

August 14, 2016

Dear Mr. Ruben:

My Fellowship experience was a challenging and immersive look into the realities of so many individuals living in and around Chicago. This reality includes the difficulties in finding safe and affordable housing, and more importantly, being able to keep this housing long term.

My time at Lawyers' Committee for Better Housing (LCBH) introduced me to a wide variety of housing crises happening just a few blocks away from our offices and homes. For example, I met a client who found herself being evicted after nonpayment of rent due to a particularly slow time at her job. The woman had three children, and it was clear finding another affordable available unit in short notice with a potential eviction on her record would be a difficult task. In my fellowship, I helped LCBH in providing legal assistance to help the client navigate through the eviction proceeding, while LCBH's supportive services branch helped her in finding a new place to call home.

In another case, we helped to get a 21-year old client's record sealed following her compliance in an eviction proceeding. At court, I was able to witness the young woman's immense appreciation to LCBH for helping her through this difficult process, and smoothly transition her so that she is not followed by an eviction on her record for the rest of her life.

In another part of my fellowship, I assisted with the Tenants in Foreclosure Call Center. LCBH assists tenants in Chicago and some other parts of Cook County who find themselves renting in a building that is facing foreclosure. Although I have personally rented for the past 5 years of my life, I was personally unaware of the law laying out a tenant's rights and court procedures in these situations prior to my fellowship. The fact that I knew so little about the law before my fellowship made my phone calls with clients that much more real. When a client called in explaining their previous landlord had abandoned the property and utilities had been shut off, I now understood the feelings of anxiety and fear the client expressed. The legal rights of tenants are not always obvious or easily accessible. Although LCBH does a great job of explaining these rights on their website, there are still plenty of others who do not know how to find this information. Thus, it was a meaningful experience to have the opportunity to convey these rights to the

clients. For example, I could hear a sigh of relief when telling one particular client that while she and her husband were away for the weekend, her landlord had no legal right to change the locks and empty their things out in the street.

My fellowship this summer was not easy for me either in the substantive work I did or the emotions it brought out in me. I am so very thankful for the experience and hope to keep housing issues a part of my legal career. Thank you very much for supporting me in pursuing this great opportunity.

Sincerely,  
Taylor Grode

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Taylor Grode', written in a cursive style.

University of Chicago Law School  
Class of 2018



## Lawyers' Committee for Better Housing

August 30, 2016

Dan Ruben

Executive Director

Equal Justice America

Building II - Suite 204

13540 East Boundary Road

Midlothian, VA 23112

Re: Taylor Grode Fellowship at Lawyers' Committee for Better Housing

Dear Mr. Ruben:

It is my pleasure to write to you regarding Taylor Grode's fellowship, sponsored by Equal Justice America, during the Summer of 2016 at the Lawyers' Committee for Better Housing (LCBH).

LCBH's mission is to provide free legal and supportive services to improve housing stability for lower income renters while advocating for the rights of all renters until everyone in Chicago has a safe, decent, and affordable place to call home.

Taylor joined LCBH in June of this year, following her first year of law school at the University of Chicago. Taylor's intelligence and enthusiasm were apparent from the beginning of her internship. Her ability to catch on to concepts and analyze legal issues really stood out over the course of the summer.

Taylor excelled at interacting with clients and presenting their legal issues to the attorneys. She has the skills to develop a rapport with clients, understands how to ask the right questions, and can present the issues in an objective yet thorough manner. This made her an invaluable part of LCBH's intake and case acceptance process.

Taylor was eager to learn the substantive area of the law with respect to the rights of tenants in eviction and foreclosure. She confidently researched the law and prepared legal pleadings including complaints, requests for discovery and motions. She was also to participate in and observe various stages of litigation from demand letters to settlement and trial.

It was a pleasure and a privilege to have Taylor spend a summer at LCBH and we are grateful for the support of Equal Justice America to assist her in doing so.

Sincerely,

Melissa O. Picciola

Pro Bono Coordinator/Staff Attorney