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Stephen Pokart
The Legal Aid Society
199 Water Street
New York, NY 10038

Dear Mr. Pokart,

I am a third-year student at Harvard Law School and I am writing to apply for a position as an attorney with The Legal Aid Society's Criminal Defense Practice. I am committed to a career in public defense and I am drawn to the Legal Aid Society because of its pioneering work as the oldest and largest defenders office in the country. I also share the Legal Aid Society's belief that people are entitled to more than just free legal counsel—they deserve zealous advocacy and justice.

My experiences over the last two summers as an intern with the Brooklyn Defender Services and Bronx Defenders has cemented my desire to work as a public defender in New York City. At both offices, I experienced every aspect of trial preparation, from meeting clients at arraignments, to drafting motions and preparing cross-examinations, to observing *voir dire* and opening and closing statements at jury trials. I watched judges set excessive bail for low-level misdemeanors crimes and listened as clients told of being repeatedly stopped and searched by the police. I witnessed how even the most minor criminal charge can have destructive effects on a person's family, job, and housing. I want to be a public defender because I do not want to watch from the sidelines as these atrocities occur. It is a huge responsibility to hold someone's liberty in your hands, but it is a responsibility I strive to tackle head on.

As an intern with the Brooklyn Defender Services, I represented clients at arraignments and, in one case, argued for the immediate sealing of an ACD due to the potential for negative immigration consequences. The judge granted the motion and my client was relieved and overjoyed with the outcome. This experience was immensely meaningful, as it emphasized for me that in a criminal case there is no action that is too small, too minor, or not worth the effort; there is no step of the process that does not directly affect a human being's life. It is this belief that motivates me to work hard and advocate passionately for every client, in every case.

My commitment to defending disenfranchised clients was the impetus for my participation in the Harvard Legal Aid Bureau (HLAB), a two-year clinic in which I commit to spending over twenty hours per week representing indigent clients in housing and employment law matters. Working under the supervision of a clinical instructor, I manage my own caseload, conduct client interviews, file and argue motions, negotiate with opposing counsel, and represent clients at hearings and trials. In addition to providing much-needed legal assistance to people who cannot otherwise afford it, this clinic has also provided me with the opportunity to develop strong trial skills and build long-term client relationships. In my first year with HLAB, I conducted a bench trial for a Spanish-speaking client facing a no-fault eviction. I successfully objected to the introduction of irrelevant evidence on direct examination and exposed the landlord's retaliatory motives for eviction on cross-examination. The case was ultimately dismissed on a motion for directed verdict, on the grounds that the tenancy had been improperly terminated. I am excited to continue improving my written and oral advocacy skills during my second year with HLAB.

I believe that my strong legal research and writing abilities, my fluency in Spanish, and my commitment to indigent criminal defense would allow me to make a substantial contribution to your office. I would welcome the opportunity to further discuss my qualifications. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Olivia Davis