

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America

August 31, 2016

Dear Mr. Ruben,

First, I would like to thank you for helping me to pursue this internship with Legal Services of South Central Michigan. Without the money I received this summer, I would have been far too stressed to learn from my experience. As someone entirely new to the field of law, I had a lot to learn, and I handled a variety of situations on a day-to-day basis. This fellowship allowed me to better focus on serving our clients at Legal Services.

Much of what I did involved family law cases involving domestic violence. I learned to talk to clients who had been through unimaginable experiences. I learned that the sadness and anger that I feel on their behalf does not dissipate with time. And I learned that without Legal Services organizations, many of our clients would be trapped in toxic relationships. They do not have the resources to pursue divorce and custody cases. They may be struggling to make ends meet, or their spouse may have control of their finances. We helped our clients to file Personal Protection Orders so that they had protection from abusive spouses, and we helped them to keep their children safe in contentious custody battles.

Through my work with my attorney's clients, I took their phone calls, listened to them speak about the status of their case and their lives as a whole, drafted their pleadings, and met them in person. I grew attached to the women we worked with and felt the joy of prevailing on a Personal Protection Order case as well as the sadness at watching a woman go through a situation where nobody believed her or seemed to be on her side. Being a zealous advocate in those cases felt particularly important, and that lent a certain gravity to my work. While the day-

to-day tasks required focus and organization, my emotional investment in the cases proved to be the biggest challenge, and I learned a lot about myself as a lawyer and as a person. I hope that I can strike that balance between sincerely caring about my clients and ensuring that I maintain enough distance to effectively represent them. This is an aspect of lawyering, particularly public interest work, which cannot be addressed in a law school setting. I am grateful that I received the opportunity to recognize that layer of legal practice now so that I can think about those issues in my future classes as a law student and beyond.

I have the utmost respect for what the lawyers at Legal Services do, and I am honored to have contributed in some small part to making difficult situations for our clients a little bit easier. Everyone in the office works extremely hard in an effort to make the legal system work for all clients, not just those who can afford representation.

Best regards,

Lindsay Weiss
Michigan State College of Law, Class of 2018