

September 18, 2014

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

Re: Equal Justice America Summer Fellowship at Gender Justice

Dear Mr. Ruben:

This summer, with the help of Equal Justice America, I served as a law clerk for Gender Justice, a gender, sex, and sexual orientation discrimination non-profit in St. Paul Minnesota. I am very grateful for the opportunity to have worked with Gender Justice, and I remain inspired by their tireless advocacy and devotion.

When I was offered the position at Gender Justice, I felt as if I had found a perfect fit. The organization does impact litigation, much of which centers on employment discrimination, and advocates for marginalized groups such as transgender individuals, women of racial minority, and victims of domestic violence. As a law student interested in LGBT rights, women's rights, employment law, and litigation, I could not have found an organization better attuned to my interests. During the fellowship, I drafted briefs, orders, and memos addressing complicated areas of anti-discrimination statute. It was something like a crash course in discrimination law, and I am glad that I learned about this area of the law under the supervision of such competent attorneys, and doing such important work.

But even better than the substance of the law Gender Justice practices is their clients. Over the course of my fellowship I met a series of engaging, determined, and extremely brave clients for whom I was proud to advocate. At first I was nervous to have direct contact with client, worried that I would mishandle or misunderstand their feelings and needs. During the first week, I sat and listened to a client tell a harrowing story of assault. I felt paralyzed, unsure of what to say or how to comfort her. Throughout the summer, as this client came in week after week, we started to form a relationship of trust. We shared trust built on the mutual understanding that everyone at Gender Justice would protect her story and use it to better her life, as well as the life of her community.

Near the end of the summer, when a schoolteacher called with a complaint about the maternity leave structure of her contract with the school, I was confident enough to take point. I was a main contact point for the teacher, and interviewed her about the details of the contract and the details of her pregnancy. I conducted research and drafted a letter of support, which Gender Justice sent

to her school board. I continue to follow the case as it progresses. After just a few months, my confidence and self-assurance in client relations dramatically improved. The first few weeks taught me the importance of the attorney-client relationship, and the last few weeks showed me how much I had learned.

This summer I grew considerably as an advocate and as a person, just by rubbing elbows with the excellent lawyers and clients of Gender Justice. I am extremely grateful to Equal Justice America for helping make that happen.

Best Regards,

Leah Tabbert
University of Minnesota Law School
Class of 2016