

August 31, 2011

Dan Ruben
Equal Justice America
Building II, Suite 204
Midlothian, VA 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I recently completed a summer clerkship at Migrant Legal Action Program for which I received funding through an Equal Justice America Fellowship. My clerkship was a truly rewarding experience and I write to express my sincerest gratitude to you and Equal Justice America for giving me the opportunity to participate in this wonderful organization serving a truly deserving clientele.

Even before I started my summer clerkship at MLAP, I got the sense that the experience would be different from any job I had ever held. The Executive Director kept emailing me with weekly updates on his activities and the potential summer projects they would yield. It was very clear to me that this organization placed such a high value on even its ten-week summer clerks as to bring them into the fold well in advance of their showing up to work

Upon arriving for my first day, it dawned on me just how important the clerks were to MLAP's work. I was surprised at the small size of the team but I soon grew to understand that the environment made for one of close collaboration on projects and high levels of responsibility. And while it was readily apparent that the work with which I was entrusted was vitally important to MLAP's mission, the organization's small scale allowed for flexibility in assignments that resulted in my projects almost always being in the areas of law that personally interested me. For me, that area was immigration law, a subject that MLAP frequently encountered in advocating for the rights of migrant workers. My first project was to determine the nature of a federal immigration enforcement program as it applied to the ability of states and municipalities to withdraw themselves from participation. Within my first week at MLAP, two states attempted to withdraw from the program, leaving me with a dynamic, developing problem to, along with my other projects, monitor for the remainder of the summer.

In addition to exploring both applied and theoretical aspects of specific areas of law that interested me, my time at MLAP exposed me to sides of public advocacy that I had never seen before and would not have been privy to at most other organizations. From attending senate hearings to sitting in on strategy sessions and meetings with high-level officials, I was able to see how the work that I was doing directly affected policy and thus impacted and improved the lives of migrant workers. The ability to witness the entire process and end result of my work made my clerkship extremely gratifying.

One particular anecdote from my experience at MLAP that illustrates the type of work I was able to perform for the underserved community of migrant workers stems from a call that MLAP's director received late one afternoon. A legal services provider in Kansas needed to know whether it was a good idea for a young undocumented worker to register for the Selective

Service. Such an open-ended question had many possible answers and I realized quickly that there was no simple answer. I began researching the various statutes, the Selective Service Act, Immigration and Nationality Act, Privacy Act, and accompanying Homeland Security and Selective Service Administration regulations. The project, however, was time-sensitive as I quickly learned that, if it was indeed safe for this young man to register, any delay in registration would be looked at very unfavorably.

The Selective Service Administration made very clear claims that undocumented persons were required to register and doing so would not put them at risk of removal or deportation. I knew enough to not take these claims at face value, however, and so I delved into the supporting statutes and regulations to see where the claim was based. By the next day, I had determined that, even if an immigration enforcement agency requested or demanded a record of immigration status, the Selective Service Administration would directly violate the Privacy Act of 1974 if it were to provide that information. Additionally, a failure to register would all but rule out any possibility of future naturalization or legal status in the United States. Ultimately, confident that I had explored and weighed all possible scenarios and risks, I recommended that the young man immediately register for the selective service.

I feel that both the direct service I was able to provide in this instance as well as the wonderful work that MLAP performs on a daily basis exemplify the wonderful organizations that Equal Justice America supports and allows students to experience. Without the support offered by Equal Justice America, many law students would not be able to develop their skills while performing public interest work, but, more significantly, fewer people would be able to offer their services to these underserved populations. I thank you for your support and entreat you to keep up the good work!

Sincerely,

Bayard Dodge
Georgetown University Law Center

Migrant Legal Action Program, Inc.

1001 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Suite 915
Washington, D.C. 20036

Telephone: (202) 775-7780
Fax: (202) 775-7784

August 23, 2011

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America
Building II, Suite 204
13549 East Boundary Road
Midlothian, VA 23112

Dear Dan:

I am writing today to communicate our great pleasure in having Bayard Dodge work as a law clerk with us this summer with the support of EJA.

Bayard is about to begin his second year at Georgetown University Law Center and was a wonderful “fit” for our program and for our work. Bayard came to us with great interest in learning more about immigration law and policy and in learning additional research skills to complement what he had learned so far in his first year of law school. He undertook and successfully completed a host of important projects for us, significantly advancing our work and our clients’ interests.

As you know, the Migrant Legal Action Program is a non-profit support and advocacy group representing indigent migrant and seasonal farmworkers. In the mid-nineties, our organization lost 90 per cent of its funding as the result of the U.S. Congress requiring our principal funding source, the Legal Services Corporation, to terminate funding for all national and state support centers including ours. Since that time we have relied on private contributions, contracts for services, and small foundation grants, but as you might well imagine, migrant farmworkers are not a high priority for foundations in this country and it has, consequently, been, and continues to be, quite difficult to obtain assistance from foundations. We have, therefore, cut overhead to the bone, making every effort to funnel our limited funding into services to the farmworker community.

The support of the EJA was critical to our being able to have Bayard with us this year and we are enormously grateful for your support of him and, in turn, our work.

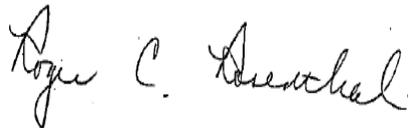
Some of Bayard's projects included a state-by-state review of school admission laws since they are often used (illegally) as a barrier to the admission of immigrant students to public school; an in-depth review of those laws in several states in which we will be doing focused work; an examination of the difference between civil and criminal immigration law violations; a review of Texas and Alabama's recently enacted anti-immigrant state laws; and a rather difficult issue involving the language of testing and evaluation of students who are not fluent in English who may be helped by assignment to Special Education programs in public school.

Bayard's work was excellent, thorough, extremely well-researched, and solidly written. For all these projects and more, he made an extremely valuable contribution to our advocacy and the legal rights of our client community, and we have EJA to thank for supporting this work this summer. We also enjoyed having him with us for the ten weeks and miss his commitment, quiet humor, hard work, and intellectual curiosity.

While he made an enormous contribution to our work, this summer also afforded us an opportunity to help him grow in his legal skills, enhance his knowledge regarding immigration law and the plight of farmworkers, and, I hope, planted the seed of interest and commitment to helping our client community and others similarly situated when he leaves law school.

Once again, Dan, we want to thank EJA and you, for your willingness to fund a student working with us this, enriching both our work and the legal experience of a gifted law student, who we are confident will make a positive contribution to the public interest in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Roger C. Rosenthal". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Roger C. Rosenthal
Executive Director