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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I would like to thank you and Equal Justice America for the support you provided for my summer internship with the Legal Wellness Institute at the Family Center in New York this summer. As a member of the Family Center's team, I contributed to their work to provide civil legal services to low income families in New York affected by death, disability, or serious illness. With EJA's support, this internship made me see the appeal and promise of a career in civil legal services and pointed me in new directions for the work that I will do this year and after graduation.

During the two and a half months I spent at the Family Center, I provided support to attorneys working on cases in various stages of the litigation or application process. The cases I worked on included evictions, child support, guardianships, end-of-life planning, and applications for government benefits. Each case began with a call to the legal team's intake line, and the other interns and I were responsible for fielding those calls, gaining insight on the various issues our potential clients faced and presenting their cases to the full team for assignment or referral. If we took a case, I would attend the office visit, or where the client's condition required it, the home visit, and I was always encouraged by my attorneys to ask questions along with them. If we could not take the case. I researched referrals to minimize the burden on the potential client, or provided basic advice under the supervision of one of the attorneys. When the cases required substantial fact development or legal research, I was often responsible for gathering and synthesizing those materials. I also took the lead on drafting submissions to courts and administrative agencies, and helped the attorneys prepare for their appearances. In addition, I assisted the department in secondary source research necessary for a grant proposal. These experiences gave me the opportunity to work directly with clients and attorneys, and to understand the life of lawyer in civil legal services.

One of my biggest successes this summer was a motion to dismiss that I worked on in an eviction case. Our client faced eviction from her rent-controlled apartment, but the landlord, out of either ignorance of the law or hope that we wouldn't notice, had cut many corners in trying to get her out. I spent several days drafting and editing a motion that pointed out these procedural deficiencies, and eventually the attorney I was working with got the motion in front of the judge. The attorney asked me if I would like to argue the motion myself, and I began preparing to do that, but we soon got an email from opposing counsel—they agreed they had cut procedural corners and were withdrawing their case, at least for now!

I was also able to get a win for a client who needed government assistance to pay her rent. Although she generally had the ability to pay, some medical and financial issues had combined to create a situation that caused her to miss three months of rent and jeopardized her apartment. Working with a staff attorney, I visited this client, helped her reduce monthly expenses by eliminating recurring payments and bringing down some bills, and wrote a letter to the NYC Human Resources Administration asking for a "one-shot-deal" emergency rent payment. On my very last day in the office, the attorney told me HRA had approved our request, and our client was delighted to hear that we had gotten through to someone who could help her.

These experiences and many others like them made me see the ways that lawyers can use legal tools to create positive change in their clients' lives. I was grateful for the mentoring that Family Center's staff attorneys provided and for the trust they placed in me as we engaged in this important work. I am also immensely grateful to EJA for making this opportunity happen for me and for many other law students like me.

All the best,

Paul Leroux NYU Law '19



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Via Email

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

Re: Paul Leroux

To Whom this May Concern:

I am the Assistant Director of Legal Services at The Family Center, a multidisciplinary nonprofit organization in New York City serving those affected by serious illness, loss, and other crisis. I write to thank you for your generous support of Paul Leroux, who was an intern in our Legal Wellness Institute this summer.

The Family Center's Legal Wellness Institute (LWI) provides holistic civil legal representation to low income New Yorkers struggling with serious illness and life-limiting disabilities in the areas of housing law, family law, benefits and income maintenance, and end-of-life planning. As a legal intern, Paul assisted clients with cases in each of these areas and more. Below are just a few specific examples of the important work Paul did this summer under the supervision of LWI attorneys:

- For a case in which a landlord was seeking to evict a rent-controlled tenant, Paul researched and drafted a motion to dismiss that was filed in the NYC Housing Court Kings County. After receiving Paul's motion, the landlord's attorney withdrew the eviction petition.
- For a young man with cancer, Paul conducted significant research and wrote letters to the Social Security Administration relating to the amount of Supplemental Security Income that he was receiving, and spoke with the client on multiple occasions to explain how his living situation affected the amount of benefits he could receive.
- For a woman with a chronic illness who receives a public rental subsidy, Paul researched and drafted an informational letter regarding source-of-income housing discrimination.

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- Paul assisted a woman with breast cancer whose only income was Supplemental Security Income with an application to obtain emergency financial assistance for rent arrears. Because the woman was physically unable to travel, Paul met with her in her home. With Paul's assistance and an advocacy letter that he drafted, the application was approved and the arrears paid within days. Paul further worked with this client to reverse bank fees, reduce some monthly expenses, and establish a more realistic budget, so that she does not again fall behind on her rent.
- Paul worked closely with the mother of a 6-year-old girl with significant learning, behavioral, and intellectual disabilities. Paul assisted with appealing her daughter's denial of Supplemental Security Income benefits; obtaining medical, school, and other records; reviewing these records, and doing significant work on a written appeal brief.

In addition to working closely with these and other clients on myriad issues, Paul also conducted thorough phone intakes with callers seeking legal assistance; filed pleadings, motions, and other documents in Courts throughout all five boroughs of NYC; and much more.

As a small office, our legal interns like Paul make a huge difference in allowing us to represent more clients in need. Most importantly, Paul's work most definitely had a positive and lasting impact on the lives of the clients he served. So again, thank you for your generous support of Paul this summer.

Sincerely,

Caroline L. Bersak, Esq.

Assistant Director of Legal Services