

July 7, 2015

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I have been so grateful to be a director of the Temporary Restraining Order Project for the second year in a row. It remains one of the best experiences in my law school career. As a director I did not staff the office that often, but I was also able to enrich my experiences by talking to all of our fantastic student volunteers about the program and what they gained from it. I helped volunteers problem-solve when they experienced difficulties like a non-responsive marshal. I also debriefed with volunteers after some shifts, offering advice for how to approach a problem the next time or when they just needed to talk about an emotional client. Talking with our volunteers always reminds me just how many people we are able to help by keeping the office open 5 days a week. This year, I also had the chance to work with a committee of local advocates to try and get legislative changes passed to make service of process work more efficiently. Meeting these local organizers was an incredible experience. It was also great to see the data our project has collected used to help politicians understand the problem. I'm sure I will never forget testifying in front of the legislature for the first time (even more so because we waited over 12 hours to testify after midnight). Lack of service is a dangerous problem for so many of our clients. Even if we did not get the change we wanted this year, I'm optimistic that this was an important first step.

I personally worked 5 shifts this year and probably helped about as many clients. One problem I saw over and over again was problems getting service. I talked to one applicant who had been to the courthouse three times trying to find a marshal to serve the respondent. Each time, no marshal appeared for their required shift. I was able to call the marshal commission and make sure she connected with someone. Another applicant gave her papers to a marshal, but when he was unable to locate the respondent right away he gave the papers back to the applicant and told her to serve the respondent herself. We were able to help her find another marshal since

serving herself would be incredibly dangerous *and* invalid. I was also able to work with a court translator to help an undocumented immigrant file an order against her son-in-law.

Interacting with the clients in our office reinvigorated me whenever 3rd year felt overwhelming. It reminded me why I came to law school and what I'm excited to do next year. I know that I will take the interviewing, lobbying and negotiating skills I learned as a TRO director and volunteer with me, making me a better advocate for students in school discipline proceedings.

Sincerely,

Rachel Judd  
Class of 2015 | Yale Law School