

September 18, 2013

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

This summer I was able to use the Equal Justice America Summer 2013 Fellowship to work at New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG) in their Immigration Protection Unit. While at NYLAG, I had the opportunity to provide direct services to low-income New Yorkers, many of whom were receiving public benefits. I mostly helped clients file their applications for naturalization and petitions for adjustment of status. I attended internship trainings on a variety of subjects, including immigration law. I also volunteered at a monthly clinic in Brooklyn, which provided assistance to Haitian-Creole residents who wished to file naturalization applications.

I was particularly fortunate to handle a variety of cases during my time at NYLAG. After the DOMA was repealed, we received a same sex couple that wished to adjust their status. This couple consisted of a transgender American woman and a cisgender female Malaysian woman. It was extremely timely, and among one of the first same-sex couple spousal adjustment petitions to be filed by NYLAG following the repeal of DOMA. The couple, Jennifer and Carmen, was extremely grateful and thankful for our services. This one of my favorite cases because it represented a successful, much needed change in immigration law and practice.

Another case that I enjoyed working on was a naturalization case for a Pakistani man who was also filing a spousal petition for adjustment of status. His wife had previously received her naturalization certificate and was now able to sponsor him for naturalization. They were a hard-working, industrious couple with one young son. It was clear that they had a bona fide and happy marriage, and that they were working hard to provide for themselves. Although there was nothing particularly pressing about this case, the husband had an incredibly good memory and we were able to fill out his information quickly and easily. Afterwards, he called me several times to thank me and wish me good luck with my studies.

NYLAG provided me with a very strong, hands-on internship program. There were trainings at least twice a week, and I worked under several different supervisors. I was able to interview and follow-up with clients myself. I also began a long-term U-Visa with a Mexican client that I saw on a weekly basis. Everyone that I worked with was extremely warm and kind, and it gave me real-life insight into being a public interest attorney.

I am very appreciative of Equal Justice America's Summer Fellowship Program, and I would encourage EJA to fund NYLAG interns in the future.

Sincerely,

Quinn Rowan
St. John's University, Class of 2014