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Mr. Geoffrey Griffis
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street Suite 201
Washington, DC 20001

June 6, 2003

Dear Mr. Griffis:
I write regarding the National Child Research Center in Cleveland Park, Case 16970. As both a past parent/ long-time NCRC supporter and as a 20 year resident of Highland Place, I am disturbed by NCRC's high enrollment numbers and the escalting traffic caused by them today.

Traffic on Highland Place has become hazardous to us all. Congestion is due to twin forces: first, NCRC's 3 sessions a day requires 6 drop-off /pick-up car lines; second, NCRC operates at 60% over the legal occupancy limit. In 1998 the Director informed us that NCRC would enroll 108 students; at present enrollment is closer to 168, with an additional 10 or more students planned.

Highland Place was not designed to absorb such congestion, especially 6 times a day. At present, the cars curve all the way down the street, making passage dangerous and often blocking Ashley Terrace completely. I know because, living at the junction of Highland and Ashley, I find it dangerous to go west on Highland during drop-off / pick-up times while turning around is itself difficult with the cars stretched down the block. Second, parents who park on Highland to escort children to school often block driveways and frequently walk in the middle of the street, thereby clogging the street traffic further. One proposal to ease this problem is to turn Highland into a one way street; however, I am now convinced that making Highland one-way will only encourage drivers to go faster. Third, unlike other neighborhood schools, NCRC neither adequately monitors the drivers blocking traffic lanes all along Highland nor adequately supports carpooling —a shift from prior policy that affects local residents as well as those walking to the Cleveland Park metro.

NCRC is a first-rate school and I fully admire its fine faculty. Many of us here chose Cleveland Park precisely because of its strong schools and have rich memories of our children's years at NCRC. At the same time, its inflated enrollment, its lack of a viable car pool system, and its parents' disregard for neighborhood safety prompt this letter. However, this crisis causes us to reflect on what makes a good neighborhood in the middle of a capitol city, and it allows Highland residents an opportunity to consider our own roles in keeping it safe and welcoming. NCRC's refusal to come to terms with its neighbors' concerns and its unwillingness to remedy the critical traffic situation is neither in the spirit of the school nor representative of Cleveland Park at large.

Clearly both the inflated numbers and speed of the cars pose serious dangers to NCRC children and to neighborhood children alike. I ask you to consider the detrimental effect of such intense congestion on those who visit and live on Highland, and I invite NCRC to work with us in maintaining a safe and welcoming neighborhood. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours,
Eugenie Silverthorne

BZA
Case No. 16970
Exhibit No. 211

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16970
EXHIBIT NO.211