

Mr. 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 thank you and Equal Justice America for supporting my work as a legal intern with Prisoners' Legal Services of Massachusetts (PLSMA).

As you know, PLSMA engages in a number of activities that serve the broad aims of vindicating prisoner rights and promoting the use of just, evidence-based policies in prison administration. Some of the organization's most impactful activities include: monitoring state prisons for poor conditions and guard brutality; conducting medical advocacy and complex litigation on behalf of prisoners; and engaging with activists and legislators to develop evidence-based reforms of sentencing procedures and conditions of confinement. Over the course of my internship, I participated in each of these tasks, which afforded considerable insight into the differing approaches to practice in the realms of law, advocacy, and policy.

The most rewarding aspect of my internship was the opportunity to work closely with clients. Prisoners seek the assistance of PLSMA because appealing denials of medical care or seeking justice for civil rights violations while in prison frequently entails overcoming a daunting and confusing set of administrative hurdles. Even with the guidance of PLSMA, collaboration is difficult owing to administrative restrictions on traditional means of attorney/client communication such as phone calls and in-person meetings. However, in spite of the difficulties faced in conducting tasks essential to legal advocacy, our clients offered meaningful contributions to their cases and displayed a deep knowledge of substantive and procedural law. It was a pleasure to learn from my clients and to assure them that advocacy pursued on their behalf would be high-quality and conducted pursuant to proper procedure.

Beyond collaboration with clients, I was thrilled to work in an environment that offered intellectually stimulating tasks in developing areas of law. For one of my first assignments, I composed a Daubert Motion to exclude the quasi-scientific testimony of a law enforcement official on the grounds that it was irrelevant and unreliable. At the time of my assignment, the exclusion of such testimony was essentially an issue of first impression in the First Circuit so I was able to craft an argument that incorporated the most up-to-date understanding of Daubert as well as modern scientific consensus in the area addressed by the official's testimony. I felt that my work in the intersection of criminal law and science not only benefitted my client, but the legal system as a whole as it works to process rapidly changing developments in science and technology.

Again, I would like to express my gratitude for the generous support of Equal Justice America. This invaluable experience informed my career path while affording an opportunity to provide crucial legal services to an underserved population. I look forward to applying the lessons of my

summer experience in future efforts to provide legal services and implement evidence-based policies in the criminal justice system.

Sincerely,

Suzy Deuster  
University of Virginia School of Law