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Forty Under 40
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Dear Forty Under 40 Judges,

I am writing in wholehearted and enthusiastic support of Josh Mandelbaum as a candidate for the *Forty Under 40* class of 2017.

I have had a close working relationship with Josh in both the public and non-profit sector for the past 15 years. Josh served as a policy advisor in the Vilsack/Pederson administration from 2003-2007. He was a passionate and knowledgeable resource respected by legislators across party lines for his thorough research skills and commitment to assisting lawmakers in developing good public policy. I suspect his successful experience in state government led him to choose to earn a law degree, graduating with distinction from the University of Iowa in 2009.

It was during his time in law school that I drafted him to join the Advisory Board of the newly created UI REACH program. UI REACH is a post-secondary education program for students with intellectual and cognitive disabilities. The campus-based program provides students with opportunities to explore career options and develop skills for independent living. Josh has helped to shape the program, first as a board member with a student perspective and now as a community leader in Des Moines. He used his knowledge and experience in public policy to help low income families secure access to funds through Pell grants for which UI REACH students originally did not qualify. His insights, advice and advocacy for the students have contributed to the success of the program and to its recognition at the top of the list of "*20 Incredible Colleges for Students with Special Needs*" by BestCollegesOnline.

Josh's commitment to spreading the word about this life-changing education program inspired him and his bride to create table tents at their wedding reception introducing and promoting UI REACH to a new audience of his friends and family. Perhaps that best sums up Josh's passion and heart and why I believe he is an exceptional choice for *Forty Under 40*.

Respectfully submitted,
Sally Pederson