

July 29, 2010

Mr. Dan Ruben  
Equal Justice America  
Building II - Suite 204  
13540 East Boundary Road  
Midlothian, VA 23112  
Phone (804) 744-4200 · Fax: (804) 744-6789

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I am a rising third-year student at Harvard Law School and am writing to thank you and everyone at Equal Justice America for sponsoring my summer at the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area. The Lawyers' Committee is devoted to championing the legal rights of people of color, poor people, immigrants and refugees in the Bay Area. During my ten weeks here I have had the opportunity to work in all of these areas, both in the capacity of providing direct legal services and by providing assistance to staff attorneys working on impact litigation involving these populations. I would like to share with you two stories from my summer experience.

One of my most rewarding experiences was helping a man I will call Thomas with an asylum claim. Thomas originates from a small village in an African country and has spent the majority of his adolescent and adult life working to provide for himself and his family. Thomas lawfully entered the United States with a visa but subsequently became diagnosed as HIV-positive. As a law clerk at the Lawyers' Committee, I had the opportunity to interview Thomas and directly learn of his story. He shared with me his fear of persecution if he returned to his home country with a positive diagnosis. He recalled memories from his youth of how such persons were socially isolated and denied medical treatment. After meeting with Thomas, I wrote an intake memo including a recitation of the facts, an evaluation of Thomas' claim, and a summary of the conditions he might face in his home country. Based upon my evaluation the Lawyers' Committee decided to refer this case to its member law firms for representation. Through this experience and the other asylum work I have done this summer, I have learned how technicalities in the law impact the daily lives of the people who must live by it. As a future attorney I will always be mindful of what purposes underlie the law and what challenges arise as the law is applied to real situations.

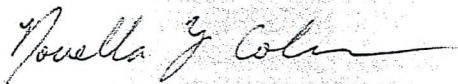
This summer I also had direct client contact by serving at an employment law clinic for the people of Oakland. At the clinic I saw members of the legal community from various non-profit organizations come together for the sake of advocating for low-income workers' rights. I will call the client I served Oscar. Oscar is a Latino man who works as a day laborer in various



construction jobs across the city of Oakland. He came to our clinic because he was denied his lawfully earned wages after working for more than ten weeks with the same employer. The employer did not pay Oscar for the first two and last three weeks of work. In addition, Oscar never received overtime wages for any of the work he did. Oscar expressed frustration that this employer had a practice of denying workers their rightfully earned wages. During the course of the evening I listened to Oscar tell his story, and helped prepare a demand letter to the employer and a wage claim for the California Division of Labor Standards Enforcement. As Oscar left he repeatedly expressed his gratitude for our advocacy. He even expressed pride in the fact that I was doing volunteer work as a law student.

None of these experiences would have been possible without the summer fellowship I received from Equal Justice America. This summer I have learned more about providing direct legal services to the poor and thought more strategically about how various areas of the law apply to their situation. In addition to the aforementioned stories, I also had the opportunity to attend a hearing by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors regarding a proposed "sit-and-lie" ordinance that would affect the city's day laborers and homeless population. I also attended a hearing in Madera County regarding equal protections concerns about the voting district lines and how they impacted Madera's communities of color. I have had the opportunity to learn by observing and interacting with junior and senior attorneys about the litigation and policy areas in which they are involved. While I do not yet know what area of the law I will ultimately practice, I am certain that my commitment to advocate for poor and disadvantaged communities was reinvigorated this summer at the Lawyers' Committee.

With all sincere gratitude,



Novella Coleman  
Harvard Law School  
J.D. Candidate 2011

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*VIA email*

August 31, 2010

**Re: Novella Coleman**

Dear Mr. Ruben:

This letter confirms that Novella Coleman served as a full time summer law clerk here at the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights ("Lawyers' Committee") in 2010, and did a tremendous job doing so.

The Lawyers' Committee is devoted to advancing the rights of people of color, poor people, and immigrants and refugees, while maintaining its historical commitment to provide legal advocacy for African-Americans. The Lawyers' Committee is affiliated with the national Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, begun in 1963 at the request of President John F. Kennedy. San Francisco's office was founded by leading members of the San Francisco Bar in 1968, shortly after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The Lawyers' Committee -- with the assistance of hundreds of *pro bono* attorneys -- provides free legal assistance and representation to individuals on civil legal matters. In addition, the Lawyers' Committee handles policy impact cases in the areas of Race, Poverty, and Immigration.

This summer, Novella had the opportunity to work in each of the Lawyers' Committee's three priority areas: race, poverty, and immigrant and refugee rights. Novella worked with staff attorneys and fellows on research and writing related to impact litigation and case development, direct client services, and a variety of non-litigation activities, including policy advocacy and community outreach.

An example of Novella's work was her much needed assistance in the Lawyers' Committee's Peña-Canal civil human trafficking case (a federal suit for damages by an immigrant domestic worker who was imprisoned by her employers). Novella researched and wrote an extensive memorandum on the various ways to measure the value of victim's labor under the federal Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act, state Trafficking Victims Protection Act, Cal. Civil Code § 3343 (fraudulent inducement of property), and Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 17200 (unfair competition). Novella identified civil damages awards in previous cases brought for forced labor, and drafted a brief on the potential for a punitive damages award for Peña-Canal's motion for default judgment in her civil

case.

Another example was when Novella traveled into West Oakland where she served as a legal observer during a Specialized Multi-Agency Response Team Inspection (SMART) inspection of an apartment complex. Novella, analyzed the scope of police authority to make warrantless home entry during an administrative search, conducted an informal survey regarding frequency of police participation in administrative searches in Oakland, and communicated her findings with ACLU staff attorneys in Northern California

Novella also assisted in the Lawyers' Committee's Education Equity Project by drafting a brief that identified limitations placed on maximum classroom occupancy by the California Fire Code, explored writ of mandamus as possible remedy for Fire Code violations regarding enforcement of room occupancy regulations, conducted follow-up research with the San Francisco Fire Department and the Office of the State Fire Marshal on increased occupancy load provision in Fire Code, and created a fantastically useful "know your rights" flier to distribute to teachers for determining if their classroom occupancy complies with the Fire Code

Novella was also a key member of this summer's "Asylum Team." She conducted asylum intake interviews and drafted memos evaluating strength of claims. She researched country conditions in Honduras, Guatemala and Nepal, and researched avenues for obtaining permanent residency in Nepal

On the policy side of our work, Novella, assisted in our Domestic Worker's Campaign and prepared work product comparing and contrasting legal protections provided to domestic workers under soon-to-be enacted New York law and current California law. Novella also created a flier on New York law for distribution to California legislators

Novella drafted the declaration of the owner of Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) on role of Caltrans DBE Program in providing equal opportunity to minority business owner.

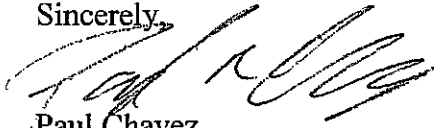
Finally, Novella attended a Centro Legal de la Raza Worker's rights clinic where she conducted an intake interview for her client with a wage claim for failure to pay minimum wage and failure to pay overtime compensation, and then drafted a demand letter and wage claim for the client

Novella was a superb summer law clerk. It is clear to me that she has a wonderful

career ahead of her.

If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me. I can also be reached at (415) 543-9444.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Chavez', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Paul Chavez

Senior Staff Attorney and Law Student Program Supervisor