

August 22, 2014

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America
Building II, Suite 204
13450 East Boundary Road
Midlothian, Virginia 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben,

Thank you very much for your support and the support of an Equal Justice America Summer Fellowship for my summer 2014 internship at LAF (Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago). This summer taught me an incredible amount about legal practice in general, direct services in particular, and most importantly, the type of work that I want to pursue in my career. While I loved my first year of law school, it was this summer that made me sure I had made the right decision in going to law school by showing me what a challenging, engaging and fulfilling career in public interest law looks like. Without the support of the Equal Justice America Fellowship, it would have been much harder to have this educational and professionally affirming experience.

I spent the summer working in the Consumer Practice Group at LAF. The Consumer Practice Group helps individuals who are facing predatory debt collection, foreclosure or loss of their home, utility shut-off, bankruptcy, vehicle repossession or home repair fraud. The very first day on the job I attended foreclosure court and got an assignment to draft a motion to dismiss a debt collection case. Needless to say, it was a steep learning curve, but I felt very comfortable approaching attorneys, paralegals and other interns at LAF to ask questions about the work that I was doing and general issues in consumer law. I loved the fact that the people around me were both experts in consumer law and always interested in learning more as new case law developed and new problems arose.

Due to the long timeline of the majority of cases in the Consumer Practice Group, there is only one case that I have seen to the end – the very first motion to dismiss that I helped to draft. We received a reply, so I was also able to work on the response to the reply and accompanied a staff attorney to a hearing on the arbitration date. The attorney recognized that opposing counsel would miss their due date to admit evidence to the arbitration and successfully argued to ensure that they could not extend the arbitration date. Opposing counsel then withdrew the case. It was important to recognize the many different channels that attorneys need to consider. While pursuing the motion to dismiss, this attorney was attuned enough to the arbitration date that she was able to achieve a successful outcome for our client.

One of my favorite aspects of my time at LAF was client contact. I sat in on and contributed to several intake interviews. One of the most interesting of these was a home repair fraud case. An older couple that does not speak English tried to contact a company to fix their furnace. The company first signed a contract with them to make the needed repairs. Then, representatives of

the company fraudulently obtained a signature of our clients on another contract to replace the furnace and air conditioner. When the clients saw the workers removing the furnace and air conditioning unit, they were confused and asked the workers to leave. The workers left with the furnace and air conditioning unit and have not returned them. I have been working on the statement of facts, demand letters, affidavits and the complaint for an affirmative case against the home repair company. Being able to work on an affirmative case from the very beginning – gathering facts, going over strategy, trying to work with the adverse party – has been incredibly informative and a unique opportunity.

My summer at LAF was very educational in two important respects. The first was learning what a lawyer actually does – how court cases work, what legal writing looks like in the real world, how to think about legal strategy, and other aspects of legal work. The second was learning about how the law can be such an important resource for people in poverty. Most of the individuals we worked with were facing situations that they could not solve on their own. By partnering with a lawyer or paralegal, however, their situation became more manageable. Even for the cases that we did not take, we were able to provide legal advice and sketch out possible solutions for the client. It was not always about making all of their problems go away, but about giving information and power to the client so that they could move forward. It is my goal to continue to be a partner to people who need this legal expertise. Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to begin.

Sincerely,

Rachel Zemke
Candidate for Juris Doctor 2016
The University of Chicago Law School



Equal justice starts here.

August 29, 2014

Mr. Dan Rubin
Executive Director
Equal Justice America
Building II, Suite 204
13450 East Boundary Road
Midlothian, VA 23112

Re: Rachel Zemke, LAF Summer Fellow 2014


Dear Mr. Rubin,

I am writing this letter evaluating Rachel Zemke's performance this summer in her Equal Justice fellowship. Rachel worked in our Consumer Law practice group, focusing on cases involving foreclosure, predatory lending, home repair fraud, and a variety of consumer debt issues.

As a first year student, Rachel performed a tremendous amount of valuable research for us, and was able to develop that research into useful briefs and pleadings. She also drafted practical litigation documents including subpoenas and motions and participated in direct client service as well. One unusual project Rachel did was to create a consumer education pamphlet called "Buying a Used Car." She adapted a lengthy booklet into a small brochure that provide will be used in community outreach and education for years to come. She completed each project quickly and with a high degree of writing skill.

Rachel is a good team player, demonstrated curiosity and asked good questions during our case acceptance meetings. She took assignments from no less than eight attorneys in the office, all of whom were pleased with her work. Rachel is clearly committed to public interest law and will make an excellent attorney and an asset to any organization she joins.

Sincerely,


Michelle A. Weinberg
Supervisory Attorney
312-347-8363