

November 15, 2013

To whom it may concern,

I am writing on behalf of Bob Filner, my former husband. We were together for 25 years, married for 23, and separated in 2009. Two of the qualities I most admire are his extraordinary drive to make life better for working people and the less fortunate and his unwillingness to accept the status quo. He works harder than anyone I've ever known and has gone to great lengths to right a wrong or provide assistance to someone who asked for his help. He was successful in righting both individual wrongs and systemic wrongs.

There are countless examples of people in despair and terribly ill, even close to death, who needed surgery or an expensive medication approved by their health insurance, but had met with repeated delays or denials. Bob would pick up the phone to talk directly to the insurance company manager and more often than not was able to resolve the matter in the patient's favor.

Bob has been roundly criticized for his quick anger but there are many cases of that anger fueling his determination to shake things up to get attention for a cause that needed someone to shake things up and demand something be done. An important example was following the scandal uncovered by the Washington Post in 2007 of the shameful conditions at Walter Reed Hospital for soldiers returning from war in Iraq and Afghanistan and the bureaucratic nightmare suffered by so many of them upon their release when they sought help for continued care or post traumatic stress. The powers that be knew they had to direct funds to clean up the mess but Bob felt the amount was insufficient and would only serve as a band aid. His efforts eventually led to the Administration adding billions of dollars for veterans care in the 2008 budget.

There are so many of these examples over the 30 years he was in office, beginning with the school board, then the City Council, and Congress. He was renowned for the efforts he and his staffers made to serve his constituents.

Bob and I have stayed in touch since our divorce. In the final weeks of his tenure as Mayor and when he resigned, I was very concerned about his mental health and contacted him. I've seen him on a handful of occasions, one being soon after he had completed his two-week treatment. As he talked to me about it, I was surprised that he completed the program and how much of an impact it had on him. He has an effective therapist and is taking his treatment seriously. He is spending time with his son and grandchildren.

Please consider the lifetime of good Bob has done for so many people as you make your decision about his sentencing. Thank you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Joe Merrill". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the page.