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DECLARATION OF LAURA RAMIREZ

I, LAURA RAMIREZ, hereby declare:

1. I am the parent of Larry and Sandra Ramirez. I make this declaration based on my own personal knowledge and if called to testify I could and would do so competently as follows:

2. My son Larry is nine years old and just completed the fourth grade at Joseph E. Gascon Elementary School in Montebello. This fall, he will enter the fifth grade at Eastmont Intermediate School in Montebello. My daughter Sandra is thirteen years old and just completed the seventh grade at Eastmont Intermediate School. She will enter the eighth grade at Eastmont Intermediate School this fall.

3. The purpose of this declaration is to describe the conditions at my children's schools, including the lack of textbooks, the lack of internet access, over-heated classrooms, and filthy bathrooms. I moved to the United States from Mexico for a better future, but I have been very disappointed by the depressing conditions at my children's schools. Sometimes I think I should move to another state because my children might have better opportunities or get a better education elsewhere. I don't know if it's because I'm poor that schools are allowed to treat my children so badly, but I pay taxes and work hard, so I don't think it's fair that my children have to attend schools that give them so few opportunities. I want my children to have a good education, but the schools do not provide my kids with the basic resources that they need in order to learn.

Joseph E. Gascon Elementary School:

4. Gascon Elementary School does not have enough books. When Larry was in third grade, he never had any of his own books and always had to share his books with other students in his class. When he entered fourth grade last year, the book shortages continued. At the start of the school year in September, the teachers said that they had ordered books, but that the books would arrive late. In December, a teacher informed me that the books had still not arrived but that the school had borrowed some textbooks from another school. In the end, Larry received only two books that he could bring home: a reading book and a mathland workbook. He never brought home a science book nor a social studies book. In fact, his class never received a set of social studies books. Instead, Larry's teacher just read aloud to the class about social studies.

1 5. For homework, Larry frequently brought home photocopied assignments. It would
2 be better if he could bring home a textbook, so he could check his homework against a textbook.
3 Kids need the books to remind them how to do the new things they learn in school. When Larry had
4 questions about how to do homework, he couldn't check the textbook because he didn't have a social
5 studies, science, or spelling book that he could bring home. Because he didn't have examples to
6 show him what he was supposed to be doing, it was sometimes very hard for him to do his
7 homework. Although the teacher gave him one example of how to make sentences at the beginning
8 of the year, he sometimes forgot the subject-verb construction, and could have really benefited from
9 having a textbook with some examples at home with him.

10 6. There are not enough toilets for the number of children at Gascon. There are almost
11 1200 students at Gascon, yet there are only three toilets for the girls and presumably, three toilets for
12 the boys. There is usually a long line for bathrooms during recess, so kids spend their recess waiting
13 for the bathrooms rather than playing. The bathrooms at Gascon are very dirty. The toilets in girls'
14 bathrooms frequently do not flush. When water overflows onto the floor, the bathrooms really stink.
15 Last year, some of the students' mothers were so disgusted with the situation that they volunteered
16 to clean the bathrooms. The principal, however, said that only staff members could clean the
17 bathrooms, so the mothers were not permitted to help out. The bathrooms rarely had any toilet
18 paper, soap, or paper towels. The water fountains were also filthy.

19 7. Teachers assign trash pick-up duty for bad behavior, so sometimes the children have
20 to walk around the school yard cleaning up food and trash. I think bad behavior should be punished
21 with more homework or something educational, rather than cleaning, which the school should do
22 anyway.


23 **Eastmont Intermediate School:**

24 8. When Sandra had classes in the bungalows last year, there was no heat or air
25 conditioning. During the spring and towards the beginning of summer, Sandra complained that she
26 was frequently hot and perspired a lot in class. It was very difficult for her to concentrate on learning
27 because the heat made her so uncomfortable.

9. Most of Sandra's homework involved research projects. The school library, however, was not very helpful because it rarely had any of the books she needed for research.

10. Frequently, Sandra's instructors assigned research projects using the internet. Sometimes it was difficult for Sandra to complete this homework because we do not have a computer at home. The school wasn't particularly helpful either because the school closes the computer lab at the end of the school day and during school time, there is only one computer per classroom, so she can't use that computer for very long either. If the school assigns computer-related homework, then the school should provide the kids with more time on the school's computers or buy more computers so that more kids can use the computers. Having only one computer lab for the whole school is not enough.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed this 7 day of August 2000 at Los Angeles, California.


Laura Ramirez