

12/15/23

The Honorable Araceli Martínez-Olguín
United States District Court Judge
San Francisco Courthouse, Courtroom 10 — 19th Floor
450 Golden Gate Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Judge Martínez-Olguín:

My name is Kate Bowers and I am Aaron Boren's girlfriend of close to 4 years. I'm writing this letter in support of Aaron as he faces the consequences for his role in taking part in the fraudulent PPP loan activity for which he has been charged and accepted responsibility.

I met Aaron in Roseville one evening in August of 2019 while I was finalizing my divorce from my husband of 25 years. I initially didn't intend to start a new, serious relationship with anyone for the foreseeable future, but after getting to know Aaron I was impressed by and attracted to his kindness, compassion, honesty, his love and support of his family, and his overall adventurous personality. We started spending more and more time together and I'd say we became an official couple during the spring of 2020.

Aaron was working in the car dealership business when we started dating, and had been in that line of work for many years. He parted ways with the last dealership for which he was consulting and started planning on starting a new business of his own. Aaron began researching and taking courses for a variety of small businesses ideas that he was interested in. He was approached by an acquaintance he had known for over 5 years who had been a trusted financial and business advisor, who encouraged Aaron to apply for a PPP loan through him. I wasn't aware of all of the details of the agreement, and figured he knew what he was doing. I did question Aaron several times about the rules and legal responsibilities of this loan, but it seemed he had the understanding that the loan could be forgiven once he got his business and payroll up and running.

I'm not sure of the exact timeline, but at some point soon after receiving the funds, Aaron became extremely concerned with the situation he had gotten himself in to and mentioned to me he was not going to attempt to have the loan forgiven, but that he was going to work to pay back the loan as soon as he was able. He worked constantly at building his businesses in order to be able to pay back the loan. This caused a huge amount of stress and anxiety for Aaron. I witnessed a man who had been happy, confident and content become debilitated from panic attacks, to the point I had to drive him to the ER because the stress had become so intense that he could barely function physically. His overwhelming feelings of remorse began long before charges were filed against him. At night he often has nightmares and periods of panic. Having to admit to his parents and sister what he had done brought extreme shame and the feeling of having disappointed his loved ones.

For me, once I realized the situation he was in, I knew I had a major personal decision to make- to continue standing by Aaron's side or to end our relationship. At that point I knew I couldn't abandon this person who I loved and had done so much to support me in my life, in his time of need. That being said, living with this situation has been one of the most difficult things I've dealt with in my life. Even though I have made the commitment to support Aaron through this ordeal, I have had unprecedented anxiety and personal stress as we await sentencing and try to figure out how to explain the situation to my family when the time comes. When my worry is at its worst, I cope by focusing on the future and envisioning the opportunity to get back to the simple, happy life we had in the past.

As I mentioned above, Aaron is a compassionate person. We share an interest in volunteering and supporting charitable organizations, and early in our relationship on multiple occasions the two of us prepared and served dinner at The Gathering Inn in Auburn for the people they serve who are experiencing homelessness. He often takes it upon himself when we go out to eat to bring food from the restaurant and give to a person on the street who looks like they are in need and could use a meal. In our close-knit community, he is the person people call when they need help - whether it's driving a sick family member to the hospital, making household repairs for neighbors, towing cars out of the snow, or sitting down to talk and offer guidance friends experiencing a personal crisis.

As a former college athlete and Olympic hopeful, last school year Aaron signed up to help coach the local high school track team in multiple events, dedicating many hours to the program and becoming a mentor to the students, who continue to keep in touch and share their progress with him. He is also an Army veteran and has acted as a role model to younger vets who are going through their own struggles. Aaron prides himself on being a good friend and member of the community.

Aaron's family is very important to him, and recently he helped his youngest daughter move to California from Indiana after graduating with her Nursing degree to live with us here in Grass Valley. She is very close with her dad and excited to be with him after a long separation. She depends on him emotionally and for guidance as she begins her adult life. His oldest son and his family live nearby, and Aaron loves to spend time with his grandkids and help his son and daughter in law any time he can. He is very close with his parents and sister and is fortunate to have their support throughout this time of personal and emotional distress.

Aaron's choice to get involved in this fraudulent PPP loan activity was extremely surprising to me. This is totally out of character for him and I know he will always view it as the biggest, most profound mistake of his life. I am here to support him as he focuses on how he will proceed with his life in the future. My plan is to continue to share my home with him and support him financially, if needed, as he re-establishes himself through self employment. Although I know he will never pursue illegal or questionable activities again, he understands that if that were to happen, our relationship and my support would be over. I come from a family that has a very high respect for the law, and the fact that I'm involved with someone in this situation is surreal and something I never would have imagined.

In closing, my hope is that my letter will shed some light on Aaron's character and his importance in many people's lives. He looks forward to moving forward and using this horrible situation as a major learning experience that will guide his actions and decisions for the rest of his life.

Thank you,

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