



Summer 2018 EJA Fellow



Name: Erica Bilkis

Law School: The George Washington University Law School

EJA Fellowship: First Shift Justice Project

Entry 1: Week of 6/11/2018

#EJAFellowUpdate

Over the past 2 weeks I have worked with @First Shift Justice Project to conduct intakes and support women who are being denied their right to pregnancy accommodations in the workplace. It is so important to help keep these mothers, who are usually the sole breadwinner for their family, in their jobs so they can continue to support their children.

Entry 2: Week of 6/25/2018

#EJAFellowUpdate

In the last few months, **First Shift Justice Project** started a new sexual harassment helpline for women experiencing sexual harassment in the workplace. I attended a training to learn an overview of the laws that protect women in DC and have signed up to be a volunteer for the helpline. Currently, I am doing outreach for this new program and connecting with other organizations in the DC area so we can continue supporting women in the DMV area.

Entry 3: Week of 7/9/2018

#EJAFellowUpdate

At **First Shift Justice Project**, I have been working with a client whose employer denied her pregnancy accommodations in violation of the DC Protecting Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (DC PPWFA). With assistance from the senior attorney, I drafted a demand letter to send to her employer informing him of these violations. We are hoping for a positive outcome for this client and that she can return to work with the accommodations she is entitled to.

Entry 4: Week of 7/23/2018

#EJAFellowUpdate

Last week I attended the DC Consortium of Legal Service Providers monthly meeting. This meeting focused on community engagement and how to better interact with the clients we are trying to serve to ensure that we are meeting their needs. It was a wonderful opportunity to hear about the work many pro bono organizations are doing in the D.C. area and to connect with other lawyers.



September 4, 2018

Emma Ruben
Equal Justice America
Building II, Suite 204
13540 East Boundary Road
Midlothian, VA 23112
emma@equaljusticeamerica.org

Re: Evaluation of Erica Bilkis

I am pleased to write an evaluation for Erica Bilkis, a law student who worked with First Shift Justice Project this summer with the generous support of Equal Justice America. I supervised Erica this past summer.

First Shift Justice Project advocates on behalf of pregnant women in low-wage jobs. The work we do ensures pregnant women can continue to work free of discrimination and with the accommodations they need to make working possible.

Erica joined our staff at roughly the same time as a new attorney who was hired to temporarily replace an attorney on parental leave. Because we are a small office, Erica had essentially the same training, responsibilities and supervision as the new attorney. Under my supervision, she conducted intakes with new clients, provided legal advice to clients, and drafted demand letters and other documents related to client matters. She had frequent client contact throughout her time at First Shift. She also performed legal research and drafted memos on several topics relevant to First Shift's services to working mothers in low-wage jobs.

In one of the cases she handled, the client was denied the reasonable accommodations she was entitled to under the DC Protecting Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PPWFA). Her boss refused to let her use the bathroom and sit down if she felt any pain even though she provided a doctor's note. In the letter, Erica outlined her client's claim, the accommodations she was entitled to, and the employer's violation of PPWFA, Title VII and the Pregnancy Discrimination Act as well as the DC Human Rights Act, the DC FMLA and the Americans with Disabilities Act. This letter initiated a series of conversations between First Shift Justice Project and this company's lawyer in an effort to remedy the situation. The case is still ongoing.

Emma Ruben
September 4, 2018
Page 2 of 2

Because of First Shift's limited staff capacity, Erica's presence with us this summer was invaluable and she contributed to the competent provision of legal services to our clients.

Please let me know if you have any questions or any further need for information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura A. Brown". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Laura Brown
Executive Director
First Shift Justice Project
1227 Good Hope Road SE
Washington, D.C. 20020
(240) 241-0897
lbrown@firstshift.org