

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America

Dear Mr. Ruben,

This summer I interned with the ACLU of Maryland due to the help of the Equal Justice America Fellowship. My experience this summer was invaluable and I am forever grateful to the ACLU and EJA for making it possible.

This summer I worked on a variety of cases which all allowed me to make a difference in the state of Maryland. The first case I worked on this summer was an education equity case to allocate more money to the Baltimore City Public Schools System in *Bradford v. Maryland*. I did not get to directly work with the plaintiffs in the case as it was being appealed from the lower court, but I knew the work I was doing could positively impact the lives of thousands of impoverished children in Baltimore. To contribute to the case, I was tasked with researching legal topics such as the use of the political question doctrine in the state of Maryland. This work allowed me to greatly improve my legal research and writing skills and I am now leaving the summer feeling much more confident in my abilities.

The next project I worked on was a voting rights case in Wicomico County, Maryland. In Wicomico County, they currently have a hybrid electoral system where there are five single-member districts and two at-large positions. Because of this system, no more than one African American has ever sat on the county board in all of its history. For this case, I was tasked with community outreach so I was able to talk to community leaders and members about their thoughts on challenging the current system to have more representation on the board. It was inspiring to see how supportive and ready the community was to challenge the longstanding system. One individual I was able to talk to was Dr. Eddie Boyd. He is a well-known community leader and activist who served on the Wicomico County School Board, where he was often the only Black member and fought against the recent change in their election system to mimic the Wicomico County Board. Dr. Boyd has worked with the ACLU in the past on voting rights issues and despite being retired now was just as willing to join the fight and be a plaintiff for the case. Being able to directly work with people like Dr. Boyd has reminded me why I decided to go to law school because while there are still many civil rights issues in the Black community, there's always a community behind you ready to fight for the rights we as a community deserve.

I want to again thank you and Equal Justice America for the fellowship sponsorship. Without your help, I would not have been able to both help the community I love and feel financially secure this summer.

Sincerely,

Jasmine Williams