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Gary & Sandy McElrath
2106 Country Club Drive
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Re: Dr. Jason Newsome's Employment Status

To whom it may concern:

Like many citizens in Bay County I was disturbed to learn how quickly Dr. Newsome was discharged as a result of Commissioner Thomas' allegations last month. I have met with Dr. Newsome on numerous occasions and I was well aware of his crusade against obesity and its growing prevalence in our community. After all, his position required him to serve the best health interests of the citizens of Bay County

Since retiring from my position as President/CEO of bay Medical Center, I have been actively involved in serving as a voluntary teacher in the Junior Achievement program in Bay County. Dr. Newsome also served as a volunteer teacher. He believed in the program and felt like he could help the students in our JA classes. His civic-mindedness was not confined to his office as County Medical Director.

As a voluntary teacher, I can personally attest to the fact that improper diet plays a vital part in a student's inability to academically perform in a classroom. My teachers confirm that many students are so hyped up on sugar that they can't sleep at night and often fall asleep in the classroom. They were all supportive of Dr. Newsome's role in changing snack and cafeteria diets at the public schools.

My only regret is that I was not made aware of the controversy surrounding Dr. Newsom's challenge of the national Dunkin Donut's ad campaign before it became a public football. I know both of the principals associated with the new Dunkin Donuts franchise on PCB and only wish that I had a chance to intervene as a mediator before it reached a flash point. I believe we could have arrived at a mutually agreeable solution. Both are solid businessmen and have been very involved in community affairs over their careers, and neither are vindictive men.

In summary, I am of the opinion that after years of an overly complacent administration in the Health Department, Dr. Newsom was the refreshing face that we needed in Bay County to support the health of our citizens. I would be very much supportive on any efforts that would return him to the position that he so admirably served these past two years. He is a good man and deserves a second chance. We can't afford to sacrifice good leaders to the frivolity of politics.

Sincerely,


Ron Wolff