

October 15, 2015

Equal Justice America
13540 E. Boundary Road
Midlothian, VA 23112
Attn: Dan Ruben, Executive Director of Equal Justice America

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I wanted to write to thank you for giving me the opportunity to participate in the Equal Justice America fellowship program. It was truly a privilege to be able to assist people in need in the Berkeley area and the EJA fellowship afforded me that opportunity. During my internship at the East Bay Community Law Center, I was able to assist low-income individuals seeking public assistance through a weekly advisory clinic, direct intake services, and in one specific case, I fully represented a client to a negotiated settlement with Alameda County.

That specific case was the most rewarding moment during my time at the East Bay Community Law Center. The case involved a mother seeking protective supervision for her mentally and physically ill daughter. The daughter could not stay at home without constant supervision because she was a persistent threat to her own safety. The County argued that she did not qualify for protective supervision because they believed that her actions were intentional and within her own control. My task for that case was to prove that she did not have control of her own actions and that she lacked the judgment and awareness to make sound decisions for her own safety. In order to achieve this, I got into contact with her primary physician and collected an assortment of medical records to prove that she could not appreciate the scope of her disabilities. After collecting and organizing this evidence, I wrote a position statement supporting my client's candidacy for protective supervision and submitted to the County. Soon after that, I was able to negotiate with the County to grant full protective supervision for my client before the scheduled hearing date.

In another case, I was to draft a brief to challenge a discriminatory law targeting homeless individuals that slept in their cars. In this specific case, I argued that the law being used to cite homeless individuals sleeping in their vehicles could not apply to them, because it was designed specifically for trailer homes. In order to make this argument, I relied on legislative history and the plain language of the statute and was ultimately successful in excusing my client from her traffic citation that she would never have been able to pay for.

These cases were just a few of the examples of how I was able to contribute and make the difference that I always sought to make when I started law school. I never thought I would have the opportunity to change the lives while as a first year law student, but that was precisely what I was able to achieve.

The opportunity to assist clients at the East Bay Community Law Center is the type of experience that I always hoped practicing law might have been and I am thoroughly excited for the opportunity to take my career further in this direction.

Sincerely,

Andrew Le
UC Berkeley