

August 31, 2012

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America
Legal Services Fellowships
Building II, Suite 204
13540 East Boundary Road
Midlothian, VA 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben:

It is with great appreciation that I write to thank you for having selected me as a recipient for your summer 2012 Fellowship. With your support, I had the pleasure and opportunity to work at the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area. The fellowship stipend I received from Equal Justice America ("EJA") allowed me to focus on my work at the Lawyers' Committee and work full-time. Any impact I had this summer was in larger part because of your fellowship, which allowed me to finance my living situation and summer expenses.

The Lawyers' Committee presented new legal challenges each day and I found myself drawing upon my legal studies from Hastings and previous legal exposure to address each problem. For example, I had the opportunity to lobby at the State Capitol in Sacramento, California for the passage of the Trust Act (AB 1081-Ammiano [D-SF]). The Trust Act will reform California's participation in "Secure Communities," by restoring the trust between local law enforcement agencies and immigrant communities. Now, we are waiting for Governor Brown to sign bill into law.

Furthermore, I worked on was the preparation of a policy report. There, I helped investigate the issues immigrants, particularly Muslims, are facing in the naturalization process. Specifically lengthy delays, repeated requests for evidence, and/or bogus denials. The police report will address these issues. I contacted practicing attorneys in the San Francisco Bay Area and transcribed the stories reported by the attorneys.

Moreover, I interviewed asylum clients every week and prepared a memorandum for each client to present during our asylum meeting. At the meeting, we decided whether the Lawyers' Committee could partner the client with a pro-bono attorney or give the client low-fee referrals. I interviewed clients seeking asylum due to political persecution, domestic violence, and persecution on account of their LGBT status. More importantly, the asylum clients whom I interviewed reminded me why I chose to pursue this type of legal work.

Finally, the Lawyers' Committee is an excellent place to work at. Every staff member is passionate about their role in making positive change either through direct legal services, impact litigation, or policy work. I had the opportunity to work in each of these areas: do discovery and draft a motion to compel for an impact litigation class action (*Abadio v. U.S.*), interview asylum

clients, research for a policy report, and lobby. Furthermore, I received excellent supervision from my supervising attorney and every attorney I had the opportunity to work with.

Please feel free to contact me to answer any questions or provide you with additional information. My contact information is below. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Verónica Meléndez López
Juris Doctor Candidate, 2013
UC Hastings College of the Law

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CIVIL RIGHTS
OF THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

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August 30, 2012

Equal Justice America

Katie Toman
Office Manager
Via email

katie@equaljusticeamerica.org

Re: Veronica Melendez Lopez Summer 2012 Fellowship

Dear Ms. Toman:

It is with great pleasure that I write this in regards to Veronica's fellowship here at the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights ("Lawyers' Committee"). As the Director of the Law Clerk Program, I came to know Veronica very well within her capacity as a Summer Law Clerk for the Lawyers' Committee.

The Lawyers' Committee is devoted to advancing the rights of people of color, poor people, and immigrants and refugees, while maintaining its historical commitment to provide legal advocacy for African-Americans. The Lawyers' Committee is affiliated with the national Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, begun in 1963 at the request of President John F. Kennedy. San Francisco's office was founded by leading members of the San Francisco Bar in 1968, shortly after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The Lawyers' Committee -- with the assistance of hundreds of *pro bono* attorneys -- provides free legal assistance and representation to individuals on civil legal matters. In addition, the Lawyers' Committee handles policy impact cases in the areas of race, poverty, and immigration.

This summer, Veronica had the opportunity to work in each of the Lawyers' Committee's three priority areas: race, poverty, and immigrant and refugee rights. Veronica's primary focus was within the Lawyers' Committee's immigrant rights cluster. Veronica worked with staff attorneys and fellows on research and writing related to impact litigation and case development, direct client services, and a variety of non-litigation activities, including policy advocacy and community outreach for our immigrant rights policy advocacy. Each staff attorney that Veronica performed work for gave her very high marks.

During her time with the Lawyers' Committee, it became clear to me that Veronica was a dedicated advocate to our low-income clients.

Veronica demonstrated high personal and professional capacity, as well as high intelligence and critical thinking in all her work. In a setting where the demand for pro bono legal services is high and resources can be scarce, Veronica proved to be a vital addition to our organization because of her hard work and commitment to providing legal services to the community.

Veronica's exceptional cultural competency combined with her critical thinking skills allowed her to be an immediate asset to the Lawyers' Committee's immigrant justice cluster. Beyond this seemingly innate ability Veronica continuously exhibited positivity and confidence, which our clients always found comforting and reassuring.

This unique combination of skills distinguishes Veronica from her peers. It allowed her to work directly with our asylum clients from her very first day, while simultaneously having the ability to conduct complex legal research in our most complicated pieces of impact litigation. Throughout her tenure with the Lawyers' Committee, Veronica produced several short research memorandums that were very well written.

Simply put Veronica was a superb summer law clerk. It is clear to me that she has a wonderful career ahead of her.

I understand that Veronica would not have been able to spend her summer with us absent the generous Fellowship from EJA. So, I thank you; the Lawyers' Committee thanks you, and most importantly the clients served by Veronica thank you!

If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me. I can also be reached at (415) 543-9444.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul R. Chavez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Paul" being the most prominent.

Paul R. Chavez
Senior Attorney
Director of Law Clerk Program