



Disability Rights

WASHINGTON

Washington's protection and advocacy system

August 16' 2016

Dan Ruben
Equal Justice America
13540 East Boundary Road
Midlothian, VA 23112

Re: Fellowship Evaluation Letter

Dear Mr. Ruben,

This summer, I worked at Disability Rights Washington (“DRW”) in Seattle. I was mostly assigned to technical assistance support, where I interviewed callers about their legal issues, conducted research, and sent the caller information to help them self-advocate. It was a great experience where I was able to talk to many different people about a variety of disability and poverty related issues.

Most of the calls I received involved civil matters, including many employment discrimination, housing concerns and public benefits questions. A similar thread throughout all of my calls was the lack of funds callers had, making them unable to hire a lawyer. I would recommend many people to pro bono legal services, because DRW was at capacity the entire summer, but I knew most other pro bono offices were also at capacity. Many callers could have benefited from a quick phone call from their lawyer to an adversary, but we just didn't have the resources to do so. Although this was sometimes frustrating, I also received many thanks from callers throughout the summer saying the resources we had provided had helped their situation. Some callers were able to represent themselves in court because of our assistance; some others could more effectively do their job after learning about accommodations. Many more inmates were able to receive their medications after being mailed grievance and kiting procedures. Providing these resources allowed people to become educated and advocate for themselves, an important skill in a world where there isn't enough pro bono assistance.

Due to recent outreach by DRW, I spoke to many incarcerated individuals across the state about the legal and healthcare related issues they were experiencing. I received dozens of calls from inmates who felt they were not receiving appropriate mental health treatment, inmates who could not reach their public defender, and inmates who were seeking resources for after release. Speaking with these individuals and sending them resources was both heartbreaking and eye-opening. It has led me to consider pursuing jobs in criminal defense, post-conviction relief, and inmate rights.

315 - 5th Avenue South · Suite 850 · Seattle, WA 98104

t: 206.324.1521 or 800.562.2702 · f: 206.957.0729 · email: info@dr-wa.org · www.disabilityrightswa.org

DRW is a member of the National Disability Rights Network. A substantial portion of the DRW budget is federally funded.

Additionally, DRW conducts death investigations of people with disabilities. After receiving a death report through technical assistance, I was able to observe the staff attorneys conduct an investigation. We received the report from the victim's wife. The victim was in jail during the months leading to his death and was misdiagnosed and refused proper medical care. He then died due to medical complications. He and his family were living in rural Washington, and the difference between services in urban and rural jails became more obvious to me after observing DRW's investigation. His story was devastating, but investigating and educating the jail on what went wrong is important for the health of current and future inmates.

My time at DRW has definitely shaped my view of what I want my future career to be. My interviewing and client skills have improved and I believe I have a better understanding of the issues facing people in poverty and people with disabilities. I look forward to continuing to work in public interest and am thankful for the opportunity to do so.

Sincerely,

Ali Burton
J.D. Candidate 2018
University of Washington School of Law



Disability Rights

WASHINGTON

Washington's protection and advocacy system

August 29, 2016

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America
13540 East Boundary Road
Midlothian, VA 23112

Sent via email to katie@equaljusticeamerica.org

Re: Ali Burton Internship Evaluation

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I write this letter to evaluate Ali Burton's internship with Disability Rights Washington (DRW) for the summer of 2016. During Ali's internship, she has had two primary responsibilities. First, she has been responsible for responding to calls from individuals seeking assistance from DRW, which we call "Technical Assistance." While providing this service, Ali took often challenging calls from people with disabilities in the community, in state hospitals and institutions, and in jails across the state. After gathering information from callers about their disability-related issues and objectives, she conducted research and compiled resources to help them self-advocate. This has given Ali the opportunity to learn about a myriad of disability related legal issues, including mental health treatment, employment discrimination, Social Security benefits, and Washington jail policies. Since she began providing technical assistance, Ali's client interviewing, issue spotting, research, and written communication skills have improved significantly, which has allowed her to work independently in this area with minimal supervision.

Second, Ali has worked on a variety of substantive issues affecting people with disabilities through a number of assignments. In particular, she had the opportunity to contribute to DRW's City of Seattle curb ramp advocacy by working with an attorney to conduct document review and gather important accessibility information. Ali has also helped revise DRW's legal rights publications, which we use to help people with disabilities self-advocate. Furthermore, Ali has helped attorneys monitor one of Washington State's Residential Habilitation Centers, where approximately 200 people with developmental disabilities live; met with the expert in one of our cases; and plans to attend mediation on a pending matter in September.

Through Ali's time with DRW, she has demonstrated her commitment to and passion for assisting people with disabilities to reach their goals by developing a firm grasp on the issues DRW addresses and has achieved a more holistic understanding of disability law generally. I

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believe this broad range of knowledge and experience will be essential for her future public interest career success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anna C. Guy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "A" and a long, sweeping tail.

Anna C. Guy
Staff Attorney
Disability Rights Washington