

July 28, 2011

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America

Dear Mr. Ruben:

My internship at the Equal Justice Center has been an extremely rewarding and informative experience. The Equal Justice Center is a non-profit law firm that provides legal representation that enables low-income working men and women to recover unpaid wages and combat other basic injustices they encounter in their work. My internship gave me the opportunity to advocate for low-income workers who cannot afford legal services, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the fellowship that allowed me to complete this incredible ten-week internship and to share some of my internship experiences.

During my internship, I worked on several cases at various stages of the litigation process. With guidance from the attorneys at the Equal Justice Center, I completed much of the work on my cases on my own. It would take several pages to fully explain all of the great experiences I had during my internship, so I will focus on one case in particular.

One of my cases involved a restaurant worker who called our office asking for legal help because he believed his employer was not paying him minimum wage and overtime. I received this case at its intake stage and made the first phone call to the client about coming in to our office for an initial visit. When he came in to our office to talk about the details of his employment, I found out that he was still working at the restaurant that he believed was underpaying him. He was a kind and polite and told me that he wanted to continue working at the restaurant but wanted to be paid fairly or to work fewer hours per week. He averaged over 70 hours per week at his job. I learned from him that one of his co-workers had a similar claim and wanted to join him. This was great news because having two workers instead of one would strengthen our claim when we approached the employer.

This case was an especially rewarding one to work on because I was able to negotiate with the employer's attorney about settlement offers, and as of July 28, we have reached an amount that is acceptable to our clients. They will also be able to keep their jobs. Their employer realized they were great workers and want to keep our clients working at their restaurant. Though I drafted a petition and prepared documents to file suit if necessary, we were able to reach an agreement that would compensate our clients for unpaid wages and would keep them their jobs. Now we are working on some of the nuances of the settlement agreement, but it appears that the case will be resolved favorably.

To be both the first one in our office to meet our clients and the one to tell our clients they would receive most of their unpaid wages and keep their jobs was a great experience and was exactly what I had hoped for in my internship. Throughout the summer, I worked on a wide variety of cases. I completed a research memo for the office, researched solvency of opposing parties, calculated wages, met with clients, drafted legal documents, spoke with opposing parties and attorneys, and learned a great deal about employment law from the attorneys in the office. I was

very lucky to work in a great office with experienced attorneys. Most of all, I was very lucky to be able to interact with my clients and to work toward workplace justice for them.

I would like to emphasize my gratitude to the fellowship for the funds to allow me to work for justice for those who cannot afford private attorneys. My internship at the Equal Justice Center is an experience I will remember for the rest of my life.

Sincerely,

Audrey Lynn
The University of Texas School of Law
J.D. Candidate for 2013