

July 28, 2015

Dan Ruben, Executive Direct
Equal Justice America
Building II, Suit 204
Midlothian, VA 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I was so honored to be selected as an Equal Justice America Fellowship for Summer 2015. This fellowship provided me the opportunity to provide technical assistance and training on protection orders, the Violence Against Women Act, and enforcement of restraining orders with the National Center of Protection Orders and Full Faith & Credit (“NCPOFFC”) in Arlington, VA. My internship began by being provided an overview in domestic violence legislation, and being trained on provisions of the Violence Against Women Act dealing with firearm prohibitions and full faith and credit for protection orders.

During my first few weeks, I helped prepare information for attorneys and advocates participating in the National Training Institute on Protection Order Practice for Attorneys and Advocates, hosted by the NCPOFFC. The Conference took place over three days, during which time I was able to participate in various sessions. The most interesting sessions I observed under the Trial Skills track were Interstate Custody and Relocation Issues by Legal Resource Center on Violence Against Women, Inter-jurisdictional Enforcement of Protection Orders by NCPOFFC, Keeping Your Eye on the Appeal by Domestic Violence Legal Empowerment and Appeals Project (DV LEAP), as well as an Evidence and Objections Workshop. Under the Advocacy Track, Dating Violence: Advocating for Young Survivors by Break the Cycle and Working with LGBTQ and HIV-affected survivors of Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence by the New York City Anti-Violence Project (NCAVP), were the two most captivating presentations. The Conference concluded with a Self-Care Workshop which reminded both attorneys and advocates the importance of self-care while assisting survivors and reducing stress to avoid vicarious trauma. Another aspect of this internship was being exposed to various aspects of litigation through viewing attorney negotiations and court proceedings related to family and criminal law.

Throughout the summer I also thoroughly researched the implementation of both the Full Faith and Credit Provision and Firearms and Ammunition Provisions of the Violence Against

Women Act. I had several assignments helping develop materials to provide technical assistance and training to attorneys and advocates. This involved researching statutes for various topic areas such as State and Territorial Protection Order Registration, Protection Order Definitions, Firearms and Domestic Violence State and Territorial Statutory Provision, and Relocation. My job was to ensure each pertinent statute was included in our material. I also researched cases ruled on between July 2014 and July 2015 dealing with protection orders and UCCJEA which were compiled into summaries to be used in a case-law digest. Additionally, I researched relevant case-law focusing on various aspects of domestic violence.

During the course of the internship I created a case note which critiqued and analyzed Supreme Court precedent on domestic violence. The question presented was whether a property interest existed in the enforcement of a restraining order. Subsequent to the decision, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights found human rights violations by the United States and recommendations to reform several areas of domestic violence legislation. However, none of which had been followed by the issuance of the final report in July 2011.

The Equal Justice America Fellowship provided me the opportunity to dedicate my summer to public interest work and I am very grateful to Equal Justice America for this amazing experience.

Sincerely,

Niccole Sandora
University of Richmond Law
Class of 2017