

August 31, 2017

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I am writing to express my gratitude for granting me with an Equal Justice America Fellowship, and to also discuss my summer experience at the Public Law Center in Santa Ana, California. At the Public Law Center, I was a summer law clerk working in the Housing and Homelessness Prevention Unit, in addition to the Operation Veterans Re-Entry Unit. I aided staff attorneys on a variety of cases, including breach of habitability concerns, tax liability issues, and disability rating increases.

The rewards I reaped during my summer truly came from our clients' victories: we gave a client a fighting chance to appeal a ruling that hurt his livelihood, ensured our clients had a safe and habitable place to reside, helped our veteran clients apply for discharge upgrades, and received a letter from a Section 8 housing provider that our client would no longer be improperly evicted. I am extremely grateful for the opportunity I received to do legal research on several issues—specifically a case where a veteran was denied Social Security disability benefits despite being rated with a 200% disability by the VA. Our client had various medical reports and family testimony stating he certainly had a disability, but the judge did not take the reports or family testimony with great weight. I spent hours searching for case law to show that medical opinions and family testimony should be given more weight than the judge had initially allotted; I even searched in published medical journals to prove that our client had a disability that prevented him from participating in activities of daily life. I wrote memoranda that supported my findings, so that the client could appeal the initial decision and support his family.

Further, I helped a client and her family remove themselves from a house where the home owner purposely let the house fall into disrepair. The home owner sought to encourage our client to move out so he could receive higher rent payments. After speaking with our client to understand her goals, she was elated to finally leave her hostile living arrangement and not be liable for fees to the owner.

I am grateful for the opportunity to have worked with so many clients under the supervision and mentorship of the wonderful attorneys at the Public Law Center. The experience I gained from being able to conduct substantive, legal work is invaluable, and I know that the practical skills I developed during my summer will carry forward to my career in law.

Sincerely,

Katrina Yang
UCLA School of Law
Class of 2019