

Benjamin Postone

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Dear Mr. Ruben,

I want to write to express my gratitude for the opportunity to be an Equal Justice America Fellow this past summer. It provided me a deeply meaningful experience and allowed me to have a real impact in the lives of marginalized people. This summer I worked at the Public Interest Law Center in Philadelphia, a legal non-profit that employ impact litigation to advance civil rights in a number of areas from education to housing to voting rights.

This summer I was able to work in a number of different practice areas that all addressed critical areas impacting poor and underserved communities. I began the summer by working on the early stages of a case that would increase access to educational services for people living with intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDDs). Part of that work involved engaging frequently with the parents of a student with IDD. Hearing from them how much this would improve the life of their child cemented the importance of the work I was doing, which EJA made a possibility.

A great advantage of working at a smaller legal organization like the Public Interest Law Center is the range of issues I was exposed to. Not only did I work on issues around access to disability rights but I also worked on environmental justice issues, educational funding equity, and housing rights. It was a great privilege to be able to engage with such varied areas of law and explore for myself where I might envision having a career in the future.

The range of work I was able to do extended beyond the kind of litigation often associated with Public Interest institutions. The Public Interest Law Center also housed an Renters Right's organization and provided legal services as well as supporting their organizing

efforts. One of the ways that I was able to be a resource for that effort was in the Renter's Right's Clinics held every month by the organization. These clinics were opportunities for members involved in the effort to come together and support one another as well as learn about their rights from attorneys. We met with some of the members one-on-one in order to hear their circumstances and offer suggestions for ways to ameliorate the often deplorable conditions that they faced. Sometimes these remedies were legal, but often the law did not offer an avenue for redress and so we would direct them to organizing with community as the more effective means of seeking justice. That kind of broad, dynamic, expansive legal work is something I am very excited about and not the kind of thing that is accessible universally. In fact, I had not been aware of the possibility before I worked as an EJA fellow this summer. These are just some of the ways that I benefitted enormously from being able to work in a public interest position this summer. Something I would not have been able to do had it not been for the support of Equal Justice America. I have enormous gratitude for that opportunity and the lessons it afforded me.

Warm Regards,

Benjamin Postone