

## Lindy C Velasco

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September 11, 2021

Mr. Dan Ruben  
Equal Justice America  
Building II – Suite 204  
13540 East Boundary Road  
Midlothian, VA 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben,

Thank you so much for your patience and understanding regarding my Equal Justice America (EJA) updates. Please accept my sincere apology for not doing my part to support the EJA community.

I did not complete my updates out of fear of retaliation (and subsequent loss of emotional and financial support) from my conservative Latinx family. I received homophobic, transphobic, and ableist attacks after posting on Instagram about my work with the Health and Welfare Practice at the East Bay Community Law Center (EBCLC). Regardless, I take full responsibility for not being proactive in sharing these fears and information with your team.

My experience with EBCLC still only amplified my commitment to social justice lawyering. The most memorable client I worked with was Robin. She is an elderly and disabled transgender woman living with HIV/AIDS in Oakland, California. Robin lives at an unlicensed assisted living facility where she has experienced sexual violence, discrimination, and threats of eviction. She has also been denied food by staff and forced to live with a tenant who sexually assaulted her. The facility is also inhabitable due to a rat infestation and visible human waste.

Working alongside Robin has been one of the most memorable moments in my personal and professional life. Alongside legal research, I was tasked with drafting DFEH housing complaints and her client declaration. Even when faced with immense violence, Robin is resilient, positive, and loving. I was lucky enough to meet Robin and her IHSS provider, Jesse, in person. She cracked jokes, nicknamed me “dumpling,” and was gracious with my supervisor and I. This made her case even more heartbreaking. Regardless, I am so thankful I was able to meet Robin and play a small role in her journey.

My work allowed me to continue advocacy for the LGBTQIA+ Latinx community. For example, I was able to do translations for our Name and Gender Change Workshop. I was also exposed to different communities and the host of legal limitations imposed onto them. For example, I worked with various transient clients living with HIV/AIDS. It was difficult to locate my clients

because of limited access to a telephone or the internet. In one case, the court refused an appeal to challenge an overpayment claim and reinstate our clients Social Security Disability Insurance. She was penalized for being transient and without a stable mailing address.

I know these experiences would not have been possible without the support of EJA. Thank you again for your patience and understanding throughout this process. Once again, I sincerely apologize for missing my mandatory social media posts.

If you have any additional questions or wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,  
Lindy Velasco  
UC Hastings College of Law