Harvard Law School, Class of 2014