

August 31st, 2014,

Re: Summer 2014 Equal Justice America Fellowship

Dear Dan Ruben:

Thank you so much for the Equal Justice America Fellowship!

I have now completed my 11-week internship at the Immigration and Human Rights Unit of Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS), where I worked with several clients from Guatemala, El Salvador, Ivory Cost, Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

All of my clients had suffered extreme harm and persecution in their country of origins. We worked on their claims for asylum, withholding and protection under Article III of the Convention Against Torture, as well as other immigration reliefs such as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA), and adjustment of status.

Among other things, I worked principally on cases that requested a Motion to Reopen. I had to find new evidence based on changed country conditions, collected new affidavits and the testimony of an international human rights expert. The two clients, whose story touched me the most, were both indigenous women from Guatemala who had been sexually abused by the military in their pre-teen age, and were deeply traumatized.

My first client was denied asylum and withholding by the Immigration Court and the Board of Immigration Appeals, although the judge had found her testimony credible and recognized exceptional circumstances to the one-year filing deadline for asylum. We worked on a Motion to Reopen, and asked asylum based on the level of persecution she had suffered as a child because of her race and particular social group.

My second client had missed her immigration hearing and was ordered removed in absentia, because of her abusive ex-partner. Here again, we worked on finding new evidence that will compel the Board of Immigration Appeals to reopen her case for asylum, withholding, and protection under the Convention Against Torture.

Overall I believe I have tremendously benefited from my experience at GBLS Immigration Unit. It meant a lot to me to provide direct representation to indigent and vulnerable people that came to the office. Most of them were asylum seekers, but there were also a lot of immigrant children and victims of domestic violence. All these people would not have been able to receive legal assistance and representation without the dedicated work of GBLS staff and attorneys. That experience has definitely strengthened my ambition to pursue a legal career in immigration law and international human rights to help the underserved and most vulnerable populations.

Thank you again for your support,
Sincerely,

Julie Gharagouzloo

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