

Allen Love  
August 23, 2016

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

Dear Dan Ruben,

From May 23, 2016, to August 12, 2016, I worked as an intern at the Harvard Legal Services Center in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts. Within the Legal Services Center, I worked at the Veterans Legal Clinic. I worked with low-income veterans on their claims for legal benefits from state and federal programs and on discharge upgrade cases.

Oftentimes news outlets will report on the incredibly long wait times for veterans in processing their claims to the Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA). The VA is experiencing a heavy backlog of claims, which end up with cases that take years to appeal. This summer I worked with clients whose case had lasted for several years and still was not resolved. There was a mix of passion, frustration, and desperation as we attempted one legal maneuver after another to bring about a beneficial conclusion to their case. Working with my client taught me a lesson about hope. As legal counsel, I found that it was up to me to continue to reassure my clients to not give up on the process no matter how many obstacles appeared before us. It was important to convey that a favorable result was not out of reach. I learned that it is the responsibility of a lawyer to inspire hope.

The other lesson I learned was about perspective. While at the clinic, I worked on a discharge upgrade case that involved researching heavily into the story of my client. When a service member is discharged from the military, their service is given a characterization such as "Honorable", "Other than Honorable", "Dishonorable," and so on to show how well they performed. However, modern medical research now reveals many conditions that the military did not recognize 30 years ago. The best example of this is the current understanding and knowledge of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) which has greatly developed in the last couple of decades. It was my job to write a memorandum of support for a discharge upgrade that told the complete story of my client and show that actions that led to my client's discharge were not by choice but heavily influenced by PTSD. I had to research every part of my client's life to be able to present my client's perspective and humanize my client in a way that is not shown in my client's military record. Knowing the perspective of a client is essential for proper advocacy.

Overall, the experience with working with clients in need to get proper benefits and services was an incredibly rewarding experience. I learned a lot about how to be a lawyer as well as how to be an advocate for those in need. I saw the best and worst sides of administrative programs that go far in impacting my clients. But most rewarding of all was learning the stories of each veteran and being able to give back to those who have already given so much for their country. Working at the Harvard Legal Services Center was an incredibly rewarding experience that far exceeded my expectations. The lessons I learned will stick with me for the rest of my legal experience.

Sincerely,

Allen Love  
Cornell Law School  
J.D. Class of 2018



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August 31, 2016

Dan Ruben  
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Midlothian, VA 23112  
Via electronic mail: [Dan@EqualJusticeAmerica.org](mailto:Dan@EqualJusticeAmerica.org)

RE: Internship Evaluation for Allen Love

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I am pleased to share the following evaluation for Allen Love, who completed a summer internship with the Veterans Legal Clinic at the Legal Services Center of Harvard Law School from May through August 2016. The Clinic provides free legal representation to veterans and their family members in a range of veterans and military law matters.

Allen provided assistance on a variety of different legal cases during his internship, including state and federal veterans benefits appeals and a discharge upgrade case. His tasks included conducting phone and in-person meetings with clients, drafting correspondence, conducting legal research, and drafting legal memoranda and briefs. He attended an administrative appeal hearing and community events relevant to veterans law, including a public hearing about proposed regulatory changes to the state veterans benefits program.

Allen exhibited a number of strengths as a developing lawyer. He exhibited strong legal writing skills—he was able to formulate direct and clear legal arguments and communicate complex ideas in a very organized way. Allen carefully and deliberately thought through potential arguments, weighed which arguments were most persuasive, and was willing to set aside his ideas if they proved to not be compelling. He was very diligent in completing assignments and seeking supervision and guidance at appropriate times.

Notably, despite being a law student, Allen wasn't afraid to take initiative when needed. For example, while working to gather statements of support from fellow servicemembers for a veteran client seeking a discharge upgrade, Allen cold-called (or cold-emailed) three servicemembers, explained his goals and gained their trust, and then worked with them to produce a strong letter of support for our client. Moreover, when obtaining medical records of a deceased veteran for a VA case turned out to require filing paperwork in probate court, Allen

researched the probate court procedures and consulted with other staff and interns to determine the most efficient path forward.

Most importantly, Allen was thoughtful and conscientious in his interactions with clients, staff, and his fellow interns. Clients commented positively on his kind demeanor and professionalism. He treated clients with respect and dignity, even when client's mental health issues or other situations make interactions challenging. He helped to make a positive difference in our clients' lives and achieve meaningful solutions to their legal issues.

It was truly a pleasure working with him this summer. I look forward to seeing Allen gain further confidence in his skills and have more opportunities to act as an advocate. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide any additional information about Allen's superb work during his internship. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Betsy Gwin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "B" and a long, sweeping underline.

Betsy Gwin, Esq.  
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