

August 17, 2015

Dan Ruben  
Equal Justice America  
13540 East Boundary Rd., Bld. II, St. 204  
Midlothian, VA 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben,

This summer I interned at the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund in its San Antonio, Texas office. I was interested in interning there because of MALDEF's work in voting rights, education, employment discrimination, and immigrants rights. MALDEF does both policy work and impact litigation. MALDEF does not provide direct representation, so I did not directly serve any clients.

My project for the summer was researching the history of voting rights and apportionment in Texas since 1836 when this state was a republic. This research is in support of an amicus brief to the United States Supreme Court in *Evenwel v. Abbott*, a case that challenges how Texas apportions senatorial districts. Currently, both the Texas House and Senate are apportioned based on total population. However, before 1980, Texas senatorial districts were apportioned based on "qualified electors." The definition of "qualified electors" has changed throughout history; at one time it meant white men, and at another it meant poll-tax payers. The plaintiffs are voters who live in districts that have a higher percentage of citizen voting-age population, or eligible voters. They argue that their votes count less than those of people who live in districts with smaller populations of eligible voters. The plaintiffs are backed by the Project on Fair Representation, the organization that brought *Fisher v. University of Texas*.

If the Court were to rule in favor of the plaintiffs, areas with more diversity and with more children, like cities and the United States-Mexico border, would lose representation and power would shift to the rural parts of Texas. Districts may vary by 300,000 in total population in order to maintain roughly equivalent populations of eligible voters. This case could have implications for how all states apportion their state house and senatorial districts.

The majority of my research focused on how past constitutions and legislation defined "qualified electors" and how legislation apportioned house and senatorial districts. As part of my research, I went to the Texas Capitol's Legislative Research Library. I looked through proposed redistricting maps and materials relating to Texas' redistricting lawsuits. I was allowed access to the part of the library that is closed to the general public! I also researched redistricting cases involving Texas and other jurisdictions. I am happy and excited that I had the opportunity to work on the foundation for something that will be at the Supreme Court!

Sincerely,



Hannah Alexander  
J.D. Candidate 2016  
The University of Texas School of Law



# MALDEF

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Equal Justice America  
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RE: Hannah Alexander, Internship Evaluation

Dear Ms. Toman,

I write with regard to the evaluation requirement for the internship that Hannah Alexander completed with MALDEF between May and August of this year. Hannah was a hard worker and had an excellent attitude while interning at MALDEF. MALDEF sets a high bar for its interns in terms of the quality of work expected from them. Hannah met and exceeded those expectations.

During her full-time, summer-long internship, Hannah took on assignments that touched on almost all areas in which the MALDEF Southwest Regional Office works, including legislative advocacy and litigation in the areas of education, immigrants' rights, and political access (voting rights). She was always eager to take on new assignments, ranging from deep, archival legal research for an amicus brief to the United States Supreme Court to analysis of voluminous data produced in discovery in preparation for a voting rights trial.

Hannah always maintained a friendly and professional attitude around the office. She matched her collegial temperament with her work. She was always willing to balance her own assignments with aiding other interns with their assignments. She also displayed genuine interest in public interest legal work.

It is not easy to find interns like Hannah. We usually receive good interns during the summer, but Hannah was an exceptionally great one. If you need additional information, please feel free to contact me at 210-224-5476 ext. 208 or by email at [eherrera@maldef.org](mailto:eherrera@maldef.org).

Sincerely,

Ernest Herrera

Staff Attorney *Advancing Latino Civil Rights for over 40 Years*

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