

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I am a rising 2L at Harvard who benefited from the financial support of an Equal Justice America Fellowship this summer. I am writing to let you know a little bit about the work I did this summer, its value to me, and the importance of EJA's continued support for students like me.

I have long been interested in doing public interest work. Before law school, I was a public high school teacher in New York City. Among my summer pursuits in college were stints at a legal services center in my hometown and in the district office of my Congressperson. These positions were valuable educational experiences, and I was able to do meaningful work in them, but none of them had exposed me to the litigation that is frequently necessary to safeguard the rights of all people in this country—especially the poor. Working this summer at the National Center for Law and Economic Justice taught me about how such litigation is pursued, and has steeled my resolve to pursue a career in public interest law.

While at NCLEJ, I did a fair amount of legal research and writing—for ongoing litigation, in anticipation of potential lawsuits, and to update the Center's files on developments in relevant areas of law. This included the drafting of several court-filed documents, among them a complaint in a lawsuit soon to be filed. Some of my legal research also led to my explaining the results of my investigations to co-counsel at strategy meetings. I completed a fair amount of factual research necessary to the pursuit of access to fair hearings for public benefits recipients, and compiled and assembled data for strategizing with NCLEJ's co-counsel in two ongoing matters. I also was lucky enough to attend several negotiations with opposing counsel and an oral argument before the Second Circuit on a public benefits issue. Finally, I met with a couple of NCLEJ's newest plaintiffs in ongoing litigation, even visiting one at his home.

All of the various issues and substantive work on which I spent my time this summer helped me to understand what working in public interest law for the direct benefit of the nation's poor is about. Obtaining EJA's fellowship award ensured that I was able to pursue the summer work that was most interesting to me, and has resolved for me the question of what kind of career I want for myself. For EJA's providing this opportunity I am grateful.

Sincerely,

Michael Decker