

# STEPHANIE JADE RIDELLA

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August 25, 2013

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I interned at the Chicago Legal Clinic, Austin Circle Law Center during summer 2013, an organization that provides low cost legal services in general areas of law ranging from guardianships of the disabled to landlord/tenant disputes. The office I worked at provides assistance in family law matters, as well as prisoner's rights assistance.

I had a wonderful summer, gaining lots of valuable experience and learning so much that I will take with me into my future career. I had the opportunity to draft a variety of motions and orders; draft a Petition for Dissolution of Marriage and a Joint Parenting agreement; and perform legal research and prepared legal memoranda on those issues. With my 711 Senior Law Student License, I had the opportunity to appear in court for clients in both family law court and expungement hearings.

As a part of my internship, I was assigned a client for whom I drafted a clemency petition to the governor's office. This process involved several meetings with the client, essentially getting his life story from birth to present. It was an intensive experience, explaining this person's past and criminal record, and trying to persuade the reader to grant clemency to this person. The client was so grateful for the opportunity to tell his story, and have this assistance petitioning for clemency. A licensed doctor in Europe, the client is unable to complete his medical training in the United States because of a conviction more than a decade ago. He refuses to leave because he is dedicated to the goal of practicing medicine in this country. It was a privilege to try to help him reach this goal.

One client whose story will stay with me is a woman I was assigned an intake interview with. She has had an abusive relationship with her ex, the father of her children, for a decade, and has sought orders of protection from the court multiple times over the years. She has never been able to obtain a plenary order of protection. I presented her case to one of our attorneys, and we decided to represent her at her hearing. We were able to secure an order of protection. She was stunned, then so grateful, to have our assistance. The peace of mind she felt, the relief, was palpable, and it was so rewarding to be able to help her.

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Every legal assistance experience I have had during law school only further convinces me that I want a career in public interest law. I have been so fortunate to have this opportunity through Equal Justice America to work full-time, helping people with no other access to legal services. Thank you for this experience.

With regards,

*Stephanie Jade Ridella*

Stephanie Jade Ridella  
Chicago-Kent College of Law, Class of 2014

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To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is written on behalf of Stephanie Ridella. I am glad to have the chance to comment on her qualifications. The Austin Circle Law Center of the Chicago Legal Clinic ([www.clclaw.org](http://www.clclaw.org)) provides legal services, consultation, and education to many of Chicago's poor through its staff, its law student interns and its panel of volunteers, which includes attorneys and paralegals.

I have had the opportunity to work closely with Stephanie Ridella, as her primary supervisor, during the time Ms. Ridella was a law student intern, during the summer of 2013. Ms. Ridella has always conducted herself professionally whether interacting with clients, her supervisors, or other co-workers. Her energy, her enthusiasm and her conscientiousness was evident in her work, and Ms. Ridella demonstrated a strong desire to assist economically disadvantaged individuals.

Ms. Ridella successfully completed a substantial number of substantive drafting assignments for us from simple correspondence to various court pleadings to memoranda of law on various topics. Ms. Ridella has repeatedly demonstrated excellent follow up in handling other complex assignments. Ms. Ridella also interviewed and counseled with indigent clients in the areas in which we represent clients, which includes family law, expungement and clemency matters. I found her to be both industrious and resourceful. An independent worker, Ms. Ridella handled her assignments efficiently, and Ms. Ridella especially worked well with the other legal personnel in our office.

It is my privilege to highly recommend Ms. Ridella favorably in her future endeavors. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on my experience with her.

Very truly yours,

Barry C. Boykin  
Managing Attorney