

JILLIAN M. SOMERS

August 31, 2007

Mr. Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America

Dear Mr. Ruben:

After working for the Battered Women's Legal Advocacy Project (BWLAP) during the summer of 2007, I am committed to providing victim-survivors and their advocates with legal resources. Working for BWLAP was an eye-opening experience regarding domestic violence, the laws that relate to this violence and the public perception of victim-survivors. Most intriguing were the numerous different areas of law I was asked to research during the course of the summer. Being able to learn about family, immigration and criminal law and how they relate to domestic violence provided for an amazing learning experience.

Additionally, seeing the number of legal concerns victim-survivors must navigate in trying to leave their abusive situation – especially if children are involved in the relationship – was shocking. It is especially shocking when you consider that many of these victims will be destitute once they leave the relationship and may have little opportunity to consult with counsel. Being able to assist BWLAP was a personal triumph and provided extensive research and resources for victims, their advocates and the legal system in the state of Minnesota.

During my summer clerkship with BWLAP, I was fortunate to be assigned a variety of legal tasks. One of my principal projects involved researching, summarizing and editing a chapter on new immigration case law for the program's New Laws Training. The New Laws training is open to staff at Minnesota battered women's shelters, other battered women's advocates, members of law enforcement, and attorneys throughout the state. The materials created are handed out during the training and provide updates on pertinent state and federal laws. Additionally, the packets include information on tech safety and the criminal process. While writing the immigration section for this packet, I was extensively immersed in immigration law and learned many of the processes, problems and procedures involved in immigrating to the United States and attempting to become a United States Citizen.

In addition to working on materials for the New Laws training, I researched and wrote a section for a motion to quash a subpoena regarding the prohibition on using subpoenas *duces tecum* as tools to mount general fishing expeditions. This was an exciting opportunity because it allowed for a broader freedom in putting together arguments from the pertinent case law. The section I wrote will be used in BWLAP's motion to quash subpoenas *duces tecum*. BWLAP has been called upon to file a motion to quash a subpoena in situations where the records of battered women's shelters have been subpoenaed. BWLAP has arguments set out in case this situation arises in the future. Adding to the effectiveness of this motion was an exciting assignment. While at BWLAP I also created training materials for Family Law, Immigration and Subpoena workshops. Finally, I had the great fortune to be given the opportunity to research sections for an amicus brief BWLAP was deliberating submitting for a criminal appeal. It will be exciting to speak with my co-workers at BWLAP to determine if they decided to file the amicus brief for which I conducted some of the research.

Overall, my summer working for BWLAP provided a wonderful and educational experience. My co-workers were delightful people with a deep-seated commitment to the people and the cause they have chosen

to serve. I wish BWLAP the best of luck in their endeavors on behalf of battered women, their advocates and the legal system in Minnesota. I look forward to maintaining contact with my co-workers and assisting them in the future if needed. Without the assistance of Equal Justice America (EJA) this opportunity would not have been possible. I thank EJA profusely for this opportunity and wish all other awardees a similarly rewarding summer experience.

Thank you,



Jillian M. Somers
UC Hastings College of the Law
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