

Dear Mr. Dan Ruben,

I am writing to thank you and the Equal Justice America for awarding me a 2014 Summer Fellowship. The fellowship made my summer placement at the New Orleans Workers' Center for Racial Justice (WCRJ) possible. Being an EJA Summer Fellow at WCRJ exposed me to low wage workers in a variety of settings struggling with both abusive employers and racial profiling.

As one short anecdote, I spent the first few weeks of my summer taking declarations from H-2B workers who—after taking out large loans in their home country to work for an American company and weeks of working as condominium cleaners—received no pay and were housed in overcrowded and unfurnished apartments for which they had to pay rent. This had the effect of workers receiving negative or zero dollar paychecks. Further, there was no reliable public transportation in this small beach-resort town, leaving these guest workers dependent on their employer for transportation, without money for food, and sleeping on the floor. They eventually went on a wildcat strike, refusing to work without pay. Their boss acquiesced and paid them but not without threatening that if any strike activity were to happen again, not only would the workers be terminated, but they would be arrested and deported. The workers organized to challenge this blatant, all too common abuse of power by guest worker employers, building a public campaign that resulted in a Department of Labor investigation. I had the privilege to work closely with four of these workers, helping them put together the best possible application for U-visas, which, if granted, would allow these workers the status stability and employment authorization they were initially promised but never granted.

The EJA Summer Fellowship additionally afforded me the opportunity to visit and interview clients in Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention facilities and even to support on-going community organizing efforts to build meaningful access to the “New New Orleans,” post-Katrina economy. Through this work I connected with innovative, dynamic, social movement-driven attorneys.

I would like to thank you again for awarding me a 2014 Equal Justice America Summer Fellowship—what a privilege.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Han Lu". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Han Lu  
UCLA School of Law, Class of 2016