Declaration of Gerardo Montaño

- I, Gerardo Montaño, hereby declare:
- 1. 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. I am 17 years old and I go to Belmont High School.
- 3. Belmont High School is in very bad shape. The condition of the school makes it very hard to learn. There is much talk about the new Belmont High School building, but people forget about how bad the current school building is.
- 4. The lack of air conditioning is a major problem. We have no air conditioning in my math classroom. The roof of my math classroom is all glass because it is in a room that did not used to be a classroom. Therefore, the sun shines down on us throughout the period. This makes the room unbearably hot. We get tired, and it is very hard to concentrate on math. Sometimes it is so hot that I must go to the bathroom to put cold water on my face. By the end of this class, my clothes are often soaked with sweat. I would have done much better in math if the room were not so hot.
- 5. Math is not the only class where I do not have air conditioning. In fact, many of my classrooms do not have air conditioning or do not have air conditioning that works. For instance, my advanced physical science class does not have air conditioning, and my U.S. History class is sometimes very, very hot. The air conditioning does not work in my English class, even though it is in the new building. With the exception of my technology class, I sweat throughout every period at school. This makes it very hard to concentrate, as the heat makes me very tired.
- 6. It is also hard to learn when the teachers show up late to class. For example, my teacher for computer class last year came late to class almost every day. We had to wait outside the classroom in the hallway until she arrived. Many times he did not show up until 10 minutes after the class was supposed to start. By the time everyone was seated, more than one-quarter of the class period had gone by.
- 7. We also do not have enough books. My English class last year was contemporary composition. However, we were not given any novels to bring home. We did have one book.

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but it contained mostly short stories. The book had some good short stories, but we should have read some novels, too, in a contemporary composition English class.

- I did not have a regular locker to put my belongings in. I did have a locker in the 8. physical education room, but some of my stuff got lost because I did not have a locker in the main part of the building to put my stuff in. I know other students who did not get a locker, too. Also, some lockers are jammed, so they cannot open, and other lockers cannot be closed. These lockers should be fixed, so that more students can have lockers to put their possessions in.
- The bathrooms are also not in good condition. There is almost never any soap, 9. toilet paper, or paper towels. Also, some sinks run constantly-you cannot turn them off-and other sinks cannot be turned on. And the doors on the stalls do not have locks. Because there are no locks on the stall doors and no toilet paper, I cannot go to the bathroom at school. I have to go to a friend's house to use her bathroom. Sometimes I cannot leave school, and I have to wait the whole day to go to the bathroom. It is uncomfortable, and my mind is focused on when I will be able to use the bathroom. This takes away from my learning. Also, it is difficult to clean my hands in the school bathrooms because there is no soap; and when I do put my hands under the water, I have to dry them on my clothes because there are no paper towels or toilet paper.
- During the week of June 25, 2001, my friend and I were in the caleteria during 10. homeroom and we saw a fat rat. The rat went away and then we saw it later with a piece of fruit in its mouth.
- Belmont is a year-round multitrack school, and I am on track B. Belmont is 11. overcrowded, even though it is on the multitrack system. My friends and I call the school the "traffic jam" because it feels so overcrowded in the halls there. It's hard to get to class early because there are so many people in the halls that it's hard to get through the halls in the five minutes we have between classes. The multitrack system is hard because we forget stuff we've been learning when we go off track in the middle of our semesters. We come back on track and they give us tests and we're feeling all rusty from being off track. That happened with the Stanford 9 tests a few months ago; we just got back from being off track and then we had to take the Stanford 9 tests and I didn't feel prepared.

12. The conditions at Belmont have slowed my learning down. I want to be more prepared for college than I will be. I know I could be more prepared if my school gave me a better education. I deserve a better school.

I declare under penalty of perjury of the laws of the State of California and the United States that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed this 3rd day of July 2001 in Los Angeles, California.

Gerardo Montaño