

September 16, 2014

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I am a rising third year law student at Fordham University School of Law and I am writing to describe my work this summer at the Consumer Litigation Clinic of Lincoln Square Legal Services at Fordham Law School, which provides civil legal services to low-income individuals with state and federal consumer law issues.

During the summer, I worked to represent consumers who cannot afford representation in federal, state, and local courts against lenders, debt collectors, and merchants. The Consumer Litigation Clinic works to enforce the rights of low-income consumers by representing them in federal, state and local courts against lenders, debt collectors, and merchants.

Specifically, I spent the majority of the summer working with a client who suffered weeks worth of harassment and intimidation at the hands of a disreputable car dealership after they took \$2,300 deposit from her, and then refused to refund it to her after she decided against purchasing the vehicle. While we never officially represented this client, I helped her withdraw her initial small claims case for \$2,300, and I drafted a complaint for her that we later filed along with co-counsel in N.Y. Supreme Court. We spent an extensive amount of time interviewing this client, who spoke only Spanish, to ascertain all the details of her ordeal with this car dealership. I drafted a complaint with several causes of action on behalf of client, including unjust enrichment, conversion, assault, defamation, and violations of NY General Business Law. I also included claims of defamation and false imprisonment on behalf of the client's minor son. This case involved extensive research and writing, and was particularly gratifying to me because I was able to help a person, who because of her socio-economic and immigration status was intimidated by the legal system and unsure of how to fight for her rights.

As a part of my summer experience, I also had the opportunity to provide advice and assistance to unrepresented consumers at CLARO (Consumer Legal Assistance and Referral Office) every Thursday in the Bronx. I found this experience to be tremendously rewarding. On the days that I volunteered I helped with the intake of all of the unrepresented people who sought assistance from CLARO. I was also able to sit in on the counseling sessions between the

volunteer lawyers and the pro se litigants, which enabled me to see how consumer lawyers work first-hand.

My experience at the clinic has inspired me to use my legal education to help those unable to find and afford legal representation, and my Equal Justice America Fellowship has helped support my goal of pursuing this type of legal work in the future. Filling the gap in civil legal needs of low-income litigants is a pressing and important issue for the legal community and for the next generation of lawyers, one which Equal Justice America addresses.

Sincerely,  
Martha Fortune  
Fordham Law School  
Class of 2015