

DATE

Stanford Law School Postgraduate Public Interest Fellowships Selection Committee

RE: Letter of Support for [REDACTED]

Dear Selection Committee:

I write this letter on behalf of the [REDACTED] in support of the application of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] for Stanford Law School Postgraduate Public Interest Fellowship in [REDACTED].

Founded in [REDACTED] after the U.S. Supreme Court reinstated the death penalty, [REDACTED] is dedicated to providing zealous and effective legal representation to people facing the death penalty in [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], to bringing impact litigation to challenge criminal justice practices that are used to control the lives of poor people, people of color, and other marginalized groups in [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], and advocating for positive (and against negative) criminal justice policies and legislation. [REDACTED] has also made it a priority to bring more transparency and accountability to the operation of government agencies, particularly prisons, jails and law enforcement.

[REDACTED] has a long history of zealous legal representation and a reputation for the highest quality legal work. Two [REDACTED] cases, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], resulted in unanimous decisions by the United States Supreme Court setting aside [REDACTED] death sentences due to racial discrimination at capital trials. In [REDACTED], the Supreme Court in [REDACTED] threw out the death sentence and conviction, citing racial prejudice by a prosecutor who kept African Americans off the jury in order to ask an all-white jury to avenge the [REDACTED] verdict.

Most recently, the [REDACTED] won the reversal of [REDACTED] death sentence in [REDACTED] on the ground that his lawyers failed to investigate and present mitigating evidence. The [REDACTED] then moved forward with preparing for resentencing. Through extraordinary persistence and tireless litigation, the [REDACTED] wore down the State's resistance and managed to persuade the Attorney General's office to extend a plea offer to a life sentence. [REDACTED] case is a classic example of a case in which [REDACTED] involvement has in all likelihood made the difference between life and death.

As a fellow at [REDACTED], [REDACTED] would represent people facing the death penalty in [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], two of the most active death penalty jurisdictions in the nation. [REDACTED] work would involve a full range of activities that are critical to effective representation in capital cases. [REDACTED] is involved in a substantial number of [REDACTED] death penalty cases because [REDACTED] is the only death-penalty state in the nation that does not provide representation to indigent death-sentenced inmates in state post-conviction proceedings. In addition to providing representation to persons facing the death penalty who are in desperate need of assistance, [REDACTED] also seeks to address through its capital litigation caseload issues of systemic unfairness in the administration of capital punishment in [REDACTED]: the failure of the State to provide adequate funding for indigent defense representation, incompetent defense representation, prosecutorial misconduct, and racial discrimination in jury selection practices.

██████████ would carry out ██████████ fellowship by working with ██████████, which is currently comprised of two senior attorneys, a managing attorney, two staff attorneys, and two investigators. The senior attorneys and managing attorney would provide direct supervision and guidance on all aspects of her work. ██████████, the unit's managing attorney, will be ██████████ direct supervisor and will provide day-to-day support to ██████████. In addition, ██████████ has long-standing ties to numerous human and civil rights organizations throughout ██████████ and ██████████. Along with ██████████ attorneys, I will introduce ██████████ to key stakeholders on capital punishment and criminal justice issues who will help her to determine how to best carry out her work.

We are committed to providing ██████████ with training opportunities and the support and supervision necessary to carry out her fellowship. Through previous experiences hosting public interest fellows, we have in place a sound framework for hosting recent law graduates. ██████████ will enter a work environment that is fully prepared to help her launch her legal career in the public interest and civil rights field.

██████████ will be provided with an office, a computer, phone, and access to a fax, copiers and office cars for work-related travel. ██████████ will also receive support from the paralegals/ investigators who work in the ██████████ and would be made available to assist her with collecting documents, interviewing individuals and other aspects of her project.

We welcome the opportunity to host ██████████ as a fellow. ██████████ deep interest in the rights of people facing the death penalty was readily apparent from our very first conversation and, I believe, that her background will help us expand the ways in which we approach our work. Death penalty and criminal justice reform is needed in various ways throughout the nation, but the need is particularly acute in the South with its legacy of slavery and the continuing disparate impact of the system on the poor and communities of color. Hosting ██████████ will expand our capacity to meet the growing needs of these communities.

Sincerely,

██████████