

November 1, 2010

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I wanted to thank you and Equal Justice America for providing me with summer funding this past summer. Your financial assistance and general support is greatly appreciated!

This summer I worked at the Southern Poverty Law Center's Immigrant Justice Project ("IJP") in Atlanta, GA. As an intern at IJP, I worked on cases representing immigrants and migrant workers. My experience was absolutely wonderful and life changing. I was able to work on cases ranging from wage and hour violations under FLSA to trafficking cases and civil rights cases addressing the racial profiling problem that is prevalent in the South. I mostly did legal research and writing, but I also had the opportunity to interview clients and witnesses, attend depositions, and participate in education outreach trips.

For example, the case that I was involved in most heavily was representing a young Latino who was pulled over by police for riding his bicycle on the sidewalk at a very busy intersection in a county with a 287(g) agreement. Although the young man had done nothing wrong, he was arrested, beaten by police (breaking his orbital bone, which required surgery), arrested for allegedly "obstructing justice," and soon thereafter placed on an ICE (immigration) detainer. I worked with my supervising attorneys to not only find and interview potential witnesses for his criminal case, but also to determine what the legal standard was to suppress evidence in an immigration proceeding and also to determine the best legal strategy for balancing the upcoming criminal, civil, and immigration proceedings. In sum, my time on this case exposed me to many of the overlaps in criminal and immigration law, and allowed me to develop my legal research and writing skills, English and Spanish interviewing skills, and case development skills.

My supervisors at IJP were absolutely phenomenal – they provided extremely helpful and timely feedback, they took their time to thoroughly answer all of my questions, they really went out of their way to create an inclusive and welcoming environment for me and the other legal interns, and they provided the most supportive learning environment I have yet experienced in any of my internships and most of my classrooms. I feel truly blessed to have been given the opportunity to work at IJP with some of the most dedicated and brilliant legal minds in the Immigrants' Rights field. I have rarely learned so much so quickly while still staying so thoroughly engaged.

The wonderful work environment, the fascinating and cutting-edge work, and the dedicated and supportive staff at IJP this summer made this my best legal internship to date. My commitment to public interest law is now stronger than ever.

My experience this summer rekindled my strong desire to pursue a public interest law career as well

as my love for the law as a tool that can be used to help the less privileged. Thank you so much for your support this summer. For students like me, who go to a law school where the vast majority of my peers pursue a “big law firm” career, knowing that that there is outside support for my chosen career path makes all the difference.

Sincerely

Roxana Mondragón