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**BEFORE THE STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY**  
**STATE OF NEVADA**

In Re:  
Nevada Connections Academy Notice  
Closure or Possible Board Reconstitution

**DECLARATION OF N. HELD**

I, N. Held, hereby declare under penalty of perjury as follows:

1. I am a 9<sup>th</sup> grade student at Nevada Connections Academy ("NCA"), and have been a student ~~NCA~~ for over four years. I make this declaration in support of NCA relative to closure proceedings before the State Public Charter School Authority held on May ~~25~~ 26, 27, 2017, and continued to an unspecified date in 2017.

2. The matters set forth in this declaration are based on my own personal knowledge. If called upon to testify, I am competent to testify to the matters set forth herein.

3. I want to explain the amazing experience I have had and how devastating it would be if there was any interference or interruption with my school's ongoing operations. I went to a traditional brick-and-mortar public school for grades 3<sup>rd</sup> and my experience was plagued with issues. I was a very fast learner and was far ahead of many of the kids in the class and as a result I rarely paid attention in class. My grades began to slip and I ended up forgetting things that I knew before I was taught them. I was also on the verge of being a social outcast. I cared little about playing games and spent my time buried in books which left me without many friends. As time went on, even the Gifted and Talented ("GT") class proved to be a little slow for me. If it wasn't for the fact that the teachers were very caring, I would have simply slipped away and become a social outcast.

1           4.     After 3rd Grade, I was homeschooled for two years. I grew a somewhat social life  
 2 thanks to my friends who lived across the street and was finally challenged by my curriculum. It  
 3 was in 6th grade that I began with NCA. I was quickly put into the GT Literature, GT Language  
 4 Arts, and GT Science and given the freedom I needed to work at my own pace. My first semester  
 5 was an amazing experience. I spent only as much as I needed on each subject before I  
 6 moved on to the next and I got to choose the order of lessons I worked on ~~each day~~. This  
 7 freedom quickly paid off and my grades skyrocketed to straight A's.

8           5.     By the end of my first year I had completely earned the trust and respect of my  
 9 teachers and was given even more freedom including the ability to complete the entire week  
 10 any order I chose. I had kept my straight "A" status as well. It was during the second year  
 11 however that NCA changed my life. The year began normally, however, about 3 months into  
 12 the school year, was diagnosed with Chiari, a medical issue caused by a part of the brain  
 13 hanging out of the skull. My surgery was set for March 2014, so my grandparents set up a trip  
 14 to Hawaii beforehand.

15           6.     After the second semester started, I began to push ahead and complete school  
 16 work before it was due in order to nullify the amount of work I would have to do after the  
 17 vacation and surgery. My teachers helped out as much as they could by giving me the help  
 18 needed. Because of their helping hands, I ended the year as an "A" Student.

19           7.     The first surgery was followed by what can only be described as a medical  
 20 disaster. I was diagnosed with numerous other conditions and was forced into a chain of eight  
 21 surgeries that lasted up until summer of 2016. Each surgery would stop my work for at least 2  
 22 weeks and if I had still been in a public school it would have been 6 weeks. My teachers  
 23 were always helpful and would ease the workload to help my recovery and ~~never~~ heeded  
 24 to move much I could resume work faster. Despite the many complications however, I managed  
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1 to excel in school. I've maintained my "A" status since joining and have also earned the right to  
 2 participate in all Honors classes. Most impressively though, I picked up Japanese and am  
 3 exceling in my second year as of now. I owe so much to NCA, both about my education and  
 4 even my daily life.

5  
 6 8. I would be devastated if my right to choose this exceptional school to receive my  
 7 education was taken away from me. I believe it would cause me irreparable harm and I do not  
 8 know of any other option available in Nevada that could provide me the educational opportuni  
 9 that Nevada Connections Academy provides. I ask that the Authority stop efforts to close my  
 10 school or interfere with its operation.

11 9. During the hearing before the Authority on May 25, 2017, I noticed that some  
 12 attendees were using the word "sob story" to describe the stories of NCA students. If one can  
 13 look at someone who has endured eight brain surgeries and still manages to excel in school as a  
 14 "sob story," then there is no doubt that the person is looking at it all wrong. My story is one of  
 15 success thanks to NCA, and the true "sob story" would be if there were no school for students  
 16 like me to attend that would help me to reach my full potential.

17  
 18 I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Nevada that the  
 19 foregoing is true and corrected and was executed this 9<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2017, in Henderson  
 20 Nevada.

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 22 N. HELD  
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