

Monday, September 22, 14

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

Re: Closing Letter for Equal Justice America Fellowship

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I hope that this letter finds you well. This summer, I served as an Equal Justice America Fellow with the Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago (a.k.a., LAF). As a Fellow, AmeriCorps JD member, PILI intern at LAF this summer, I was assigned to help clients in their pursuits in acquiring or maintaining access to public benefits (e.g., Social Security Disability Income (SSDI), Supplemental Security income, and Medicaid prescription coverage). The wide range of issues that I saw, the type of correspondence I drafted and mailed, and the interviews I had with clients were so variable that this summer was the most profitable and educational experience I have had in law school.

I received assignments from several attorneys at LAF and served at least 14 individuals in both brief and representative capacities. Most of the cases on which I worked could not have been resolved or were not resolved by an Administrative Law Judge's final decision by the time I left. I followed-up with medical centers to acquire clients' medical records, summarized and categorized clients' medical conditions, drafted arguments, strategized with my supervisors, and wrote numerous pieces of correspondence with the Social Security Administration and Illinois Department of Human Services. In my time at LAF, I helped clients secure approximately \$1,200 in Medicaid benefits, approximately \$3,300 in SSDI, and \$4,300 in back-wages for an active-duty reservist in the Illinois National Guard.

Throughout the summer, I worked on a client's disability appeal before the SSA's Office of Disability Adjudication and Review. Before, our client's case was denied on initial determination and reconsideration. Because of his terminal condition, it was imperative to draft a comprehensive brief of his medical condition to indicate why and how he could not work, such that he was entitled to Social Security Income. Because I was not his appointed-representative, I could not submit the brief in support of his case. By ghost-writing it, I gave my supervisor the tools and information necessary to bring an expedient resolution to his case so that he could begin to draw benefits before this terminal condition took him too far.

Another success story is when I drafted a demand letter for an active-duty reservist in our state's National Guard. His employer discriminated against him by firing him when he was called to active duty. Using our state's service-member employment protection act, I researched the relevant statutory provisions and drafted a demand letter to his former employer, demanding immediate reinstatement, lost-wages, and earned-wages that were not yet paid. Our client received each and every condition in his favor after my supervisor sent the letter I drafted. Although this letter was submitted with me as a ghost-writer (like the situation above), I gave my

supervisor and LAF the means of getting this client's legal-services done effectively and efficiently, and helped secure thousands of dollars for that service-member. I cannot say with adequate words how happy I was to have been an integral part of getting justice for him.

Last summer, I was a judicial extern in the Circuit Court of Cook County, here in Chicago. Although I was still performing a public good by working as a judge's *de facto* law clerk, it does not begin to compare with my recent and prolonged exposure to poverty-law, the public interest, nor needy persons. The Fellowship has given me the best experiential and legal tools to better represent these persons in my future legal career. I thank you, Mr. Ruben, for allowing me to be a member of this fellowship program and for helping me to expose myself to the public's issues.

Very sincerely,

Daniel N. Robbin
The John Marshall Law School
Juris Doctor Candidate, Spring 2015