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Dr. Shapiro,

I joyfully write this letter of endorsement on behalf of Dr. Debra Borie-Holtz. Throughout my 8 years of working with Dr. Borie-Holtz as both an undergraduate student and as a colleague, I can honestly say that you would be hard-pressed to find a teacher and mentor who cares more about their students and their success both during and after taking her class than she does. She was easily the most influential and informative individual I had met during my undergraduate studies, but that touches only the tip of the iceberg. After graduation, I was able to join her at a research center at Rutgers and her mentoring increased exponentially. I can say with zero doubt that I would not be in the position I am in today if I had never taken her class. As I could write many, many pages on how wonderful Dr. Borie-Holtz is, I was try to keep it as brief as possible.

As background, I first met Dr. Borie-Holtz as a student in her Research Methods class in Spring 2012. As someone who had very little methods background, I was quite nervous taking the class. The first day, however, completely eliminated that nervousness. Dr. Borie-Holtz was an exceptional teacher who was effective in relaying her knowledge and experience in research to her students. She taught her class in a very clear and straightforward manner that challenged us to achieve more. I excelled in her class in no small part by her teaching, encouragement, and flexibility with office hours. She often stayed way past the time she had planned to end office hours in order to make sure all her students had their questions answered.

After taking her class, I was looking for an internship to fulfill my Bloustein requirement. After speaking with her, she offered me an internship working with her on *The Politics of Regulatory Reform* – a book that you are quite familiar with as her co-author. I had never done any sort of project like this before, but that didn't matter to Debbie. She still took me on and mentored me through the many hours of data collection and coding that analyzing state regulations required, eventually advancing me as the intern supervisor. It was such an enjoyable experience that upon completing the internship, I stayed on voluntarily for almost another year to see the book through to its' completion (as did several other interns). That is a testament to both the work environment we operated in and the skill of Dr. Borie-Holtz as a mentor.

As I neared graduation in December 2012, I wondered what my next steps were in terms of employment. At the time, Dr. Borie-Holtz was working as a Senior Researcher with the Education and Employment Research Center (EERC) at the School of Management and Labor Relations here at Rutgers. A part-time analyst working for the center was leaving and she offered me a job to replace the departing analyst. I gratefully accepted the offer, and eagerly leapt into my first post-college job.

As I started the job, I soon felt like I was in over my head. I wasn't familiar with some of the software being used nor what it was like in that job environment. The only life raft keeping me afloat during those first few weeks was Dr. Borie-Holtz. Once I was able to pull myself up, we worked as colleagues on survey designs, mixed-methods analyses, and data collection. After nearly a year, the job became full-time and I began to expand my role at the center. Through the entire period I worked at the Center with Dr. Borie-Holtz, there were many experiences where I was asked to conduct analysis that I had either never done before or didn't know how to approach. These were the times that Dr. Borie-Holtz's expertise, education, and, of course, her patience, really stood out. Some of the analyses that we were performing at the time were far beyond what many other researchers from across the country, working on similar federal grants, were conducting. When she departed the Center, it was quite a tough adjustment for me to function on the job without a mentor at my side. However, she had laid the groundwork for my success to continue, a success I maintain today. Whenever I have sought her advice or assistance in that time, she always makes herself available to offer advice and assistance when I have needed it, and it has greatly helped me.

A few years into my employment at EERC, I began to also work as a part-time research analyst with Dr. Borie-Holtz at the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling. My position involved programming surveys in Qualtrics and conducting low-level analyses – the same type of work I did with Debbie at EERC. Soon, this role expanded into client interactions, design discussions, and larger responsibilities. Eventually, I was promoted to Project Manager at the Center, and today, I now work alongside her on several major projects. Just as she did at EERC, she continues to introduce me to new experiences and new challenges and allows me to tackle them by myself while providing that safety net ensuring nothing goes (too) wrong. She always treats me as an equal colleague despite my age and my comparatively limited years of experience.

When I made the jump from EERC to an Institutional Research analyst position at Ocean County College, her support – both as a reference and as a mentor for the hiring and interview process – was vital in securing that job. As I have grown in that role, she has been a resource in survey development and in statistical analysis

There are several themes that have permeated my time with Dr. Borie-Holtz. The first is that she has a tireless work ethic. I honestly don't know how she survives. Besides her teaching obligations and her leadership as the Senior Survey Scholar at Eagleton, she continues to be active in her community and with her family, who I have gotten to know over the years. It is immensely impressive, and I believe that is a large contributor to her success. It makes you want to work just as hard and she shows a dedication to her work that is not always found. Secondly, she is incredibly generous – with her time, her knowledge, her experience, and in her assistance. Despite being as active as she is, she still takes the time to always help you when you need it and uses every opportunity as a teaching moment. Her experience before academia is both impressive and helpful in approaching challenges, and her experience in academia drives her to the solution.

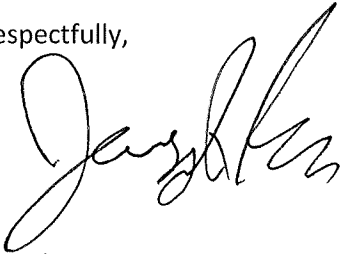
Finally, she excels in her role as a mentor and is as invested in your future success as you are. When I was applying to graduate school, I applied to both EJB for the Masters in Public Policy program as well as the Ecology and Evolution program at SEBS. Instead of nudging me towards the EJB program, she had a

discussion with me in which she asked me about my passions and goals. After speaking with me, she said it was clear that I wanted to enroll in the Ecology graduate degree and gave me nothing but encouragement. Even last month, as I struggled to find time to write my thesis, she offered to take on my workload for a week (on top of her already burdensome workload) just so I could have a few days to write my thesis. As if I needed another example, it demonstrated that she cared about my success not just our joint research projects, but about my life goals and success overall. Throughout our many work and non-work related discussions in the past four years, she has been a source of inspiration and knowledge that has been unmatched during that time period.

To close, I cannot truly express how wonderful my time spent with Dr. Borie-Holtz has been. I owe where I am in my professional life right now to her, and it was all because she took a chance on her student and gave me the opportunity to succeed.

If you would like to speak further with me about Dr. Borie-Holtz, please feel free to contact me. Thank you for the opportunity to provide my endorsement of Dr. Debra Borie-Holtz.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joseph', written in a cursive style.

Joseph

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