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

Re: Application of the National Child Research Center (NCRC) 16970

Dear Chairman Griffis:

My family has owned the home at 3204 Highland Place, NW since 1967. My mother occupied it until it was rented three months ago, since June of this year (coincidentally, to a family with children attending NCRC).

When we moved to Highland Place 35 years ago, we were barely aware of the existence of NCRC. There was no noticeable increase in traffic, no competition for scarce parking, in short, the school was like just another house on the street.

Over the last ten or so years, that situation has changed dramatically. When visiting my parents who still lived there, traffic and parking on the street during drop-off and pick-up times was congested or even impassible. Our house is at the "elbow" of the street, where Highland Place bends. We are diagonally across the street from the school. This is a particularly vulnerable spot in terms of traffic flow. The staff at the school seemed to be making every effort to streamline the process and minimize the impact to other traffic, but despite their good intentions, the fact remained (and still remains) that the laws of physics don't allow two objects to occupy the same space.

I understand that there is a proposal to make Highland Place one way. I don't see how this will provide a solution to the problem of congestion. The problem, essentially, is that the traffic generated by NCRC exceeds the

BZA
Case No. 16970
Exhibit No. 224

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16970
EXHIBIT NO.224

capacity for which Highland Place was designed. Unfortunately, given the short and relatively narrow layout of the street, that excessive amount of traffic (which is not moving traffic; the cars stand in the street during those times) has a negative impact on the residents who live there, many of whom have sent their children to the school.

The National Child Research Center is part of the neighborhood, part of Highland Place, and has been for more than 35 years. But the question to be decided by the Board of Zoning Adjustment will essentially be: does NCRC have the right to adversely effect its neighbors? Do the expansion plans of the school take precedence over the wishes of the homeowners, who have a great financial and emotional stake, to keep Highland Place, as much as possible, as it has been for decades – quiet, calm and safe? And finally, is NCRC essentially another house on the street, or is it a business which carries greater weight than its neighbors?

I would hope that the Board would study this matter cautiously and keep present in its mind that, as it is applying for a variance, the school should bear the burden of showing that its plans don't adversely effect the street, rather than the burden falling on the homeowners to show that it does. If the character of this unique street is lost, it will never be recovered.

Sincerely,

Pia Newman

Cc: Mr. Ken Laden
Department of Transportation
2000 14th Street, NW, 7th Floor
Washington, DC. 20009