

August 20, 2015

Dan Ruben  
Executive Director  
Equal Justice America

Dear Mr. Ruben,

This summer I had the pleasure of working with Legal Aid Society - Employment Law Center's Disability Rights Program. My goals were to gain exposure to numerous facets of labor and employment law and to balance direct service with impact work. My summer at Employment Law Center absolutely met those goals. I was very fortunate to have three supervisors to work with who exposed me to different projects and working styles. While the learning curve was challenging at first, by the end of the summer I had a much better understanding of how to write and advocate more effectively.

As a summer law clerk, I had the opportunity to engage in direct service as well as assist with various stages of litigation. My direct service varied between conducting intakes and providing legal information and assistance over the Disability Rights Helpline, serving as a clinic counselor at the Employment Law Center's Workers' Rights Clinic each Wednesday evening, and assisting low-wage workers with wage claims and retaliation claims at Employment Law Center's Wage Claim Clinic.

Through the Disability Rights Helpline, I assisted 26 callers with various employment issues such as disability-based discrimination, harassment, reasonable accommodation, and wrongful termination. With the Workers' Rights Clinic, I received weekly trainings and assisted 1-2 callers per week with labor and employment issues such as union representation, family and medical leave, unemployment and state disability insurance, and retaliation. At one Wage Claim Clinic, I spent several hours working with a client who had recently been terminated from his job at a muffler shop because he had requested a lunch break. This client had already filed a wage claim that he and his girlfriend had prepared together for approximately \$10,000. That day, I spent hours interviewing him about his experience with his former employer and calculating all of his owed wages; including hours not paid, overtime, meal and rest period violations, and liquidated damages. When we had finished, I had come to a total of more than \$60,000 that my supervising attorney confirmed as correct. I then created a table and checklist for the client to bring to his upcoming settlement conference; which itemized each of his claims, how they had been calculated, and why he was entitled to them. I particularly enjoyed working with this client because his blue collar background, work clothes, and rough hands reminded me of my father. Helping clients such as this gentleman, who does hard work day in and day out but is unable to navigate complex legal paperwork and processes is why I went to law school. It was my honor to help him assert the claims to which he was entitled.

In addition to engaging in direct service, I enjoyed gaining exposure to numerous stages of litigation. The litigation work I did included drafting legal research memos, two demand letters, propounding and responding to discovery, assisting in deposition and drafting a meet and confer letter, and drafting the motion for final approval of settlement agreement for the landmark *Willits v. City of Los Angeles* class action which provided for \$1.37 billion over the course of 30 years to address physical access barriers in the city. One of the demand letters that I wrote and found particularly compelling was for a woman who had been terminated from her job as a cook at a senior living facility while she was on medical leave for cancer. This client had dutifully worked for her employer for fourteen years and had many hours of unused medical and sick time when her employer terminated her. The letter I wrote addressed the employer's wrongful termination of her as well as improper denial of medical leave as a reasonable accommodation for her medical condition. After sending the demand letter, I prepared an initial calculation of damages for use in negotiation with the employer's counsel. I was able to sit in on the initial call with the employer's counsel before ending my summer and the Employment Law Center was still in negotiations when I completed my service.

It was such a privilege to work with the passionate, hard-working staff of the Employment Law Center, this summer. I so enjoyed reconnecting with my community in the Bay Area and serving people with disabilities both through direct service and impact litigation. I have a renewed sense of purpose as I enter my third and final year of law school and am so appreciative of Equal Justice America for helping me to continue my commitment to public service, this summer.

With gratitude,  
/s/

Monica Porter

The George Washington University Law School, Class of 2016



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Via e-mail (Katie@equaljusticeamerica.com)

August 10, 2015

Dan Ruben  
Executive Director  
c/o Katie Toman  
Equal Justice America  
13540 East Boundary Road  
Building II, Suite 204  
Midlothia, VA 23112

Re: *Monica Porter*

Dear Mr. Ruben:

Monica Porter worked full-time under my supervision as a summer law clerk with the Disability Rights Program of the Legal Aid Society – Employment Law Center (LAS-ELC). The Disability Rights Program works to advance the civil rights of people with disabilities in the workplace, schools, and other institutions. LAS-ELC represents workers and students with disabilities through direct representation, class action lawsuits, advocacy and by providing self-help tools and technical assistance. In order to help the large number of clients seeking our assistance, we rely heavily on law students to serve as our primary link to our many clients.

During her time with us, Ms. Porter was the primary point of contact for 26 callers to our Disability Rights Helpline. She helped these callers to understand their rights and to advocate effectively for themselves. I was impressed with her ability to communicate effectively, patiently, and compassionately with our callers. In addition to interviewing and counseling callers to the Disability Rights Helpline, Ms. Porter conducted research on the legal issues faced by our callers, which included issues arising under Americans with Disabilities Act, the Family and Medical Leave Act, and parallel California laws. She then translated her findings into practical, accessible information that could be relayed to our callers.

Ms. Porter also participated in various litigation-related activities. She attended client meetings, drafted two demand letters, and engaged in discovery related tasks including responding to requests for production and drafting a meet and confer letter. Additionally, Ms. Porter engaged in high-level research and writing including drafting a motion for final approval in a large class action against the City of Los Angeles on behalf of individuals with

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mobility and vision impairments. Overall, Ms. Porter's writing was clear, organized, and detailed. She demonstrated a solid understanding of the legal issues she was analyzing, was always receptive to feedback, and took every opportunity to improve her skills.

In addition to the litigation she was involved with, Ms. Porter was also a law student counselor for the Worker's Rights Clinic, a resource for over 2000 individuals per year on a wide variety of work-related problems, including the denial of wages, discrimination, work and safety issues, unemployment benefits, harassment, and wrongful termination. She also participated in the Wage Protection Program's Wage and Hour Clinic, where she assisted low-income workers with wage theft claims.

Ms. Porter was a pleasure to have in the office. She is reliable, friendly, and treats her clients and colleagues with warmth and respect.

Thank you for your support of Monica's work with LAS – ELC this summer. Should you have any questions about LAS – ELC or Monica Porter's work with us, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at (415) 864-8848 x 268 or email at [aalvarez@las-etc.org](mailto:aalvarez@las-etc.org).

Very Truly Yours,

Alexis Alvarez