

September 8, 2015

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I would like to thank you and Equal Justice America for your generosity and assistance. I would not have been able to take full advantage of my experience at the San Francisco office of Bay Area Legal Aid without your help. I would like to tell you a little more about what I was able to accomplish in my summer, which you made possible.

I was the only law clerk in the Housing Preservation unit at the BayLegal office in San Francisco. Although the fact that I was the only housing clerk meant that I was constantly busy, it had its distinct advantages. I was able to work closely with all of the housing attorneys and to determine what pieces of their respective approaches to advocacy worked well for me. I also had exposure to a variety of assignments and to many of the stages of the litigation process. I dedicated most of my time to legal research and writing—on topics ranging from tenancies that might be renewed when a landlord accepts rent after the termination of a Section 8 HAP contract to the appropriateness of conditioning vacating a default judgment on the posting of the total back rent alleged. I also wrote reasonable accommodation letters on behalf of tenants to landlords and the San Francisco Housing Authority, attended meetings with other tenants' rights organizations, and accompanied BayLegal attorneys at court appearances.

The highlights of my summer involved administrative hearings with the San Francisco Housing Authority. I wrote the position statements for four of those hearings—three informal and one formal. I advocated on behalf of the clients at two of those informal hearings. The second was much more straightforward, but much more rewarding. Our client had been attempting to pay her rent to her project manager for over a year, but the project manager refused to accept her payments because the agency's system indicated a credit on her account. After months of this same interaction, the system eventually indicated a massive debt. Our client proactively requested an informal hearing to resolve the situation to resolve it before the agency would erroneously file an unlawful detainer against her. Fortunately, she had kept copies of the money orders she had prepared for her rental payments, so there was more than adequate evidence to support her case. We received a favorable decision from the hearing, so the client's debt was corrected to account for the Housing Authority's mistake. However, the most rewarding part of the experience was when I saw our client, who is generally soft-spoken and reserved, speak up and stand up for herself and for her rights in the hearing. Her passion and bravery served as a reminder of the importance of the goals I was pursuing.

I learned a lot about lawyering this summer and what that means outside of the classroom, in practice. I learned the intricacies of the litigation process, how present strategic choices affect later events, and how to be an effective advocate through client relations, thorough research, nuanced writing, and pointed oral expression. Those learning experiences, which will stick with

me through law school and into my legal career, would not have been possible without your generosity. Thank you once again.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jesse R. Peters", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jesse R. Peters
Stanford Law School
Class of 2017