

September 5, 2011

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

My clerkship with Bay Area Legal Aid (BayLegal) was a wonderful learning experience. Through the helpful guidance and supervision of BayLegal staff attorneys, I was able to improve my practical lawyering skills. I would have not been able to accept an unpaid summer clerkship with BayLegal had it not been for the financial support of Equal Justice America.

At BayLegal I provided direct legal services to indigent folks in Contra Costa County. I was placed in the Housing Preservation Unit where I zealously worked to keep individuals and families from facing homelessness. As a clerk I conducted comprehensive legal research on topics such as due process rights in public housing administrative hearings, statutory notice requirements of California Code of Civil Procedure Section 1161(3), and a private landlord's obligations to grant reasonable accommodation requests.

I also wrote numerous pleadings and memoranda on behalf of clients. One especially challenging case involved a young couple who faced the loss of their Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher subsidy. On their behalf, I researched and drafted a complex administrative writ of mandate and the associated motion for a preliminary injunction. My motion was so thorough and persuasive, the Richmond Housing Authority dropped its opposition to our request for a preliminary injunction, and the clients' housing was successfully preserved during the pendency of our writ application.

As a certified law student, I was able to represent clients in court. My first court appearance was for a hearing on a Motion for Summary Judgment that I had drafted for a young client facing eviction from his apartment. I was nervous. I knew that if we lost the motion our client would face an uphill battle to keep his housing subsidy. The housing subsidy was what kept this young client in college, off the streets, and away from gangs. Entrusted with such a great responsibility, I diligently prepared for oral arguments. I strategized with my supervisor on how to optimize my arguments and respond to arguments that might be advanced by opposing counsel. I practiced in front of a mirror delivering my opening statement and I had BayLegal staff attorneys ask me questions about the case.

I went into the hearing prepared and excited. I will never forget stepping up and introducing myself to a Judge for the first time. I told my client's story and highlighted the key issues of the case for the judge. I argued with confidence, pose, and respect. I was able to think on my feet and respond to opposing counsels statements and the Judge's questions. After deliberation, the Judge ruled in our favor and granted our Motion for Summary Judgment. I was ecstatic!

Afterwards I spoke with Judge and asked for comments on my performance. She applauded my ability to clarify the issues and make logical and compelling legal arguments in my clients favor. She wished me the best and said that I will make a fine attorney. Calling my client and telling him the good news was wonderful. It felt good knowing that I played a part in helping him keep his apartment.

By the end of the summer I was able to confidently and capably interview clients, spot key legal issues, research applicable case law and statutes, and represent clients in administrative and court proceedings. I learned these great skills because my Equal Justice America fellowship enabled me to take an unpaid clerkship with a legal aid organization. Working at BayLegal strengthened my dedication to public service and strengthened my belief that providing equal access to the justice system builds bridges and strengthens lives.

Sincerely,

Nickole Miller  
DePaul University College of Law  
Juris Doctor Candidate 2012



September 7, 2011

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

Re: Letter of Evaluation for Nickole Miller

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I am very pleased to write a letter of evaluation for Nickole Miller regarding her summer clerkship for Bay Area Legal Aid in 2011. Nickole demonstrated her outstanding commitment to providing the highest level of legal services to BayLegal's clients throughout her recently completed summer clerkship. Nickole's clients consistently praised her impressive dedication and effort in a wide variety of legal matters, and she consistently received the highest ratings from our staff for her teamwork and lawyering skills.

During her summer clerkship, Nickole demonstrated excellent writing and legal research skills. Nickole was able to interview clients, spot key legal issues, and research applicable case law and statutes. She successfully conducted comprehensive legal research on topics such as due process rights in administrative hearings, statutory notice requirements of California Code of Civil Procedure Section 1161(3), and a private landlord's obligations to grant reasonable accommodation requests. Nickole always provided accurate citations for her research, and she effectively used both binding and persuasive authorities.

Additionally, Nickole's written work correctly conveyed legal rules, concepts and arguments in an organized, clear, and persuasive manner. While Nickole's memoranda always zealously advocated for our client's position, they also properly addressed the arguments that would likely be made in opposition. Nickole's ability to write thorough, concise, and persuasive pleadings and memoranda served our clients well. For example, Nickole showed initiative and creativity in one especially challenging case that involved young clients facing the loss of their housing subsidy. On their behalf, Nickole researched and drafted a complex administrative writ of mandate and the associated motion for a preliminary injunction. Because Nickole's motion was so thorough and persuasive, the

Contra Costa County Regional Office  
1025 Macdonald Avenue, P.O. Box 2289  
Richmond, CA 94802  
Ph: 510-233-9954 Fax: 510-236-6846  
[www.baylegal.org](http://www.baylegal.org)

housing authority dropped its opposition to our request for a preliminary injunction, and the clients' housing was successfully preserved during the pendency of our writ application.

Nickole's strong oral advocacy skills were evident during her representation of clients at administrative hearings and court appearances as a certified law student. Nickole prevailed in a highly contested administrative hearing, and obtained reversal of a proposed termination of Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher benefits for her client. At this hearing, Nickole confidently objected to hearsay evidence, made persuasive opening and closing arguments, narrated a compelling theme for the case, and skillfully conducted direct examination questions. Additionally, Nickole demonstrated impressive insight and laudable diligence in preparing for oral argument on a Motion for Summary Judgment that she drafted. Although she did not have prior experience with oral arguments in court, she asked the right questions to get a sense of what to expect, and with an eye to optimizing our arguments and anticipating arguments that might be advanced by opposing counsel. At the oral argument itself, she maintained poise despite being dealt some unexpected twists, and delivered her key points with clarity. Throughout this process, Nickole demonstrated that she was eager to learn -- and did so ably and quickly.

Nickole's work during this summer demonstrated her superior ability to translate legal principles into actions that served our clients facing a broad range of serious legal issues. She earned the respect of our colleagues and clients as a focused and yet warm-hearted advocate for legal services issues. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide any further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David M. Levin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent initial "D".

David M. Levin  
Staff Attorney