

Dear Mr. Ruben,

This summer I worked as a law clerk with the Community Development Project at Public Counsel, a public interest law firm in Los Angeles. Most of the work I did was focused on promoting the development and preservation of affordable housing in the Los Angeles area. Working at Public Counsel was an incredible experience. The work I did was very rewarding both personally and professionally. I was able to assist nonprofit organizations and community groups in the fight to prevent displacement and provide housing for low income people, while developing substantive legal skills through the research and writing I did throughout the summer.

A lot of the work I did was for a nonprofit client that provides affordable housing, education and supportive services to low-income people. I conducted research and wrote memorandums that will hopefully help the client continue providing vital services while remaining in compliance with federal and state law, and conditions imposed by the organization's funders. One of the services that the client provides is transitional housing for the recently homeless. The transitional housing is partially funded by HUD's Continuum of Care program, and the client was confused about the minimum and maximum lengths of stay it could impose in transitional facilities under HUD's regulations, and other relevant laws. I wrote a memo advising the client on what the allowable minimums and maximums are so that it can structure its program rules and lease agreements to provide transitional housing to people who need it most, while helping others move to permanent supportive housing facilities. The same nonprofit client is based in a specific neighborhood of Los Angeles, and is interested in targeting its services to members of that community. I did research and wrote another memo analyzing whether or not a local neighborhood residency preference for people on the client's waitlist for housing would run afoul of any state and federal fair housing laws. The work I did for nonprofit clients was very rewarding because the organizations I assisted provide very important services to people in need. This work also helped me hone my research skills, and become a better legal writer.

I also had the opportunity to work with local community groups to advocate for land use laws that promote affordability and discourage displacement as developers build expensive new housing in historically low-income neighborhoods of Los Angeles. Throughout the summer I met with members of a coalition of community organizations in south Los Angeles dedicated to preventing displacement. I took part in discussions about how the coalition could best achieve its goals, and conducted research to help the group advocate for land use laws that prevent displacement.

These experiences, among others I had at Public Counsel this summer, were invaluable and helped me develop both as a future attorney and as a person. I am very grateful for the funding I received from Equal Justice America, and I commend the work that your organization does to create opportunities for law students interested in using their educations to assist those in need.

Sincerely,

Lee A. Kaplan  
UCLA School of Law, Class of 2016



THE PUBLIC INTEREST LAW OFFICE OF THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY AND BEVERLY HILLS BAR ASSOCIATIONS  
The Southern California Affiliate of The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law

August 15, 2014

Dan Ruben  
Equal Justice America

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I write to express our appreciation for Equal Justice America's generous support of Lee Kaplan.

Lee was a Summer Law Clerk in the Community Development Project at Public Counsel for ten weeks this summer. Public Counsel is the nation's largest pro bono law firm of its kind, with a 40 year track record of fighting for the rights of low-income families, children and youth, veterans, and nonprofit organizations and small businesses in Los Angeles. Public Counsel's Community Development Project maintains a specific focus on preserving and expanding affordable housing and economic development opportunities in low-income communities.

Over the course of the summer, Lee proved to be a very valuable and capable member of our team. From the first day, Lee showed impressive knowledge, and more importantly, the initiative and dedication to his work that allowed him to make tremendous contributions.

Lee wrote an excellent memo analyzing a very complex and evolving area of law. This work product will support and enhance the capacity of a non-profit affordable housing developer to continue to provide crucial services and resources to low-income families. In addition, Lee provided important research and analysis to support a broad coalition of community based organizations working to improve housing and economic opportunities for low-income residents through the land use regulatory process. Lee's grasp of complex land use issues was extremely impressive, and his passion for the work was contagious. These are just two highlights of a larger, impressive body of work that Lee produced over the summer.

Lee was a pleasure to work with and his presence was vital to our ability to serve our clients. We are thrilled that he was able to join us as a Summer Law Clerk and we are very grateful for the support from Equal Justice America.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doug Smith", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Doug Smith  
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