

**Declaration of Aurora Martinez**

I, Aurora Martinez, 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 the chair of the Foreign Languages department at John C. Fremont High School in Los Angeles. Fremont High is a multitrack year-round school with three tracks. Two of the three tracks are in session at all times, so the school is always occupied by students. I teach Spanish I, Spanish III, and AP Spanish literature on the A track. I have been teaching at Fremont High since 1996.

3. During my first year teaching at Fremont High, I saw rats in my classroom almost every day. My classroom was on the second floor of the main building. I complained to the administration several times that year about the rats, but nothing was ever done to solve the problem. I have taught Spanish in extremely poor neighborhoods in third world countries, but I never saw rats in a classroom until I came to Fremont High.

4. There are over 900 students in "Spanish for Spanish Speakers I" classes at Fremont High, but we only have 187 Spanish for Spanish Speakers I textbooks, so there are at least 713 students in Spanish classes that need books and don't have them. In March, 2001, I ordered 408 more textbooks, but I did not receive them, until the middle of October, 2001. I teach two Spanish for Spanish Speakers I classes and until the books arrived in October, I had only one set of 25 textbooks to use with over 60 students, so my students have to share books in class. I could not assign homework from the few textbooks I had because there was not enough books for each student to take home. I shouldn't have had to worry about not having enough books. I frequently called the publisher to find out when the books I ordered were going to arrive. I spoke to Fremont High administrators about lack of textbooks just about every day. The students were the ones who suffer the most. Because I had to constantly worry about getting books, I got tired and it was hard to focus on my teaching.

5. Because I didn't have enough books to send home with students, the only way for me to assign homework was to either photocopy pages from the textbooks or write assignments

1 on the blackboard. I usually just wrote assignments on the board because it is really difficult to  
2 make photocopies at Fremont High. There is only one copy machine that teachers can use at  
3 Fremont high, and it is almost always broken.

4 6. Only four of the sixteen teachers in the Spanish department have clear teaching  
5 credentials. The rest have emergency credentials. Teachers that have emergency credentials have  
6 a much harder time when they start teaching than do credentialed teachers, because they have to  
7 take classes to get their credentials at the same time as they are preparing lessons for their  
8 students. The reason Fremont has to hire so many uncredentialed teachers is that so many  
9 teachers quit every year, and other teachers at Fremont have told me that the reason that so many  
10 teachers quit every year is that the administration doesn't give them support or the materials they  
11 need to be successful in the classroom.

12 7. At least one Spanish class on C track spent the first two months of the 2001-2002  
13 school year with no permanent teacher. The teacher who was supposed to teach that class quit  
14 after her first day of school, and the school couldn't find a replacement until the first week of  
15 September. In the meantime, the class was taught by at least three different substitutes.

16 8. There are often not enough classrooms for each teacher to have one, so some  
17 teachers have to move from room to room during the school day. At the beginning of the 2001-  
18 2002 school year, one of the brand new Spanish teachers was scheduled to teach in five different  
19 classrooms every day. I volunteered to give up my classroom for the new teacher so that she  
20 wouldn't have to travel every period, but then I had to travel to two different classrooms every  
21 day. On October 1, 2001, the administration finally made one of the bungalows available for a  
22 Spanish teacher, so now there are enough classrooms so that Spanish teachers don't have to travel  
23 from room to room anymore.

24 9. The halls are so packed during passing periods that students have to push through  
25 crowds of people to move anywhere. It is difficult for students to get to my class on time because  
26 of the crowds. For example, my students often come late to my first and second period classes in  
27 room 512 because they are coming from the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> floor in the main building, which is about  
28 500 meters away. When I walk to my room during the passing period, I have to constantly ask

1 students to move out of my way because there is no space to pass. They make extra space for me  
2 to pass them in the hallway because I am a teacher. If students didn't make extra room for me, I  
3 would be late too. Everyone feels overwhelmed at Fremont because there are so many people  
4 there, and there is no feeling of community.

5 10. Fremont High is so crowded that students are not given the opportunity to take  
6 certain classes because there is no space. For example, I know that an eleventh grade student in  
7 my Spanish class wants to take AP history, but there is no space in the class for her. She came to  
8 Fremont High because her neighborhood school was so overcrowded that it did not accept her.  
9 Her counselor told her that if she wanted to take an advanced history course, she had to go to a  
10 community college. There is not enough room in elective classes at Fremont High either, so  
11 counselors assign some students to be service workers instead of assigning them to classes. Being  
12 a service worker is not an educational experience for students because they are not responsible for  
13 learning the curriculum for the class. I don't think that it is right to make students do errands for  
14 teachers because there are not enough elective classes for them to take.

15 11. My students have told me that the bathrooms at Fremont High are dirty and  
16 smelly. I have students that try to only use the bathroom at home because they do not want to  
17 use the bathroom at school. Even students who want to use the bathrooms at school have a hard  
18 time doing so because most of the bathrooms at Fremont are locked most of the time. The  
19 bathrooms right next to room 118, which is one of the classrooms in which I taught, are always  
20 locked during class time, and they are unlocked only during lunchtime and nutrition. The closest  
21 unlocked bathroom to my classroom is in room 530, but I have to go through the middle of a  
22 classroom full of students to use it and it is only for teachers to use.

23 12. My AP students have told me that they feel like they are getting a second-class  
24 education at Fremont High. Most of my students want to go to community college because they  
25 feel that they don't have the kind of preparation they need in order to go to a four-year college. It  
26 makes me sad to hear my students say this because they are smart, and given the opportunity they  
27 could succeed in college. Fremont High has a drop-out rate of over 75%. Out of 5000 students  
28 that we have this year, only 500 are seniors. I have students in my classes that are supposed to be

1 11<sup>th</sup> graders but they are still trying to pass the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. One of my students dropped out of  
2 school last week because he is almost 18 but he is still in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade.

3 I declare under penalty of perjury of the laws of the State of California and the United  
4 States that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed this 8th day of November, 2001 in Los  
5 Angeles, California.

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