

May 20, 2014

Equal Justice America
Building II – Suite 204
13540 East Boundary Road
Midlothian, VA 23112

Dear Equal Justice America,

I again appreciate your support of my experience at New Hampshire Legal Assistance (NHLA). This semester was a continuation of my fall semester experience with NHLA, and my working relationship with my supervising attorney, Elliott Berry, continued to flourish as I picked his legal mind for all the wisdom that he has accumulated throughout the years. During this semester, I learned that Attorney Berry is responsible for much of the progressive housing law in New Hampshire, having written much of the legislation and made much of the case law surrounding his work in housing. I am humbled to have been able to work with such a credentialed attorney.

Regarding the clients I served this semester, I am particularly impressed by the willpower and fortitude of a client I met yesterday at a Local Welfare Fair Hearing in Bethlehem, New Hampshire. At first sight, he was a somewhat disheveled-looking man, wearing an old, ratty sweatshirt and worn blue jeans, but when he was called as a witness halfway through his 90-minute hearing, I developed an intense respect of him as he recounted the financial challenges he had endured in the past year. These challenges had brought him into \$1500 of debt to the Public Service of New Hampshire (PSNH), the state's electric supplier, for 8 months of unpaid bills from October 2013 through April 2014.

With great restraint, I observed the hearing officials—laymen such as an administrative assistant and other office staff—interrogate this poor (literally!) man about his financial situation and habits. Our client had come upon hard times due to health complications beyond his control that required anal

surgery, as he candidly admitted to the “tribunal,” and previous to his deterioration, he had worked at the New Hampshire Housing and Finance Authority and administered Section 8 affordable housing programs. It grated on my nerves that such a capable man was being bulldozed by hearing officers who had failed to properly compute his income, having double-counted his Social Security payments when they added his monthly Social Security award to the contents of his bank account which was itself only holding past months of Social Security disbursements.

This experience has reinforced my determination to serve oppressed populations. While I may not be successful with every case I take on, at least I will be giving voice to those who would otherwise be trampled by unscrupulous individuals.

Thank you again for supporting me during this experience. I truly appreciate the help.

Regards,

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