

Stan Polit

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Dan Ruben
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Mr. Ruben,

My name is Stan Polit and I am currently a rising 2L at the University of Pennsylvania Law School. I would like to thank you and Equal Justice America for the summer fellowship funding. The generosity of your organization allowed me to engage in public interest work that thoroughly expanded my understanding of the intersection between law and society.

This summer I worked with a joint program between the University of Pennsylvania Housing Rights Project and Dechert LLP. Through this program, students work with attorneys to provide free legal services for tenants facing eviction proceedings in Philadelphia Municipal Court. Each day I was fortunate to work with an amazing set of lawyers who were deeply committed to advancing social justice and helping tenants feel empowered to protect their housing rights.

Throughout my summer experience, I had the opportunity to help arrange settlement agreements for ten clients. Each case presented unique facts and legal arguments. However, each case had a consistent theme. Every client just wanted to find a housing arrangement that provided a safe home for family members and loved ones. In one instance, helping our client establish a “home” consisted of renegotiating an arrangement involving a pet. Our client lived alone in her apartment and her landlord had been harassing her about having a cat. When we asked her about the kind of remedy she wanted from the settlement, she began to cry. She explained that the most important detail for her was the ability to keep her cat. She explained that throughout all of these trying times, her cat provided her with the kind of companionship that meant more than any amount of rent in dispute. Moments like this highlighted to me that public interest lawyering is not just about using legal arguments to right a wrong. Instead, it is about understanding how the law impacts people’s lives in diverse and unique ways. Our goal was never to “win” cases. Instead, our work focused on helping clients use the law to feel safer and more secure.

This summer was truly transformative for me. It not only allowed me to use everything that I learned in my legal education but also made me more aware of the need for legal advocacy in the communities in which our schools reside. I have already been able to use these experiences and skills to help represent tenants during the school year. I look forward to hopefully using my legal education for even more good this year.

Again, I would like to sincerely thank Equal Justice America for its support.

Sincerely,

Stan Polit