

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I'd like to thank Equal Justice America for funding my clerkship at Disability Rights Texas. My experiences at DRTx were invaluable. I was able to learn from and observe some of the greatest legal minds in public interest law. The attorneys have encouraged me to continue in my pursuit to find a career that I love and that allows me to serve people.

Though I didn't get to interact with many clients, I did get to partner with the Legal Director to assist a client in completing her Advance Directive. My meeting with her was a little nerve-racking but thrilling, because it was real. I've read about individuals with disabilities and how their needs are met by organizations like DRTx, but to see the attorney-client interaction, to hear the Legal Director's effective and compassionate communication skills, and to feel with the client as she described the discrimination she faced due to her disability – the experience was visceral. Our client was already well read in the Advanced Directive, which is a document that a patient completes to inform her healthcare providers what she prefers in treatment in the event that she is incompetent to make decisions. She had experience with the directive before, and with doctors who would give her treatments that she knew would not serve her needs. Through tears she explained how the prison system mistreated her due to her disability, how the court found her incompetent to take care of her child, and how her physician didn't listen to her when she discussed specific medications. She had a working relationship with another attorney at DRTx to confront her issues. This client was a force to be reckoned with. She knew when her rights were infringed, and she took the proper legal measures to rectify her situation. I learned all of this while helping her read through a legal document that she already understood. She's a hero.

I was able to help her include concise language in her Advance Directive to ensure that her preferences were clear and unambiguous. I also looked up the law governing Advance Directives and explained the rights she had in the event that a physician did not follow her preferences. What was most important to our client was that I gave her a listening ear. She wanted to be heard. So I listened.

Through my experiences at Disability Rights Texas, I know that I'm committed to public service. I don't know if I will work in public interest law, but I will continue to interact with people with disabilities and learn about the ways I can help. I'm grateful to Disability Rights Texas and Equal Justice America for providing these experiences.

Sincerely,

Tempestt Moore  
University of Texas