

September 17, 2007

Honorable Judge John Sedwick
United States District Court
222 W. 7th Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99513

Re: Tom Anderson Sentencing Hearing

Your Honor:

If today I were to recommend Tom Anderson for a position in public service or leadership, I would do it with 100 percent confidence in him as a man of integrity and commitment despite the charges and conviction against him.

Tom is an honest man. I knew him at age 19, when as chairman of the Young Republicans I recruited him to join our organization. He and I have shared over the years many details about our lives, things that only good friends would share. We pursued lots of campaigns together. I've walked with him through his personal relationships; I've watched him study for and earn his legal degree; and I've seen him develop his consulting business. Because of our long friendship, we know each other's good and colorful points, if you may.

In many ways, because of my role as an associate pastor in my church, I have been able to double my camaraderie with Tom with spiritual counsel at times. As those who know him may well testify, Tom is a great talker. Yet I know him to listen. The challenge before him today is his greatest ever. I have seen him take it with a new humility. His reflective attitude and contrite mind about it have sincerely impressed upon me what he has learned from this ordeal. What had happened, as I see it, was borne out of an honest intention on his part, not as a deliberate concoction to mislead or to misuse his position as a legislator.

While working as his legislative aide during the time of this investigation and seeing Tom under stress, I witnessed him continue to display genuine helpfulness and cheerfulness with those who called upon him. When constituents would call his office, Tom would feel that there must be something he can do to help. That is his barebones character trait: being cheerful and helpful. I have seen Tom determined to help someone in need, someone that he believes in and, as I reflect upon it now, most often he exhibited the heart to support the underdog. That, I've seen him do a lot.

Finally, I sat in on much of Tom's court trial. I have to tell you, I was shocked at the outcome. Yes, I had a curiosity about the details but never found them damning. Politicians talk. They boast. They parlay. They feign. They shake

hands. Unwarrantedly, the benign jury was given a sordid education in politics that displayed it as a conniving thing. Politics is working with people. It is the art of negotiation and getting things done. Tom did that well, especially when he believed in a cause. In this instance, his intensity was misconstrued. I just have to say that. Tom genuinely believed in his service to youth counseling and bringing children back to Alaska for treatment; he believed enough in the merit of a local residential treatment center to work hard for them *before* any favors were supplied. He served to his best ability, irrespectively, because – and this is my point – he is that kind of person.

In conclusion, while I would quickly describe Tom as competent, funny, and a fighter, Tom is also genuine. He has expressed his remorsefulness to me regarding the black mark on public perception of the legislature due to his actions. He recognizes clearly today the distinct line between public duty and personal gain and has repented for his sloppiness. I have witnessed him grow through this challenge. I can trust in what he tells me, and I sense he is up to the task of continued public service. Though that seems like a far distant reality at this moment, as I said in the beginning, I would recommend Tom today, if I could, for a public post with absolute confidence in his responsible and open framework – despite, through, and after all that has happened to him.

One stranger came up to me after the trial who said that he thinks the people of Alaska will one day say “we are sorry” for what we did to Tom. I think that’s true – if we don’t bolt lock his chances. A person like Tom, with a strong core, is hard to dismiss. His public-mindedness remains. His passion for bettering the community remains. He and I were talking about positive things to do for Alaska up to the day of his indictment. Then, as the trial dust settled, we picked up those positive conversations again. That’s just the way it is with Tom. This eventful detour in his life, I believe, has made him a stronger, more humble person to work with. I am honored to stand side by side with my friend.

Respectfully submitted,


Eugene Harnett
