



PUBLIC INTEREST LAW
CENTER OF PHILADELPHIA

AFFILIATED WITH THE LAWYERS COMMITTEE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS UNDER LAW

August 8, 2014

VIA EMAIL

STAFF Katie Toman

Equal Justice America

Jennifer R. Clarke
Executive Director

katie@equaljusticeamerica.org

Amy Laura Cahn
Staff Attorney

Dear Ms. Toman:

Michael Churchill
Of Counsel

As Laura R. Smith's supervisor, I am pleased to submit this end-of-summer evaluation of her performance as an Equal Justice America Summer Fellow at the Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia.

Benjamin D. Geffen
Staff Attorney

PILCOP attracts interns of an unusually high caliber, and even within this high-achieving group, Laura stood out for her productivity, independence, and versatility. To give one example, our office is preparing to file a major lawsuit concerning Pennsylvania's system for funding public schools, and Laura completed numerous legal and factual research projects for this case. She was responsive to requests and suggestions, required minimal oversight, and she was meticulous in her research and writing. Her work has been extremely helpful to this effort.

Sonja D. Kerr
Director, Disabilities Rights Project

Jason Fortenberry
Staff Attorney

Edwin D. Wolf
Executive Director
1974-1976

Another example: a bill introduced in the state legislature would have temporarily allowed hundreds of thousands of uninsured Pennsylvanians to access healthcare. Laura researched the bill and its legal implications, demonstrating her skills at legal analysis, and then drafted an op-ed that was published in two major Pennsylvania newspapers, demonstrating her skills at public advocacy.

A third example: Laura went with me to meet with a group of Hispanic tenants who believed their landlord was discriminating against them on the basis of national origin. Laura not only acted as a flawless Spanish interpreter, but also demonstrated a deft human touch with people nervous about eviction and retaliation. Laura had no previous exposure to housing law, but quickly figured out the relevant laws and how they applied (or not) to the various tenants' experiences.

Laura will excel as an attorney. Her commitment to working in the public interest is manifest, as are her talents at research, writing, and advocacy. She contributed a great deal to the substantive work of the organization and was a pleasure to have around. We miss her already.

Sincerely,

Ben Geffen
Staff Attorney