

August 8, 2018

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I spent this summer with the Western Center on Law and Poverty (WCLP) in their Sacramento office. WCLP represents California's poorest residents on issues of public benefits, affordable housing, health care, and access to justice. WCLP helps millions of low-income children, adults, and families through impact litigation, legislative/policy advocacy, and administrative advocacy.

My summer as a legal intern for WCLP has left an undeniable mark on my ambitions as a future lawyer. My passion to advocate for those in need of justice was nurtured and intensified working with WCLP. WCLP is driven by the idea that everyone deserves the finest possible legal representation before every institution that shapes their lives. This is an unwavering belief that I have and I am inspired by the individuals that I have worked with this summer.

Over the course of my 10 weeks with WCLP, I worked on multiple research projects, sat in on a deposition, learned extensively about legislative/policy advocacy working at the capital, and participated in multiple meetings with California representatives, counties, and cities learning about administrative advocacy.

My research projects varied in topics. I conducted research on the public charge rule in the wake of the Trump Administration, proposed DMHC regulations, the Housing Support Program, and the legal authority of counties to deny administrative disqualification hearings to alleged IPV allegations for undocumented immigrants.

Being at the capital, WCLP is able to sponsor and support bills, oppose harmful legislation and educate policymakers and other stakeholders on behalf of our clients and I was apart of this process this summer. I wrote multiple support letters for different bills. I worked closely with my supervisor to co sponsor a bill that would allow for a payment plan for low income individuals to pay their parking tickets. I also gave several me toos, statements of support or opposition for a bill, to several committees in the California legislature.

Thanks to WCLP and to the Equal Justice America Fellowship, I was able to be an advocate for those in need. I have enormous gratitude for those at WCLP who took the time to teach me what they do and how I can make a difference.

Sincerely,

Maritza Ponce  
Santa Clara University School of Law  
J.D. Candidate, Class of 2019

September 4, 2018

Dan Ruben  
Ece4cutive Director, Equal Justice America  
13540 East Boundary Road  
Midlothian, VA 23112

**Re: Evaluation for Maritza Ponce**

Dear Mr. Ruben,

The Western Center on Law and Poverty (WCLP) represents California's poorest residents on issues of public benefits, affordable housing, health care and access to justice. This summer we had the pleasure of having Maritza Ponce as a law clerk and this letter is to provide an evaluation of her work. We appreciate the support of Equal Justice America in making Maritza available this summer.

We strive to provide our Sacramento law clerks with a wide variety of assignments so that they are exposed to different aspects of policy and litigation work. Here is a summary of the work that Maritza participated in this summer:

**AB 2544 (Lackey)** – This legislation allows low income persons to go on payment plans to pay off parking tickets and avoid having the DMV deny them the ability to register their cars. Maritza participated in negotiations with opponents and testified on behalf of WCLP at a Senate hearing. The bill is pending on the Governor's desk.

**Public Charge** – WCLP is part of a national network of organizations that are monitoring rumored changes to federal public charge regulations. Our organizations are sharing information and preparing policy responses if the Trump Administration proposes to deny citizenship to persons who used certain public benefits even though they were not considered to be a public charge when they received the benefits. Maritza participated in these calls in anticipation of the proposed rule change but the Trump Administration never issued the proposed rule while Maritza was here.

**Legal Research** – Maritza was asked to do quick turnaround research on a number of issues during her time with us including welfare fraud prosecutions of undocumented immigrants, another memo on the way that Housing Support Program funds have been utilized and another on the need for identity verification for receipt of public benefits,

**Advocate Meetings** – WCLP holds a bi-weekly meeting with all of the organization's litigators to discuss our active and pending cases. Maritza participated in these calls to get a feel for how we decide litigation issues.

**Law Clerks Training** – Maritza participated in WCLP’s annual training on poverty law for law clerks working at legal service programs and support centers. This day long training is heavy on the mechanics of how to file litigation but also includes a session on policy advocacy.

It was a pleasure having Maritza clerk for us this summer and I am sure we will take the skills she learned this summer into her professional career.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Herald". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "M".

Michael Herald  
Director of Policy Advocacy