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

Dear Dan,

I am extremely grateful to Equal Justice America for giving me the opportunity to work as an unpaid legal intern this past summer for the Whitman-Walker Clinic Legal Services Program in Washington, DC. Based on conversations with my classmates, I truly believe that my experience was more rewarding, instructive, and enjoyable than most paid summer positions available to law students.

My employer, the Whitman-Walker Clinic, is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing health care and other services at little or no cost to people living with HIV/AIDS in the Washington, DC area. While I was there, the Legal Services Program consisted of only 5 full-time attorneys, 1 administrative assistant, and 6 unpaid summer interns. Despite these limited resources, the attorneys provided us with about a week of substantive training in the areas of law most relevant to our clients' needs: employment discrimination, public benefits, immigration, confidentiality, and insurance. I spent most of my time at work interviewing clients, discussing their cases with the attorneys, and then counseling them on steps to take. Most of my clients needed help applying for either Social Security disability benefits or for HIV waivers (as a precursor to applying for legal permanent residency).

Many of my clients were unaware that they were eligible for public benefits or HIV waivers. Foreign-born clients, in particular, were often afraid that disclosure of their diagnosis would allow all employers to turn them away. The highlights of my legal education so far have been the times when I was able to console despondent clients, telling them that there were solutions to their problems, and that I could start working on them immediately.

One of my HIV waiver clients was a Nigerian mother in her 30s pursuing a college degree in Virginia. She has a very strained relationship with her husband, who remains in Nigeria and pressures her to give up custody of their three young children, all of whom were born in the U.S. This client won the diversity lottery for a green card, and she is eligible for an HIV waiver because her children are American citizens. Her legal needs are not only for help filing the relevant forms and applications, but also for advocacy. I wrote a memo about how immigration authorities determine whether a waiver applicant should be denied based on her likelihood of becoming a "public burden," and on points we could argue in our client's favor. My supervisors agree that our client will most likely succeed in her waiver application, even



though she has received public benefits in the past. It was a thrill for all of us involved to see her making gains on the road to permanent residency, health, financial independence, and a happier domestic life.

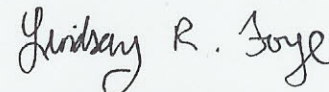
Another one of my clients was an African-American transgender woman (male to female) who suffered from severe HIV-related and other health problems. Peripheral neuropathy caused numbness and tingling in her limbs, sometimes affecting her ability to walk or hold things in her hands. She had also had a brain tumor removed, which significantly compromised her memory and other cognitive functions. Her former partner died of AIDS, and she is estranged from all of her family members, some of whom do not even know of her female identity.

This client had been receiving disability benefits from Social Security, but these were cut off when tax forms revealed that she had earned too much income from work during certain months to remain eligible. Being aware of her memory problems and afraid of situations just like this, our client carries a backpack with her at all times filled with all of her important documents. After speaking with her at length, emptying out the backpack, and examining the contents, we found that despite a few months of being "over-income", our client had been in compliance with Social Security's rules for years, including many of the months for which the Agency wanted to be reimbursed. I worked quickly with one of the attorneys to make sure we filed a timely Request for Reconsideration and for benefits pending the appeal.

Thankfully, this woman who would otherwise be completely alone now has a team of lawyers, doctors, and social workers all looking out for her. She is still impoverished and in poor health, but the Clinic can help her preserve her benefits and be part of a safe, LGBT-friendly community. She thanked me profusely for my help, and I felt immensely proud that I had been able to accomplish something useful and valuable.

I consistently found my work at Whitman-Walker to be engrossing and a great deal of fun. The attorneys and other clinic staff members were always approachable and ready to teach us what we needed to know. I appreciated the opportunity to learn about a variety of legal issues and to interact with numerous clients everyday, most of whom were fascinating to talk to and extremely grateful for our help. Despite some of clients' tragic circumstances, we always managed to fit some levity into our lunch and coffee breaks. I can't help but note that I seem to be more enthusiastic about my summer experience than most of my classmates are about theirs. I was fully dedicated to a public interest law career before this summer, but I am now better equipped to practice in the public sector and to encourage others to do the same.

Sincerely yours,



Lindsay R. Foye  
Northwestern University  
Candidate for J.D. 2007