

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

This summer I had the pleasure of working with Public Counsel Law Center in Los Angeles, California. Public Counsel serves many of the most needy individuals in Los Angeles and works toward equal justice. Public Counsel has many different practice areas that offer a wide variety of legal services.

This summer, I worked at part of the Children's Rights Project. This project is focused specifically on assisting youth in a variety of ways and includes areas such as adoption, education, and access to services. Within that project, my summer position was in the Transition Age Foster Youth Program. This program works with children that have been involved in the dependency system with the myriad of issues that they face.

In particular, I worked a lot with students on educational issues. I conducted extensive research in federal and state special education laws. This research will be used by my supervising attorneys to assist Los Angeles foster youth both while in care and in successfully transitioning out of the dependency system and into independence and adulthood.

Much of my work reminded me of the great deal of privilege that I have in my life. There are so many things that I would turn to my mother to ask questions about. However, for these youth that lack an involved, supportive family, there may be no one to turn to. These students don't have anyone to advocate for them or push them to succeed in life. Expectations for these students might be low or even nonexistent. That is why the work at Public Counsel is so important. These children should be given the chance to have meaningful futures.

Many of the clients that I worked with have faced huge obstacles in life that would seem insurmountable to many of us. I felt like if I was able to help these individuals, even a little bit, I would be very proud of my work. It was a privilege to work with the attorneys of Public Counsel this summer and watch them work tirelessly to assist the Los Angeles youth in the dependency and delinquency systems.

Another part of my summer was assisting youth in obtaining summer jobs. I worked with one client in particular to help the client learn how to fill out a job application and how to apply for jobs. It was a very interesting experience to sit in a library in East Los Angeles and talk with this client about the client's interests, goals, and life experiences. As much as I enjoyed the legal work I did this summer, the biggest benefit to me was entirely non-legal. I learned to feel more connected to the city of Los Angeles and to find common ground with individuals whose life experiences have been so different from my

own. I've lived in LA for nearly six years now, and it was not until this year that I really began to feel connected to the city and its residents, most of whom I would never cross paths without legal services organizations like Public Counsel. This experience has made me want to continue to work with disadvantaged individuals, especially in Los Angeles, and fight to ensure that everyone has a change to succeed in life. This may sound very lofty, or even a little cheesy, but I will always be grateful for the eye opening experiences of this summer.

Sincerely,

Kelsey Williams
Loyola Law School, Class of 2013