

August 25, 2011

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I am writing to describe my Summer Fellowship experience with the Michigan Poverty Law Program (MPLP) in Ann Arbor, MI. Enclosed is my Fellowship Questionnaire. Thank you very, very much for allowing me such a fantastic opportunity to work in public interest this summer.

As a law clerk for MPLP's family law attorney, Rebecca Shiemke, I was immersed in legal issues surrounding divorce, child custody, and domestic violence from my first day. I researched case law, summarized newly decided court opinions, and doggedly worked to improve my writing skills.

In addition, I learned how to present the law especially clearly, simply, and succinctly so as to be accessible to anyone with an 8th grade reading level.

While my clerkship focused overwhelmingly on the research and writing aspects of the law, the results were further reaching than the desks of my supervising attorneys.

For Rebecca, I created a brochure on MCL 554.601b, a newly passed Michigan law that allows victims of domestic violence release from their rental housing lease with minimal penalty. This brochure contains nearly all of the information a survivor requires to obtain a release, and provides it in a concise manner that is easy to digest. In addition, as a freelance graphic designer, I was able to use my skills to present the legal content professionally and elegantly. Edited by a domestic violence advocacy expert in the state, the brochure will likely be distributed throughout the state of Michigan in the future. I have hope that my work will help domestic violence survivors find a safer place to call home for years to come.

For Angela Tripp, co-managing attorney of MPLP, I drafted web content for a new statewide legal aid website that will launch within the next year. With a focus on personal protection orders (PPOs) and domestic violence, I wrote articles and compiled a list of frequently asked questions for the typical pro se party. I edited material drawn from multiple sources for clarity and brevity, and organized it with accessibility and ease of use in mind. In weekly meetings with Angela, we energetically discussed the best ways to present the information that will help survivors of domestic violence gain court-mandated relief from the actions of their abusers. The site will serve as the most useful source of legal aid for Michigan residents on the web.

I cannot emphasize my satisfaction with this opportunity to gain research and writing skills while doing work that will clearly benefit some of the most vulnerable members of my state. This chance to work with public interest attorneys who remain dedicated and strong in their respective fields serves as a source of optimism and affirmation for a law student interested in a similar career in the future.

Thank you again for this opportunity.

Sincerely,
Namira Islam
Michigan State



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LAW
PROGRAM**

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August 10, 2011

Dan Ruben
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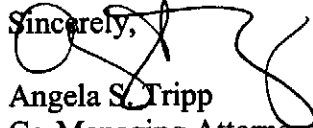
Re: Clerkship of Namira Islam, University of Michigan School of Law

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I am writing to report on Namira Islam's clerkship with the Michigan Poverty Law Program (MPLP), for which she was given a grant from Equal Justice America. Ms. Islam, like many of our law clerks, helped our office in many different ways. Ms. Islam primarily conducted research and writing projects for MPLP's Family Law specialist, Rebecca Shiemke. MPLP is the statewide support office for the legal aid programs throughout Michigan, providing case-specific assistance to field office staff, as well as conducting trainings and regular task force meetings, and acting as co-counsel on impact litigation cases. MPLP substantive law attorneys (such as Ms. Shiemke) often assist field staff with research and writing tasks, as well as draft articles for various legal publications and prepare presentations for trainings. Ms. Islam assisted Ms. Shiemke with these tasks, often by conducting legal research and writing memoranda summarizing her findings. She also worked on a brochure about Michigan's new sexual assault personal protection order.

Ms. Islam also assisted me with a web content development project. MPLP is building a new statewide legal assistance website for self-represented litigants. Ms. Islam drafted content for the website in the area of personal protection orders – drafting topical articles, “frequently asked questions” lists, and procedural instructions for pro se litigants needing to file for a Personal Protection Order due to domestic violence. This task required in-depth research in that particular topic area, and then synthesizing that information into easy-to-understand articles and instructions.

Ms. Islam performed extremely well at her duties while with the Michigan Poverty Law Program. We were grateful for her assistance and grateful for the Equal Justice America grant as well, so that she could be compensated for her work. Should you have any further questions about Ms. Islam or her clerkship, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Angela S. Tripp
Co-Managing Attorney