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Testimony before the BZA, November 4, 20003

My name is Virginia Stern. I have lived with my husband, Robert Stern, at 3218 Newark Street, N.W. since 1976, but in fact we moved into Cleveland Park to 3312 Highland Place, a little more than 40 years ago, in August 1963. We have raised our four children in the neighborhood and continue to be involved in community activities.

Every weekday morning I walk to the Cleveland Park Metro via 33rd Place, Highland Place, Ashley Terrace, the 30th Street stairs, and Ordway Street, dodging the oversized cars of NCRC parents and drivers. No matter what traffic plan NCRC attempts to impose, and how many red-vested traffic guards they hire, Highland Place looks and feels like a moving car dealership. The activity on this once-quiet street has changed, and only because of the school. It has become too dangerous for children who live here to walk or ride bikes alone. Our neighborhood peace and safety has been eroded by the adverse impact of this institution, which now wants to expand its campus even further.

If I chose to drive to work, it is impossible to back our own car out of our own driveway during any of the five daily NCRC drop-off and pick-up times because the parade of cars turning from 33rd Place to Newark Street hardly ever has a break. The drivers want to by-pass the neighbors, drive away as fast as possible, to have their way no matter what the neighbors think. But **we live here, maintain our property, and pay taxes to the District.**

36 years ago, our three-year-old son Mark, who is profoundly deaf, attended NCRC. He attended Children's Hospital Hearing and Speech Center in the mornings and NCRC in the afternoons. Of course I supported the school. I direct a national program for students with disabilities, and I know how important it is that young children with disabilities be included in preschool programs. In those years and through the 1980s, I could back out of our driveway, go on errands, and never consider traffic on Highland or Newark.

I oppose the proposal to expand the school, which would only result in more drivers and more congestion. The school can enhance its programs in many fine directions without more cars. NCRC calls itself "a world-class model", suggesting that the cognitive development of its students would be enhanced by an indoor motor center where the children could jump and ride tricycles when they can't go out in the rain. However, I would not want any of our five grandchildren to enroll in NCRC now. My concept of a truly world-class institution is one that is based on honesty. If the motor center is also envisioned as a professional development and conference center, it should not have been disguised as a tricycle track. **Our experience, as neighbors, has been that honesty has not been a characteristic of this institution, and we are seriously concerned on the uses of their proposed expansion.**

Case No. 16970
Exhibit No. 283
Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
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