

August 31, 2015

Mr. Dan Ruben
Equal Justice America
13540 E Boundary Rd.
Midlothian, VA 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben,

My name is Julie Pasch and I am the Managing Attorney of the South Texas Pro Bono Asylum Representation Project (ProBAR), a project of the American Bar Association Commission on Immigration. ProBAR provides free legal services to immigrants detained at the Port Isabel Detention Center in Los Fresnos, Texas. We conduct a Legal Orientation Program for detainees, provide *pro se* support, and also sometimes provide direct representation before the Immigration Court.

Kristen Mishler, a rising 2L from the University of Minnesota Law School, served as an intern for our organization during the summer of 2015. Kristen's assignments included things like conducting intakes at the detention center, assisting *pro se* immigrants with completing applications for relief, researching conditions in the country of origin and assembling document submissions for the court, and assisting with *pro se* workshops to familiarize detainees with immigration court processes.

In addition, Kristen provided direct representation to a detainee from Somalia in his asylum hearing under my supervision. This included assisting the client in gathering documentation of the persecution he had faced in the past, working with him to craft a declaration as a vehicle for presenting his story to the court, researching country conditions in Somalia, briefing the legal arguments in support of the client's application for asylum, and drafting and practicing direct and cross-examination questions with him in advance of his hearing. At his hearing, Kristen was prepared with an opening and closing statements, potential re-direct questions, and rebuttal evidence should it have been necessary. Detained immigration court cases move very quickly in this part of the country, and Kristen was able to put the entire case together in less than four weeks.

During the ten weeks she interned with us, Kristen provided assistance to many detainees from a wide variety of countries and backgrounds. Her work allowed us to provide services to more people. In addition, the work she did provided detainees with a better opportunity to fully present their cases in court. The application assistance she provided helped detainees tell their stories clearly to the immigration judge in properly-written English, and the country conditions research she did equipped the immigration judge with relevant knowledge regarding the situations in their countries of origin. Though ProBAR cannot represent all (or even most) of the detainees at Port Isabel who cannot afford a lawyer, our goal is to empower and equip them to be the best advocates for themselves that they can be.

In addition, Kristen's direct representation client benefitted from the assistance of an attorney (or, in this case, a law student working under the guidance of an attorney) in presenting his case to the immigration judge. Analysis has shown that the single most important factor in determining whether an asylum-seeker will be able to remain in the United States is whether or not he is represented by counsel. Kristen's client received a full and fair hearing in immigration court, with a legal representative ensuring that he understood the process and that his rights were protected.

ProBAR enjoyed having Kristen as a summer intern, and both our organization and our clients benefitted significantly from her work. Thank you to Equal Justice America for providing financial support for Kristen to allow her to spend her summer with us. If you have any questions or if you would like additional information regarding the activities Kristen completed during her internship or ProBAR's work generally, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



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