

Dan Ruben  
Executive Director  
Equal Justice America

Dear Mr. Ruben:

Thank you very much for providing the funding that made my summer clerkship with Texas RioGrande Legal Aid possible. During my clerkship, I supported the Starr County Public Defender's Office and the Farm Worker team. It was an incredible experience where I learned a lot and developed a lifelong passion for legal aid work.

Over the course of my clerkship I supported several attorneys and completed a variety of assignments. They included:

- Drafting motions for discovery
- Drafting motions to suppress
- Drafting letter requesting medical and educational records
- Drafting subpoenas for video evidence
- Conducting legal research
- Writing short memos to supervising attorneys
- Consolidating main rules from case law for quick reference
- Researching effects of criminal history on government benefits eligibility

In addition to these day-to-day assignments, I observed both misdemeanor and felony court an average of two days a week. There, I conducted intakes for new clients during arraignment and shadowed the attorneys as they discussed a case with their client.

The pinnacle of my clerkship was supporting two attorneys during a felony jury trial. I conducted research to support their arguments, sat in on their prep, and translated body cam footage to aid in cross-examination. The jury rendered a not guilty verdict. The client, who maintained his innocence, had been facing a First-Degree Felony conviction and 5-99 years or life in prison. This trial altered the course of the client's life, and it was an incredible opportunity to be a part of that. Particularly since the client maintained his innocence, it was wonderful to support his legal team and ensure a not guilty verdict.

Again, thank you very much for the funding that made this summer clerkship possible. I greatly appreciate the opportunity to have had such a rewarding experience.

Sincerely,

Stephanie L. Dodge  
The University of Texas School of Law  
Class of 2019

# TRLA

Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, Inc.

## STARR COUNTY REGIONAL PUBLIC DEFENDER

310 E. Mirasoles Street, Rio Grande City, TX 78582

Ph: (956) 271-0712 Fax: (956) 263-1339 Toll Free: 1-888-545-3138

**ELIZABETH CASTILLO**  
Chief Public Defender  
ecastillo@trla.org

**LINDA L. GONZALEZ**  
First Assistant Public Defender  
lgonzalez@trla.org

**JESSICA ANDERSON**  
Public Defender  
janderson@trla.org

**RHIANNON HAMAM**  
Public Defender  
rhamam@trla.org

**ASHLEY WILLIAMS**  
Law Graduate  
awilliams@trla.org

**WILLIAM AHEE**  
Law Graduate  
wahee@trla.org

**CINDY RAMIREZ**  
Investigator  
cramirez@trla.org

**HENRY GUERRA**  
Investigator  
hguerra@trla.org

**CECILE ALANIS**  
Legal Secretary  
calanis@trla.org

**ABNER BURNETT**  
Director, Public Defender  
Program  
aburnett@trla.org

**HERIBERTO SILVA**  
Deputy Director, Public  
Defender Program  
hsilva@trla.org

October 2, 2017


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

RE: Clerkship Evaluation for STEPHANIE DODGE

Mr. Ruben,

I am writing this letter regarding the clerkship that Stephanie Dodge did with our office this past summer. I was surprised to learn that Stephanie had only completed her first year of law school when she came to our office. Stephanie comes across as very knowledgeable about the law at such an early stage of her education. Her work product is better than that of most law graduates (or attorneys for that matter) that I have come across. Stephanie helped the attorneys and support staff in our office with different assignments, including, but not limited to: drafting motions, legal research, requesting client records, client intake, legal translations, and even jury trial support. It was truly a pleasure having Stephanie work in our office, and sad to see her go. Stephanie would be a great asset to whichever organization or office is fortunate enough to have her work with them.

Sincerely,

  
Elizabeth Castillo