

August 5, 2009

Dan Ruben
Building II - Suite 204
13540 East Boundary Road
Midlothian, VA 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben:

First of all, I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Equal Justice America for providing me with a summer fellowship. Without the support of your organization, my summer experience would not have been possible. That would have been a shame, because I had a wonderful experience this summer as a legal intern at the Legal Aid Justice Center in Charlottesville, VA.

My work this summer was primarily devoted to three substantive areas: Housing, Consumer and Employment law. I will share a brief story concerning each of those areas.

I spent more time working on housing-related cases than any others this summer. For example, I assisted in the representation of tenants who were being evicted due to conduct-related offenses; I negotiated on behalf of a tenant who was being charged for something that she insisted was not her fault; I assisted in the civil defense of a client who was being charged by his landlord for cleaning services that were neither contemplated by the contract nor requested by the tenant; and I used my Spanish language skills to mediate a dispute between a non-English speaking tenant and her landlord.

Another highlight of my summer was assisting homebuyers who had been taken advantage of by lenders. I assisted our office in securing a favorable settlement for a homebuyer who had been tricked into signing away a considerable amount of equity in her home. I also contributed a significant amount of time to assisting in our office's defense of a family that was in danger of being evicted due to falling behind on their mortgage payments. Also, I drafted a complaint on behalf of that same family, which sought to recover their down payment and which the lender claimed had been forfeited. For me, these kinds of cases were very satisfying because I believed that our clients had been taken advantage of by lenders who were more sophisticated and had greater bargaining power.

Finally, I assisted workers who had been denied unemployment benefits by the Virginia Employment Commission. Some workers were denied because of confusion about the application process, in these cases I was able to help guide them through the process so that they would qualify for the benefits they were entitled to. In one instance I actually represented a worker in an administrative hearing. I particularly enjoyed helping a worker who had been denied benefits in

part because he did not know how to use a computer and so his unemployment claim was susceptible to errors. It was very gratifying to see him win his appeal, because I knew my work had paid off and he began to receive money that he desperately needed in order to survive.

These experiences have provided me not only with great experience, but also with a renewed commitment to public interest law.

Very truly yours,

Joseph Bailey

University of Virginia Law School

J.D. expected, 2011