

August 25, 2010

Dear Mr. Ruben,

This summer, I worked in the Immigration Unit at the East Bay Community Law Center in Berkeley, California. I worked with individuals who are HIV-positive residents of Alameda or Contra Costa County and the families of children who were formally referred to us through a Medical-Legal Partnership with Oakland Children's Hospital. I worked on various immigration petitions, including asylum, adjustment of status for a U-visa holder, temporary protected status, and removing the conditions on permanent residency. Additionally, I conducted client intakes and general consultations.

My experience this summer was amazing and confirmed my desire to be a direct services immigration attorney at a legal services non-profit organization after law school. My primary case was an affirmative asylum case for an HIV-positive homosexual man from Mexico. Though I had worked with asylum-seekers before and read about deep-seated homophobia in Mexico, his case disturbed me greatly. He had suffered physical, emotional, and sexual abuse at the hands of his family, classmates, coworkers, and even the police, for nearly 30 years in Mexico. After fleeing Mexico to escape the abuse, he was diagnosed with HIV and AIDS here in the United States. He was deeply traumatized, but we worked on his case slowly and built a great rapport. Even though many people question the "American Dream" these days, working with him made me realize it is still alive and something we can still be proud of. He often told me about how he was absolutely amazed that there were laws that prevented his coworkers from harassing him here because he is gay, and more importantly, that they are respected by workers, management, and the courts. He told me about how much he admired the United States and loved that people here didn't care that he is gay. He no longer feared being raped by police and people no longer spit on him on the streets.

I had the honor of preparing his affirmative asylum case from the very beginning through his asylum interview. Fortunately, the asylum officer granted his asylum application and it is now awaiting final review from USCIS headquarters. Working with him made me a better legal advocate, person, and challenged preconceived notions that I had about HIV and AIDS. His final grant of asylum will make me proud to be a citizen of a country that provides him protection and life-saving medical treatment.

Thank you for your support this summer and helping to foster other public interest attorneys.

Sincerely,

Siobhan Waldron
UCLA School of Law, Class of 2012



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EAST BAY
COMMUNITY

LAW CENTER

August 26, 2010

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

This summer, Siobhan Waldron worked under my supervision in the Immigration Unit at the East Bay Community Law Center in Berkeley, California. Our unit provides immigration legal services to individuals who are HIV-positive residents of Alameda or Contra Costa Counties and the families of children who have been formally referred to us through a Medical-Legal Partnership with Oakland Children's Hospital. All law student interns have their own caseloads and conduct client intakes and general consultations.

Siobhan was assigned an affirmative asylum case and an adjustment of status for a U-1 visa holder in the beginning of the summer. After providing the interns with introductory trainings on major forms of immigration relief and how to use the Immigration and Nationality Act to screen clients for eligibility, the students assumed primary responsibility for preparing each case. During her 10-week internship, Siobhan prepared an entire affirmative asylum case and represented her client at his asylum interview. Siobhan developed a strong rapport with her client and prepared a very strong case. Fortunately, the client's application was sent USCIS headquarters for final approval. Siobhan learned not only about asylum law, but also became familiar with the practical aspects of preparing a filing and working with clients.

I very much appreciated Siobhan's positive attitude throughout the summer. She was always eager to learn more about immigration law and practice and was willing to take on additional cases. After representing her client at his asylum interview, Siobhan enthusiastically volunteered to work on a few other cases during the last three days of her internship. In those three days, due to her tremendous organizational skills, she was able to make significant progress. Given her strong work performance earlier in the summer, I am confident that Siobhan has the legal and interpersonal skills to succeed in any public interest work environment. It was truly a pleasure to work with her. I appreciate Equal Justice America's commitment to supporting law students who are interested in public interest work.

If you have any other questions, feel free to contact me at (510) 548-4040 ext. 368

Sincerely,

Linda Tam
Staff Attorney