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To whom it may concern:

It is with pleasure and enthusiasm that I write to wholeheartedly recommend Mark Pennington to serve as your Scout Executive. I have known and worked closely with Mark since 1994. He is my professional advisor in many of the positions I have served here, from District and Council fundraising, creating the Council Campmaster Corps., Council Camping Committee Chairman, building out an extensive Council High Adventure Committee, 100th Anniversary and most importantly for the years when I was Council Vice President for Programs. I have also worked with Mark for many years as a unit leader and Executive Board member. I have seen him wearing all of the hats.

Mark facilitates volunteers in growing our Scouting program. When we approached him about creating a Council High Adventure Program to expand both our local High Adventure and the Council contingents to Philmont, Sea Base and Northern Tier, Mark's response was, "Let's do it." He went right to work on getting us the tools we needed and the contacts to make things happen. We literally went from 0 to 90 almost overnight; Mark opened doors to keep the youth waiting lists low and open our programs to more and more Scouts. Our first Sea Base trip was supposed to be 18; we took 36 Scouts. We've had nothing but success since with Mark guiding and advising us. He translates our operational aspirations into success, both financially and program wise. Mark knows the Scouts and Scouters as well, and grows them to their fullest potential. He remembers names and events; everyone is important to him.

I served for some time as the Council Program Vice President, and Mark was my staff advisor. Our team put on some amazing 100th anniversary programs, and Mark made sure we had the resources to make everything we did come off without a hitch. We put on a huge Scout-a-rama at the fairgrounds, with almost everyone in the entire Council showing off their stuff, massive top-caliber evening stage shows (a la NOAC) with over the top fireworks and music. This, and all the other programs were a great success. Mark quietly worked the background so the volunteers shone, but asked them the hard questions too. Mark is an innovator and leads us in progressive programs.

With Mark's coaching, we upgraded camp, programs, and long term plans. Mark listens to our wish lists, and then engages the community to build up the people and resources to make things happen. He is the best team player I've ever worked with on any project from Scouting to our litigation teams. If Mark would work in the private sector, I'd hire him in a heartbeat. However, Mark is not a "yes" man. We've agreed to disagree over the years. He is also not a "no" man. He is a team executive. While his love of Kentucky basketball may be misplaced, his loyalty knows no bounds.

Years ago, when Scouting Councils began "competing" with each other for resources, programs and funds, Mark began to assist us in working together instead of against each other. We partnered with other Councils, in sharing resources such as Woodbadge courses, Order of the Arrow Chapter service locations, and the greater use of resources for the benefit of the Scouting program. Mark knows everyone on the eastern seaboard in the Scouting program.

With Mark's direction and guidance, he has taken our Council from a small back room Council where we patched together broken objects and squeezed out third-world programs to a fiscally transparent, efficiently operated first class Scouting program of which we are all enormously proud. His vision and values are the Scout oath and law.

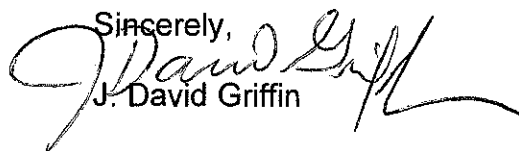
When virtually all of our school systems shut out the Scouting program, Mark began the next day working to reopen the doors. He is polite, persistent, and successful in reopening many doors which closed to us over the years.

Mark is a no-nonsense speaker and presenter. He knows how to deliver good and bad news, and how to handle tough customers. He thinks both in and outside of the box, and his innovation abilities know no bounds. Mark is also well versed in the languages of communication; be it accounting, computer use, audits, difficult board members, unit leaders and contributors. He has developed a comprehensive communications strategy with a group of stakeholders with very conflicting agendas in a team approach so that everyone involved feels like this is their product and plan.

When we kicked off the Venturing program here, Mark was out front in selling the concept. This was a program that was met with a stoney silence in our geographic area when first introduced. Mark viewed it from our perspective and instead of force-feeding the program, he took the time to cultivate relationships with groups Council-wide to create and grow this program. I was an early Venture Unit leader; Mark ensured our district had the resources we needed to make this program work. We wanted co-ed high adventure; he made it happen. We wanted pistol shooting; he oversaw the grants.

In short, Mark "gets it," and gets it done. No excuses. No issues. His management and work skills are beyond reproach. Mark Pennington is a self-motivated team player. In my thirty years of practicing law and advising and assisting a broad range of business, governments and nonprofits, I place him in the top 1% of the people with which I have worked. I have never worked with anyone who can hold a candle to his work ethic. He is also an honest, ethical and delightful person. This rare combination of a positive personality with impeccable skills makes him literally one of a kind. I wholeheartedly recommend him and I will personally regret the loss of the opportunity to continue to work with him. Mark is not only a great Scouter, fantastic Executive, mentor to many, and my long time staff advisor; he is also my friend.

I would be happy to expand on any and all questions, comments or areas of interest you may have about Mark Pennington. I invite your call any time.

Sincerely,

J. David Griffin