

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

August 26, 2009

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I am writing to express my gratitude to you and your organization for funding my summer internship at the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law in Chicago, Illinois.

The Shriver Center seeks to improve the lives of the poor through the law, using means such as policy development, impact litigation, and communications strategies. This summer, I worked on various matters. My work included research regarding potential strategies for use in ongoing housing litigation in federal court; tracking the impact of state budget cuts on poor persons who rely on government services and benefits; and assessing the impact of new federal child welfare legislation on the provision of child welfare services in Illinois.

The highlight of my summer was working on the aforementioned housing litigation. The Shriver Center represents a tenants association whose homes in a project-based public housing project are being threatened by the city in which they live. The city, claiming blight, wants to take the project by eminent domain, demolish it, and replace it with a park. The public housing lost would not be replaced within the city. This would practically eliminate affordable housing opportunities within the city for the current tenants of the project. Under the supervision of two experienced housing litigators, I did legal research regarding several different theories of liability that may be used in an attempt to preserve the public housing, and with it, the tenants' ability to have a safe and affordable homes. I loved the difficult problems that the legal research posed, as well as the fast pace and real-world implications of working on a live case.

In addition to the housing litigation, I also worked closely with the tremendously experienced and talented attorneys at the Shriver Center as they blended policy advocacy and novel legal theories to help their real-world clients, who include both classes of persons and individuals seeking to obtain or keep public benefits. Overall, my summer was an excellent experience, and helped to affirm my commitment to making public interest work a major part of my practice after law school. I am, and will always remain, grateful that Equal Justice America was able to provide me with a grant that lessened the hardship of such an opportunity.

Thanks again,

Matt Wolfe
University of Chicago Law School
J.D. Candidate 2011