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JUL 10 2001

Thank you Madam Chair and Board members. My name is Michelle Delino Vricella. I live three doors down from the Edmund Burke School at 2947 Upton Street, NW.

I want to state at the outset that I am not opposed to the schools and institutions that already exist on our residential street, that is, Howard Law Center, The Levine School of Music, The Hillwood Museum, The Netherlands Embassy and the Edmund Burke School. And I applaud the Burke School's academic excellence. What I am opposed to is the EXPANSION of the Edmund Burke School. You have heard testimony regarding the traffic and safety problems that already exist on Connecticut Avenue, Tilden, Van Ness and Upton Streets. Let me please note, we have yet to see the impact of the BZA APPROVED expansion of the Levine School of Music's 350 seat concert hall, which has yet to be built. I'd like to reiterate what was said earlier about the increased traffic due to the Hillwood Museum's re-opening and the Howard Law Center's new library. We simply cannot take any more expansions on our narrow, two-way residential street. The Burke School's plan simply DOES NOT FIT in the small space acquired for expansion without utilizing and further abusing our public streets and alleys. Their proposed Compliance Plan or "Pledge" for students and parents is simply unenforceable and not something the neighbors feel can be taken seriously given the School's history of non-compliance. The burden on the neighbors to police such a pledge is unfair. I'd like to also mention the incredible amount of time, energy and money it has taken the neighbors over the past year and a half to fight this proposed expansion. I personally shot all the video we presented earlier, which by the way took many hours and days of my time away from my freelance business. Why are we, taxpayers and homeowners, given the arduous task of policing the traffic and safety of our streets?

& I would like to leave you with additional footage plus a piece produced by FOX5's John Henreckan Nov. 19 2000

Is it fair to the neighbors to have to endure yet another expansion on our block? Is it fair to the commuters on CT Ave. who will have to be inconvenienced by the Burke School's use of one of the two lanes allocated to rush hour traffic heading north in the morning? Mayor Anthony A. Williams is obviously aware of the traffic problem. He conducted a town hall meeting on May 14th to specifically address the traffic problems that plague Ward 3 and Connecticut Ave. As one of the outcomes of that meeting, The Mayor, along with DPW and the Office of Planning, are now studying the impact of private schools on residential neighborhoods.

In closing, I'd like to applaud my fellow neighbors and certain members of the ANC for their hard work and the countless days spent away from their families, friends and hobbies to take on the opposition to the school's expansion. We realize we are in a somewhat unpopular position to fight a private school that is needed in this city – HOWEVER, we firmly believe that this proposed expansion will seriously affect our quality of life. We LIVE here and we too want what is best for our families. If it is that important for Burke to expand then I would like to propose that the School move to another location in the city where they can acquire enough land to make the improvements and additions to their curriculum and increase their student and faculty population to suit their needs.

BZA
Case No. 16611
Exhibit No. 187

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16611
EXHIBIT NO.187