

August 15, 2021

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

Dear Dan Ruben,

This summer, I worked at Immigrant Defenders Law Center (ImmDef) as a legal clerk on the Litigation & Advocacy Team. I applied to work at ImmDef because the organization's commitment to providing compassionate, high quality legal aid while also advocating to dismantle xenophobic policies resonated strongly with me, given my own immigrant history and my decade of experience as an immigrant and refugee youth organizer.

At ImmDef, I conducted legal research for the organization's lawsuit against the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). ImmDef filed the lawsuit on behalf of a subset of its clients, who are unaccompanied minor migrant children (UCs) whose civil and statutory rights had been violated by President Trump's Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), known colloquially as the 'remain in Mexico' policy. Secretary Mayorkas formally terminated this program in June 2021; however, MPP continues to impact UC immigration cases to this day.

When I started at ImmDef, the case had just entered Discovery. I spent the first half of my summer researching issues related to jurisdictional bars concerns, specifically 1252(g) and 1252(f), as well as diving into caselaw about organizational standing. I wrote several memos and created case charts to convey the information that I found, as well as helped our oral advocates prepare for arguments during moot sessions.

I spent the second half of my summer working on individual client cases. I conducted several client interviews and prepared a declaration for a *Casas* bond hearing on behalf of a client who had been in detention for over three years. My client is a legal permanent resident who had lived in the United States with his family for 62 years. My client's public defender failed to inform him about the collateral immigration consequences of his criminal conviction. Moreover, she did not advocate for a one-day sentence reduction, which could have protected him from detention and removal. This case was a strong introduction to "cimmigration," which is an area of law I'd like to practice in. I also learned about our client's PCR case and supported some my supervising attorney in her work on his appeal.

I worked on several other projects as well. I supported a Ninth Circuit case for asylum, completing the "country conditions" section. I also submitted a letter requesting custody redetermination for a client in detention with severe mental illness, arguing that the client did not fit under DHS's new priorities for enforcement. Finally, I worked on a memo explaining relevant statutory authority about the rights of individuals with disabilities in private immigrant detention centers.

My public interest clerkship exposed me to the work of inspiring lawyers who are providing zealous legal aid to immigrant community members while at once addressing systemic issues through impact litigation. It was a deeply meaningful and powerful experience, and I am incredibly grateful to Equal Justice America for supporting my summer with Immigrant Defenders Law Center.

Best wishes,
Viveka Ray-Mazumder
Loyola Law School, Los Angeles