

August 29, 2005

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

This summer I had a wonderful internship experience at the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles. My time in the Employment Law Unit met and exceeded my expectations for my first law student summer. I would strongly recommend a future EJA placement at this organization. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for making this experience possible for me.

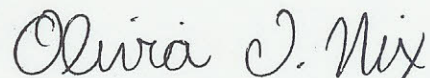
I felt that my time spent in LAFLA's Employment Law Unit was an ideal balance of different types of experiences. The other law student and I spent a good deal of time making direct client contact. Every other Friday we would spend the day at the Labor Commissioner's office in downtown Los Angeles, helping low-wage workers file claims for unpaid wages, overtime, and rest and meal breaks. We heard many stories of employers taking advantage of the difficult financial and immigration situations many workers found themselves in. About 80% of the workers we helped spoke no English, and I was glad to have the opportunity to work on my Spanish language skills. At each of these Friday sessions we helped dozens of people file complicated claim forms.

We also engaged in community outreach on a larger scale through Know-Your-Rights presentations. We went to several adult education schools and gave presentations on basic wage and hour law for workers. The presentations took the form of engaging skits and the workers eagerly participated as we asked them how the employer in the skit had mistreated the employee.

Another portion of our time was spent on corporate research for a new project – outreach to taxi drivers. Legal Aid in partnership with other community organizations had decided to try to organize the Los Angeles taxi drivers, and we were engaged in the earliest stage of researching the industry and the key players who controlled the different taxi companies. We were able to uncover a complicated web of entanglement among the companies, which are supposed to be competitive but instead are mostly owned by a few families. One of my biggest and most rewarding projects for the summer was making a huge 6' x 4' chart showing all the connections between the cab companies. We displayed this chart at a town hall meeting that we put on for the drivers. It helped them see just how corrupt their industry is, and I believe it helped motivate them to organize and begin to fight for their rights.

My internship re-fueled my desire to work in the public interest, and I also became interested in possibly narrowing my focus to employment law. I found it incredibly rewarding to help low-wage workers receive their basic rights to a safe workplace and honest pay for the work they performed. My summer experience simply would not have been possible without the grant from Equal Justice America. Thank you so much for continuing to support law students as they contribute to the important work of public interest organizations. I am so grateful to have had your help.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Olivia T. Nix". The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent loop on the 'O' and a long tail on the 'x'.

Olivia T. Nix
Albany Law School '07