

When I reflect on this summer, I am astounded at how quickly it passed. Although my time at ILG was brief, I am inspired by what we accomplished while I was here. In just under three months, I learned more about the law relevant to my intended practice than I had in the entire previous academic year. It is empowering to consider the diverse projects I worked on, and the small but vital impact each will have upon an individual's case. For all of my dedication to serving the clients, and creating quality work product for the firm, I know that I am the one who benefited most from this experience. My summer here has equipped me with greatly improved research and writing skills, invaluable exposure to the complexities of different processes within immigration law, and more insight into the both the system as a whole, and the everyday realities faced by practitioners and noncitizens alike.

Although working through nuanced legal questions and navigating a new firm culture was intimidating at times, it was a powerful mechanism for growth. My experience was shared with a wonderful group of legal assistants, a fellow summer clerk—and now friend—, a warm and supportive administrative staff (Mateo and Elizabeth's bright smiles were a welcome burst of energy on a Monday morning), and a trio of brilliant, dedicated attorneys. ILG encourages excellence, and that is reflected in its phenomenal staff. It was an honor and an inspiration to be surrounded by such lovely human beings for the past ten weeks.

My projects ranged from small, discrete writing assignments, to policy-oriented research and several larger briefs. I began my summer with several asylum cover letters and accompanying expert witness searches, but by the end of week one, my "caseload" had grown to include multiple memos and long-term projects. Over the course of the summer, my assignments included the following:

- Memo regarding the finality of administrative orders of removal;
- Asylum cover letters which required research into how a gender transition or coming out may constitute "extraordinary circumstances," thus overcoming the one year bar;
- Petition for Review to the Ninth Circuit;
- Motion to Proceed In Forma Pauperis;
- Research on the categorical approach in the context of Oregon's drug schedule in the 1990s, and whether certain drug convictions qualify as aggravated felonies;
- Prehearing Statement for a Guatemalan asylum seeker, for whom I also helped secure an expert witness and medical evaluation;
- Research on equal protection claims for an upcoming litigation effort;
- Memo regarding *sua sponte* motions to reopen based upon newly acquired eligibility for relief;
- Research into intentionality as an element for certain removal charges against children;

- Memo exploring the requirements of a motion to reopen *in absentia* as they applied to a noncitizen who provided a legitimate foreign address to ICE and was consequently ordered removed without notice of a hearing;
- Memo on the firm resettlement bar to asylum;
- Expert labor search and theory development to present child labor as persecution;
- Request for an expedited asylum interview based upon humanitarian grounds;
- Multiple referral letters to mental health professionals and other subject matter experts;
- Supplemented evidence packet for an Ethiopian asylee;
- Contributed research and writing to an amicus brief to be filed with the BIA regarding the custody v. release dichotomy, and arguing that DHS custody should be understood in the context of control, not confinement.

I was fortunate to receive an impressive scope of projects, and each presented a unique learning opportunity that I will carry with me moving forward.

I also enjoyed opportunities to attend Continuing Legal Education (CLE) events, experience USCIS's local office, and observe hearings at the Immigration Court. One of the most rewarding elements of my summer was a weeklong trip to the South Texas Family Residential Center to advocate for refugee women and children in Dilley, Texas. Despite its name, the facility is an internment camp, or as many of the long-term staff call it, "baby jail." When I asked the attorneys if I could take a week to volunteer there, I was granted permission. Their willingness to change course and support my desire to return to Dilley is a wonderful reflection of ILG's values of advocacy and service.

The past ten weeks at ILG have strengthened my lawyering skills and helped me become a more competent professional. I have come to know a wonderful network of advocates, and my time here has reinforced my optimism that I will find a place in the immigration law community.

Sincerely,

Erin Diann Carter