

August 5, 2013

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America
13540 East Boundary Road
Building II, Suite 204
Midlothian, VA 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben:

My experience as an Equal Justice America fellow this summer has been extremely educational and interesting. As an intern at the Equal Justice Center in Dallas Texas, I learned so much about employment law and economic justice for low-wage workers and I emerge from this experience a more determined law student set on a career in employment law and working with low wage workers to ensure that they achieve and maintain justice in the workplace.

As the only intern in the Equal Justice Center's Dallas office, I worked closely with most all cases the attorney, Michael Cowles, had on his docket. In addition, I worked with new clients and callers who had cases and were seeking assistance or knowledge of their rights. I found this close work with clients as well as my deep involvement in the ongoing litigation extremely educational and gratifying.

Two of the first cases I began to work on during my summer were domestic worker cases. In both instances, these Mexican immigrant women were hired by families to work within their private homes and were severely taken advantage of. One woman was brought over on a B-1 visa for employees, promised the minimum wage, overtime, and other benefits from the family, and was overworked and underpaid throughout the three years she spent with them. Our client worked about 12 hour days throughout, but was paid for only about 8 hours per day and did not receive the overtime she was promised in her employment contract. I met our client on my first day at the Equal Justice Center when she came in to prepare for her deposition the following day. I heard her story through her own words and saw the empowerment she received from having recourse in the law that could potentially win her what was rightfully hers. I observed her deposition and was impressed with her ability to tell her story throughout such an intimidating process, and with her former employers present in the room.

Our other domestic worker client worked in a family's private home for a couple of years, during which she was denied the minimum wage, forced to work long, hard hours, and subjected to verbal abuse and other forms of negative treatment by her employers. At the end of her employment, the family kicked her out of their home and she became homeless and without family with whom to stay. When I first met our client, she was living at different shelters and trying to find permanent employment.

As the daughter of a former live-in domestic worker and having worked extensively with immigrants, these cases were of particular interest to me and I thoroughly enjoyed my work with these two clients. At various points throughout my summer, I was tasked with making phone calls to the clients, interviewing them for affidavits, communicating with them in drafting responses to discovery requests, getting them set up with rent assistance and other benefits, and more. In addition, I conducted extensive legal research regarding different issues in their cases, and worked at length on a Motion for Summary Judgment in one of the women's cases. I found my work with these clients extremely educational and fulfilling. Giving domestic workers who are in such a vulnerable position by the nature of their work tools

and education about their rights with their employers is very gratifying and important. I hope to work with domestic workers in the future.

I also worked extensively on a collective action case that we brought against an organization that hired ex-convicts to complete highway litter pick-up and other janitorial work. Despite working 11 or 12 hour days regularly, the employees were paid for only 6 or 7 hours of work, placing their regular rate of pay well under the statutory minimum and violating overtime provisions of the FLSA. These clients were owed well over one million dollars in total and were taken advantage of because of their vulnerable status as ex-convicts with minimal employment opportunities. For this case, I prepared damage models, spoke at length with clients about their work with the company to best calculate the money they were owed, conducted legal research, and attended, helped at, and presented my damage models at the mediation that ultimately settled the case. My work with these clients who, by nature of their past criminal history, were forced to settle for jobs that severely underpaid and took advantage of them, sparked my interest in expungement work and advocating for ex-convicts in the employment sector.

Throughout my summer with the Equal Justice Center, I was also involved in and observed a number of oral depositions of clients and defendants, observed an arbitration, and attended the all day mediation as mentioned above. I conducted intake with a number of clients and evaluated with our attorneys in Dallas and Austin whether we could take these new cases. I drafted memos regarding a number of legal issues that came up in these cases, and underwent a three-day training in the organization headquarters in Austin as well as almost weekly classes on various topics pertaining to employment law.

I am very lucky to have worked at such a great organization that does such fantastic work where I was able to take part in such a wide variety of projects and complete such an array of assignments that taught me more than I ever thought possible in one summer. I was also grateful for the opportunity to observe and participate in so many different aspects of the legal process and come out of this summer a better-prepared law student dedicated to a career in employment law for low wage workers post graduation.

I would also like to thank the Equal Justice America Fellowship for making this summer internship possible for me. I truly appreciate it.

Sincerely,

Megan McCormick

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Dear Mr. Ruben,

I am writing this evaluation letter with regard to Megan McCormick, our summer intern, and an Equal Justice America grant recipient. It was absolutely a pleasure to have Megan with us for the summer, and I can say that the Equal Justice Center (EJC) benefited a great deal from her presence.

The EJC is a nonprofit dedicated to fighting for worker rights for low-wage workers around the state of Texas. We represent all workers, regardless of immigration status, in employment claims, and specialize in wage and hour claims by workers cheated by their employers.

As a former EJA grant recipient myself, I know how important this funding is to allow students to pursue work that they are passionate about for organizations focused on social justice issues such as ours that wouldn't otherwise be able to support them. I also know the responsibility that comes with being fortunate enough to receive funding to do this important work. I can say very comfortably that Megan more than lived up to her responsibility and that your organization can be proud to fund such a smart, motivated and talented young student. We asked Megan to do a variety of tasks in aiding our litigation docket. From strategizing and drafting a Motion for Summary Judgment, to investigating a number of important claims of clients and would be clients, to researching and writing on a myriad of complex legal issues, Megan consistently rose to the occasion and did amazing work.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions about Megan's work with us.

Sincerely,

Michael O'Keefe Cowles
Attorney
Equal Justice Center