DECLARATION OF ERIN VERCANDE

COMES NOW, Erin Vercande and pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, declares under penalty of perjury that the following is true and correct:

1. My name is Erin Vercande, I am a resident of Decorah, Iowa, and I am over 18 years old. I have personal knowledge of the facts as stated herein.
2. I am the mother of three children, S.V., C.V., and R.V. who attend school in the Decorah School District.
3. I am a member of the Arc Iowa.
4. S.V. is ten years old and should be enrolled in the fourth grade at Decorah Middle School.
5. C.V. is seven years old and is enrolled in first grade at John Cline Elementary School.
6. R.V. is three years old and is enrolled in preschool at Little Farmers Pre-school.
7. Because my children are under the age twelve, they are not eligible to receive any of the currently authorized COVID-19 vaccines.
8. S.V. has a brain injury, cerebral palsy, and a history of strokes and epilepsy.
9. The CDC has identified strokes and cerebrovascular diseases as risk factors for severe illness from COVID-19.
10. S.V. has a Health Plan that covers his many special needs related to his medical condition, including transfers throughout the school day. (See Attached Exhibit A).
11. S.V.'s treating doctors and specialists have informed me that because of his underlying medical conditions, he is at risk for severe complications if he contracts COVID-19. (See Attached Exhibits B and C). His neurologist has also indicated that he may also experience more severe seizures and further brain damage if he contracts COVID-19. (See Attached Exhibit C). His doctors have stated that for S.V. to return to school safely, everyone around

him should observe strict COVID-19 safety protocols and wear a mask indoors. (See Attached Exhibit B and C).

12. Because of S.V.'s medical and cognitive issues, and the fact that he is nonverbal, he cannot follow instructions easily. It is much more difficult for him to adhere to current mitigation strategies, such as wearing a mask, handwashing independently, or social distancing, so it is even more important that others wear a mask and follow CDC guidelines around him.

13. Last year we had our children enrolled in person because the school provided S.V. with the necessary accommodations to remain safe, including that all staff were required to be masked.

14. I have had phone calls with the principal and superintendent to seek these same accommodations for this school year, but my requests have been denied.

15. I am faced with an impossible choice between my child's safety and education. Because the school is not providing necessary modifications, I have had to make the extremely difficult decision to pull S.V. out of school to avoid sending him in person in an unmasked environment, which would be a very high risk given his medical conditions, as well as against the recommendations of his doctors and the CDC.

16. My husband and I are terrified of sending our children back to school, especially with all of S.V.'s health complications. We have really struggled with the decision, but we do not feel like we have any option.

17. I believe that if everyone was wearing a mask and the school was following the guidance and recommendations from the CDC, my children would be safe in school.

18. I am seeking to have HF847 blocked so that my school will be able to require universal masking as necessary to meet its obligations to my child.

I swear under the penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Dated this 2 day of September 2021, at Decorah, Iowa.

Erin Vercande, Plaintiff