1	Timothy Snowball, Cal Bar No. 317379	
2	tsnowball@freedomfoundation.com Shella Sadovnik, Cal Bar No. 267551	
3	ssadovnik@freedomfoundation.com Freedom Foundation	
4	PO Box 552 Olympia, WA 98507	
5	Telephone: (360) 956-3482	
	Facsimile: (360) 352-1874	
6	Attorneys for Plaintiffs	
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9	SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE	
10	LOS ANGELES, ST	ANLEI WOSK
11	H.K., A.S., A.P., and C.P.,	
12		Case No.:
13	Plaintiffs,	
14	V.	COMPLAINT FOR DECLARATORY JUDGMENT,
15	UNITED TEACHERS LOS ANGELES,	INJUNCTIVE RELIEF, AND
16	a labor organization; <b>CECILY MYART- CRUZ</b> in her official capacity as President	DAMAGES
17	of UNITED TEACHERS LOS	
	<b>ANGELES</b> ; <b>JEFFREY GOOD</b> , in his official capacity as Executive Director of	
18	UNITED TEACHERS LOS ANGELES; LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL	
19	<b>DISTRICT,</b> a political subdivision of the	
20	State of California	
21	Defendants.	
22		
23		
	COMPLAINT NO.	P.O. Box 552, Olympia, WA 98507
	1 No.	P: 360.956.3482   F: 360.352.1874

#### INTRODUCTION

Since Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) schools closed more than a year ago due to concerns over the then unknown COVID-19, Plaintiffs' children have variously become suicidal, isolated, depressed, addicted, clinically obese, and had their future prosperity needlessly imperiled. While the need to shutdown schools was unclear in March 2020, the scientific consensus is now indisputable: schools can and should safely re-open. Keeping schools closed not only harms children's academic performance but has also been shown to cause ongoing and in some cases devastating harm to their social, mental, and emotional well-being.

But instead of following the science, Defendant LAUSD has followed the demands of United Teachers of Los Angeles's (UTLA) to keep schools closed unless their outlandish and unwarranted political agenda is granted. Rather than allow its members to return to class and resume teaching, UTLA and its president Cecily Myart-Cruz have held the current well-being and future prospects of LAUSD students' hostage. UTLA's demands have included "defunding the police," the shutdown of publicly funded privately operated charter schools, and cash payments. LAUSD schools have remained closed, and Plaintiffs' children have continued to be harmed without scientific, legal, or moral justification. While UTLA has the right to seek a political agenda, it does not have the right to aid and abet the continuing harm of Plaintiffs' children.

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For these reasons, Plaintiffs H.K., A.S., A.P., and C.P., bring this action on behalf of their children seeking declaratory and injunctive relief, and compensatory damages.

#### JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- This action arises under the California Constitution and applicable 1. statutes.
- 2. This Court has jurisdiction over complaints for injunctive relief under California Code of Civil Procedure (CCP) §§ 525 and 526, and jurisdiction over complaints for declaratory judgments under CCP § 1060.
- 3. Plaintiffs are seeking combined damages in excess of \$25,000, and their case is properly classified as an unlimited civil case. CCP §§ 85, 86, and 88.
- 4. Venue is proper in the California Superior Court of Los Angeles County, as the Defendants are located/reside in Los Angeles County, wherein the Plaintiffs are also denied the ability to receive an in-person education. CCP §§ 393(b), 394(a), and 401(1).

#### **PARTIES**

#### Plaintiff H.K.

5. Plaintiff H.K. resides with their spouse and two school-aged children in LAUSD. Plaintiff H.K.'s son is eleven years old and is in the sixth grade. H.K.'s daughter is six years old and is in the first grade. Both children either attend or previously attended LAUSD schools.

exclusively online instruction.

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7. This began a downward spiral for both children. Plaintiff H.K.'s son has experienced mental, emotional, and social harm due to the continued closure of schools and an exclusively online "education." Specifically, before the schools closed, Plaintiff H.K.'s son was socially active, outgoing, and a member of his school's student council. No more.

In March 2020, both children were told not to return to class and began

- 8. Since the schools closed, Plaintiff H.K.'s son has become increasingly socially isolated, spending the majority of his time alone in his room. He has experienced deep depressive episodes which have negatively affected his ability to interact with his family and friends (through the computer). In fact, Plaintiff H.K.'s son has gone from having little interest in video games or online entertainment to having a full-blown video game addiction. His parents have even been forced to monitor the time he is supposed to be in online "classes," because he plays video games instead of paying attention to the teacher.
- 9. Plaintiff H.K.'s son often experiences emotional outbursts, consisting of extreme anger and distress. In the fall of 2020, he received a poor mark on a school assignment and informed his parents that he wanted to kill himself. A school counsellor was consulted.
- 10. Plaintiff H.K.'s son has also found it increasingly difficult to stay organized with online "classes," in which communication between teachers and his

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peers is cumbersome and unreliable. The number of hours of actual instruction have also been drastically reduced.

- 11. Since the schools closed, this is a day in the life of Plaintiff H.K.'s son:
- Rolling out of bed 10-15 minutes before his first online "class" begins, often wearing the same clothes from the previous day.
- An online "class" from 9am to 10am, then a 30-minute break.
- Then another online "class" from 10:30am to 11:30am, then an hour break.
- Then a final online "class" from 12:30pm to 1:30pm, then "school" is concluded for the day. Total instruction never exceeds three total hours.
- After "school," Plaintiff H.K.'s son spends an hour on homework, then spends the rest of the day either in bed or playing video games.
- 12. Since the schools have closed, H.K.'s daughter has become much more socially shy and withdrawn. She is no longer as outgoing as she was when attending fulltime in-person classes.
- 13. Plaintiff H.K.'s daughter required the retainer of a fulltime childcare provider to supervise her during her online "classes." The cost of this provider was borne by H.K. and their spouse.
- 14. The iPad provided by the school also did not function properly, so H.K. and their spouse were required to purchase a new computer for her education.

- 15. When the daycare provider could no longer provide services in October 2020, H.K. and their spouse had no choice but to place their daughter in a private "Pod" program costing them an additional \$1,500 a month.
- 16. H.K. and their spouse are expected to act as "teacher's assistants" due to the fact that the majority of schoolwork is now expected to be performed after online "classes" have concluded. This time commitment has put pressure on their available time to care for their family's other needs.
- 17. H.K. and their spouse assumed that LAUSD would make decisions and act in the best interest of their children. Not only did they not expect the schools to be closed for such a long time, or continue to be closed, but did not think LAUSD would continue to require the children to participate in ineffective online "classes."
- 18. H.K. and their spouse fear retaliation by UTLA or UTLA affiliated teachers for their advocacy for the well-being of their children and participation in this lawsuit.

#### Plaintiff A.S.

- 19. Plaintiff A.S. resides with their spouse and two school-aged children in LAUSD. Plaintiff A.S.'s son is eleven years old, suffers from autism, and is in the fifth grade. A.S.'s daughter is fifteen years old, is in the ninth grade, and attends a private school. Plaintiff A.S.'s son currently attends a school in LAUSD.
- 20. In March 2020, Plaintiff A.S.'s son was told not to return to class and began exclusively online instruction.

- 21. This began a downward spiral for Plaintiff A.S.'s son. Plaintiff A.S.'s son has experienced mental, emotional, social, and physical harm due to the continued closure of schools and an exclusively online "education."
- 22. Online "classes" have been very difficult for Plaintiff A.S.'s son. He has trouble concentrating, paying attention, and remaining engaged. He is barely able to participate. Plaintiff A.S.'s son's teacher often has to resort to messaging Plaintiff A.S. to check whether he is even in "class."
- 23. Because of the lack of supervision, Plaintiff A.S.'s son has been caught cheating on assignments, further imperiling his academic future.
- 24. Before the shutdown, Plaintiff A.S.'s son was seated directly next to his teacher. This physical proximity helped Plaintiff A.S.'s son stay focused and maintain his grades.
- 25. Since the shutdowns, Plaintiff A.S.'s son has only ever been on campus for temporary assessments and has never even met his teacher in person.
- 26. Since the shutdown began, Plaintiff A.S.'s son's grades have gone down, and Plaintiff A.S. and their spouse were forced to hire a private tutor. It is their belief that but for this private tutor, Plaintiff A.S.'s son would be failing his "classes." This tutor spends three to seven hours a week with Plaintiff A.S.'s son, and costs \$50 an hour, which puts a financial strain on Plaintiff A.S. and their spouse's finances.

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- 27. Since the shutdown began, Plaintiff A.S. and their spouse have also been forced to pay out of pocket for school supplies and other materials normally furnished by the school.
- 28. Plaintiff A.S.'s son has no opportunity to engage with his classmates while attending "classes" online.
- Plaintiff A.S.'s son already had difficulty making friends before his 29. school shutdown. But since the shutdown he has no friends and no social interactions outside his immediate family. His only friend is his sister.
- 30. Since the shutdown, Plaintiff A.S.'s son has become extremely socially isolated. He manifests this frustration through increased aggression and frustration. His disability makes the expression of emotion even more challenging.
- 31. Since the shutdown began, Plaintiff A.S.'s son's opportunities for physical exercise have also been restricted, and as a result he has gained 30 pounds. This unhealthy weight has caused Plaintiff A.S.'s son other health problems, such as difficulty breathing.
- 32. A.S. and their spouse assumed that LAUSD would make decisions and act in the best interest of their son. Not only did they not expect the schools to be closed for such a long time, or continue to be closed, but did not think LAUSD would continue to require their son to participate in ineffective online "classes."
- 33. A.S. and their spouse fear retaliation by UTLA or UTLA affiliated teachers for their advocacy for the well-being of their son and participation in this lawsuit.

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#### Plaintiff A.P.

- 34. Plaintiff A.P. is a single parent that resides with their daughter in LAUSD. Plaintiff A.P.'s daughter is twelve years old and is in the sixth grade. Up until September 2020, Plaintiff A.P.'s daughter was enrolled in school in LAUSD.
- 35. In March 2020, Plaintiff A.P.'s daughter was told not to return to class and began exclusively online instruction.
- This began a downward spiral for Plaintiff A.P.'s daughter. Plaintiff 36. A.P.'s daughter has experienced mental, emotional, and social harm due to the continued closure of schools and an exclusive online "education."
- 37. Plaintiff A.P.'s daughter's school did not even offer online "classes." Instead, Plaintiff A.P.'s daughter's teachers would meet with her briefly over Zoom for no more than 90 total minutes per week. These meetings did not consist of any substantive instruction or reviewing past assignments or homework. Instead, the calls were treated as merely "checking in," before quickly concluding.
- 38. Meanwhile, the amount of homework Plaintiff A.P.'s daughter was assigned increased from several hours a day, to up to eight hours per day.
- 39. Due to confusing layout of the assignment portal, it would take upwards of two hours per day for Plaintiff A.P. to help her daughter recover her assignments.
- 40. Plaintiff A.P.'s daughter began having daily meltdowns, which consisted of crying fits, anxiety attacks, and heart palpitations. Plaintiff A.P.'s daughter showed signs of both clinical depression and anxiety.

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- 41. Plaintiff A.P.'s daughter became increasingly socially withdrawn, and her only outlet became interacting with friends over her computer, sometimes for three or more hours at a time after spending a full day on the computer to complete her homework. Plaintiff A.P.'s daughter began to experience debilitating headaches as a result.
- 42. The time and stress of helping Plaintiff A.P.'s daughter recover and complete her copious assignments became overwhelming for Plaintiff A.P. When Plaintiff A.P.'s daughter's grades began to slip, Plaintiff A.P. was forced to rehire a former nanny to help Plaintiff A.P.'s daughter with her schoolwork. This nanny worked with Plaintiff A.P.'s daughter for three or four hours a day, at a cost of \$18 per hour.
- 43. When Plaintiff A.P. called the school to inquire as why their daughter was receiving so little actual instruction, she was connected with the school principal. The principal told Plaintiff A.P. that the teachers had their own kids at home to take care of, and "are doing their best." When Plaintiff A.P. asked about the eight hours of outside work their daughter was being assigned a day, the principal said, "we like to keep them busy."
- 44. Left with no alternative, in August of 2020, Plaintiff A.P. enrolled their daughter in private school. The annual tuition of this schooling is \$40,000. As a single parent, this additional expense has put financial stress on Plaintiff A.P.
- 45. Plaintiff A.P. assumed that LAUSD would make decisions and act in the best interest of their daughter. Not only did they not expect the schools to be

closed for such a long time, or continue to be closed, but did not think LAUSD would continue to require their daughter to participate in ineffective online "classes."

- 46. But for the continued closures, A.P. would consider re-enrolling their daughter in a LAUSD school.
- A.P. fears retaliation by UTLA or UTLA affiliated teachers for their 47. advocacy for the well-being of their child and participation in this lawsuit.

#### Plaintiff C.P.

- 48. Plaintiff C.P. resides with their spouse and son in LAUSD. Plaintiff C.P.'s son is five years old and previously attended pre-Kindergarten "classes" in LAUSD. Plaintiff C.P. has been a long-time private union member and grew up in a household where both of their parents were union members for their entire lives.
- 49. Plaintiff C.P.'s son never met his teacher and has never set foot on campus. His entire experience with public school was in online "classes."
- 50. Plaintiff C.P.'s son almost immediately began having emotional outbursts when Plaintiff C.P. and their spouse attempted to make him sit still for online "classes." This included throwing tantrums, crying, or simply refusing to sit at the computer.
- 51. Because of his age and the requirements that an adult be present at all times to operate the online platform, Plaintiff C.P. had to guit their job. Not only has this resulted in a loss of income and financial pressure on Plaintiff C.P.'s family but is likely to harm Plaintiff C.P.'s career and long-term earning potential.

- 52. The online instruction platform chosen by the school (Zoom) had near constant technical issues that often led to "class" being cancelled for the day.
- 53. Even when the technology was functioning properly, Plaintiff C.P.'s son's teacher often did not know how to use the technology properly, and Plaintiff C.P.'s son was unable to leave the Zoom "waiting room" to attend his "class."
- 54. Even when Plaintiff C.P. and their spouse could get their son to sit at the computer, the majority of the instruction was not delivered by the teacher but consisted of watching otherwise publicly available YouTube videos.
  - 55. This "instruction" consisted of no more than 90 total minutes a day.
- 56. Plaintiff C.P. and their spouse are expected to be responsible for the majority of teaching, due to the majority of work being assigned after the online "class" concludes. This time commitment has put pressure on their available time to care for their family's other needs.
- 57. Plaintiff C.P. and their spouse were also responsible for the out-of-pocket expenses, including food coloring, special kinds of construction paper, and other arts and crafts materials.
- 58. Left with no alternative but to continue to sacrifice their son's education and C.P.'s career, two months ago C.P. and their spouse enrolled their son in a private pre-school which initially cost them \$900.00 a month for three days a week, and now costs them \$1,150 a week.
- 59. C.P. and their spouse assumed that LAUSD would make decisions and act in the best interest of their son. Not only did they not expect the schools to be

- closed for such a long time, or continue to be closed, but did not think LAUSD would continue to require the children to participate in ineffective online "classes."
- 60. But for the continued closures, C.P. and their spouse would consider re-enrolling their son in a LAUSD school.
- 61. C.P. and their spouse fear retaliation by UTLA or UTLA affiliated teachers for their advocacy for the well-being of their children and participation in this lawsuit.

#### **Defendants**

- 62. Defendant Los Angeles Unified School District is the second largest public school district in the United States and is a political subdivision of the State of California. The District employs approximately 30,000 K–12 public school teachers in Los Angeles. According to the most recent available data, LAUSD spends approximately \$15,920 per student annually. The District's office is located at 333 S Beaudry Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90017.
- 63. Defendant United Teachers Los Angeles is the second largest teacher's union in the United States and the exclusive bargaining representative approximately 30,000 K–12 public school teachers in Los Angeles. Under California state law, and the terms of the applicable collective bargaining agreement (CBA), UTLA is empowered to represent those teachers in all contract negotiations, grievance proceedings, and lobbying efforts. UTLA's office is located at 3303 Wilshire Blvd., 10th Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90010.

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- 64. Defendant Cecily Myart-Cruz is the President of Defendant UTLA. Defendant Myart-Cruz is directly responsible for both developing UTLA's political and policy agenda in response to COVID-19, engaging in protracted negotiations with LAUSD based on this agenda, and personally prevented the re-opening of LAUSD schools for political reasons, causing harm to LAUSD students, including Plaintiffs' children. UTLA's office address is included in the preceding paragraph.
- 65. Defendant Jeff Good is the Executive Director of Defendant UTLA. Defendant Good was UTLA's primary representative in protracted negotiations with Defendant LAUSD from July to December, 2020, and personally prevented the reopening of LAUSD schools for political reasons, causing harm to LAUSD students, including Plaintiffs' children. UTLA's office address is included in the preceding paragraph.

#### **FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS**

#### A. California School Closures and UTLA's First Demands.

- 66. In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, Governor Gavin Newsom declared a state of emergency on March 4, 2020.
- 67. On March 12, 2020, UTLA demanded that LAUSD close all schools within the district.
- 68. As part of the call for school closures, UTLA released "10 Common Good Community Demands," including fifteen additional paid sick days for all Los Angeles County workers, a weekly disaster stipend, and creation of a food supply network. Exhibit A.

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1	69.	"The state has a \$20 billion reserve and this is exactly the time to tap
2	into that res	erve to support students and families," former UTLA President Alex
3	Caputo-Pea	rl said. "There is an opportunity here to build a social safety net
4	through our	Common Good Community Support demands. Let's take the
5	opportunity	to build those now."
6	70.	On March 13, 2020, Governor Newsom signed Executive Order N-
7	26-20, whic	h permitted California's local school districts to initiate school
8	closures.	
9	71.	That same day, LAUSD notified approximately 670,000 students not
10	to return to	class.
11	72.	Within days a majority of California's school districts followed
12	LAUSD's le	ead and announced emergency school closures.
13	73.	95% of the state's 6 million public school students were affected by
14	the initial w	ave of public-school shutdowns across California.
15	74.	No other event has disrupted the education of so many Californians in
16	the two deca	ades since the state has kept records of emergency closures.
17	B. School C	Closures Have Injured, and Continue to Injure, LAUSD Students.
18	75.	Continuing school closures, and exclusively on-line instruction, has
19	harmed and	continues to harm LAUSD students' mental health and social well-
20	being.	
21	76.	A study by FAIR Health, a company that "possesses the nation's

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largest collection of private healthcare claims data," revealed an over 300%

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ncrease in intentional self-harm for 13- to 18-year-olds in the Northe	ast U	nited
States since school closures began.		

- 77. A review of multiple studies finds that young people experiencing social isolation makes them three times more likely to develop depression in the future, with the impact of loneliness on mental health lasting up to nine years later. Exhibit B.
- 78. In a national survey conducted last spring, nearly a third of high school students reported that they were unhappy and depressed "much more than usual" during the prior month.
- 79. Drug overdoses more than doubled from April 2019 to April 2020 for the same age cohort.
- 80. One study released in November indicated that school closures "may be associated with a decrease in life expectancy for U.S. children."
- 81. There has been a significantly higher rate of suicidal ideation and suicide attempts for children aged 11 to 21 since the school shutdowns began in March 2020, as compared with the same months in 2019.
- 82. Dr. Saun-Toy Trotter, a psychotherapist at U.C. San Francisco's Benioff Children's Hospital in Oakland, said the clinic recorded more youth suicide attempts during the first four weeks of the pandemic than it had the entire previous year.
- 83. Since the school closures began in April 2020, children's mental health-related emergency room visits have increased by 24% for children aged 5 to

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11, and 31% for children aged 12-17. Exhibit C.

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Francisco medical professionals published an open letter calling for schools to be re-opened by February 1, 2021, noting that distance learning has led to serious mental health issues for children.

On January 13, 2021, a group of thirty University of California San

- 85. More than a third of youth previously received mental health services in the context of on campus resources and are unable to access these services while the shutdowns continue.
- 86. This lack of access to campus mental health resources disproportionately impacts marginalized student demographics such as Black, Latino, and LGBTQ children.
- 87. Aside from the toll on students' mental health, continuing school closures harm LAUSD students' academic progress, and impedes their future economic and career opportunities. Exhibit D.
- 88. A McKinsey & Company report in June 2020 concluded that students who do not receive full-time, in-person instruction until 2021 will have lost an average of seven months of learning.
- 89. According to a recent study co-authored by Yale economist Fabrizio Zilibotti, pandemic-related school closures deepen educational inequality by severely impairing the academic progress of children from low-income neighborhoods. Exhibit E.
  - Zilibotti reports that "[t]he learning gaps created by the [COVID-19] 90.

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demonstrates that the shutdown were unnecessary, and schools can safely re-open.

- 99. The COVID School Dashboard developed by Brown University tracks over 5,000 schools, 4 million students, and 1.3 million school staff.
- 100. This on-going study has consistently found student and staff infection rates of 0.1% to 0.2% since it first began publishing in September 2020.
- 101. A September report from Insights for Education using data from 191 countries found no link between schools being open for in-person instruction and COVID infection rates.
- 102. Data collected during a November 2020 surge of COVID cases in the State of Illinois also found only 16 schools experienced outbreaks of between 11 and 16 cases each among over 750,000 students in full- or part-time in-person instruction.
- 103. In an article published in the medical journal Pediatrics January 8, 2021, researchers reported that in a study of 90,000 students across 56 school districts in North Carolina during the first nine weeks of the school year, there were only a few dozen instances of secondary spread in schools.
- 104. No cases in that incident were found of in-school child-to-adult spread, even with community infection rates of up to 29 per 100,000.
- 105. In a study of Swedish schools from March through June 2020, published January 6, 2021, researchers similarly found that even though community spread was prevalent and schools for ages 1 through 16 remained open, only 15 out of 1.95 million children were hospitalized with COVID-19.
  - 106. That study also showed that only 20 out of 103,596 teachers were

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admitted to the ICU, and no students or teachers died from COVID-19.

- 107. A study by the National Center for Research on Education Access and Choice at Tulane University, published January 4, 2021, also "found no evidence" that reopening schools in person or in a hybrid form increased COVID hospitalizations" and "suggest[ed] that it seems safe to reopen schools when there are no more than 36 to 44 total new COVID hospitalizations per 100,000 people per week."
- The United States Centers for Disease Control recently published two studies concluding "there has been little evidence that schools have contributed meaningfully to increased community transmission," and "that when schools strictly adhere to layered mitigation strategies, they can minimize in-school transmission even during times of higher community incidence." Exhibit F.
- 109. As the CDC wrote on December 4, 2020 "because of ... the disproportionate impact that school closures can have on those with the least economic means, kindergarten through grade 12 schools should be the last settings to close after all other mitigation measures have been employed and the first to reopen when they can do so safely."
- 110. Re-opening does not lead to increased cases in a community, and closing classrooms "should be a last resort," according to a March 11 analysis of more than 130 studies by American Enterprise Institute's John Bailey.
- 111. Despite the extremely low risks, in the fall of 2020 LAUSD brought back less than 1% of its students for in-person services and instruction, although

state rules	s allowed	up to 25	% o	f enrollr	nent on	campus	for s	pecial	services	at a
given time	e.									

- 112. And amid a winter surge of COVID-19 cases (outside of schools),LAUSD reentered a hard lockdown in early December 2020.
- D. California State Government Tries to Re-Open Schools.
- 113. Following the end of the 2019–2020 school year, the California Legislature passed Senate Bill 98 (SB 98), with the purpose to ensure the continuity of education during COVID-19.
  - 114. Governor Newsom signed SB 98 into law on June 29, 2020.
- 115. Senate Bill 98 amended and added various provisions to the California Education Code to clarify the obligations of local education agencies, like LAUSD.
- 116. SB 98 modified section 43502 of the Education Code to state: "For purposes of calculating apportionments for the 2020–21 fiscal year, a local education agency *shall offer in-person instruction*, and *may offer distance learning*, pursuant to the requirements of this part." Educ. Code, § 43502 (emphasis added).
- 117. The Legislature further stated that a "local educational agency shall offer in-person instruction *to the greatest extent possible." Id.* (emphasis added).
- 118. On July 17, 2020, Governor Newsom announced that school campuses outside of the thirty-two hardest hit counties would be allowed to reopen while complying with guidelines promulgated by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH).

- 119. That same day, the California Health and Human Services Agency, through the CDPH, issued the COVID-19 and Reopening In-Person Learning Framework for K–12 Schools in California, 2020-2021 School Year.
- 120. The framework required compliance with the COVID-19 Industry Guidance: Schools and School-Based Programs, which mandated certain safety protocols such as masks and spacing between teachers and students.
- 121. On December 30, 2020, Governor Newsom announced his Safe Schools for All Plan, which he described as "California's framework to support schools to continue operating safely in-person and to expand the number of schools safely resuming in-person instruction."
- 122. On January 14, 2021, CDPH released a new COVID-19 and Reopening In-Person Instruction Framework and Public Health Guidance for K–12 Schools in California, 2020–2021 School Year.
- 123. The January 2021 Framework mirrored much of the Safe Schools Plan but added numerous new requirements for school re-openings.
- 124. On March 2, 2021, Governor Newsom and Democratic legislative leaders announced an agreement to give school districts \$2 billion to open schools for students in transitional kindergarten through second grade by April 1, 2021.
- 125. The plan, detailed in Assembly Bill 86, provides financial incentives to school districts that offer in-person instruction at the beginning of March 2020 in counties with fewer than twenty-five new daily confirmed coronavirus cases per 100,000 residents.

- 126. School districts in counties in the state's red tier, with seven or fewer cases per 100,000 residents, would be required to extend classroom learning to all elementary school students and at least one grade of middle or high school in order to access all available funds.
- 127. But the proposal stopped short of mandating that schools across California must re-open.
- 128. Instead, it leaves the final decision to local education officials and, in some areas, subject to agreements between districts and the unions representing school employees.
- 129. The total \$6.6 billion plan was approved by the California Legislature on March 4, 2021 and signed into law by Governor Newsom on March 5, 2021.

#### E. UTLA Actively Prevents the Re-Opening of LAUSD Schools.

- 130. A Brown University report found that the political influence of local teachers' unions best explains how school boards have approached re-opening schools across the United States.
- 131. Researchers Corey DeAngelis and Christos Makridis found that school districts in places with strong teachers' unions were much less likely to offer full-time, in-person instruction. Exhibit G.
- 132. In line with this dynamic, UTLA has continued to prevent re-opening schools within LAUSD, based on a personal and ideological agenda instead of sound science or the best interests of LAUSD students.
  - 133. On April 8, 2020, UTLA entered into an agreement with LAUSD that

1	allowed me	mber teachers to provide exclusively online instruction.
2	134.	The agreement provided that member teachers were not required to
3	assess stude	ent learning.
4	135.	The agreement provided that member teachers were not required to
5	spend more	than one hour per week planning, collaborating, or attending
6	professiona	l development meetings.
7	136.	The agreement provided that member teachers would not be evaluated
8	in any way	or have their performance monitored.
9	137.	The agreement provided that member teachers' work hours would be
10	reduced by	50%.
11	138.	UTLA's ideological agenda is exemplified by the list of demands it
12	issued in Ju	ly 2020 as the cost of allowing its members to return to work. Exhibit
13	H.	
14	139.	UTLA demanded that the police be "defunded."
15	140.	UTLA demanded single-payer, government-provided health care.
16	141.	UTLA demanded full funding for housing California's homeless.
17	142.	UTLA demanded the shutdown of publicly funded privately operated
18	charter scho	pols.
19	143.	UTLA demanded a new set of programs to address systemic racism.
20	144.	In order to pay for these new social programs, none of which
21	concerned (	COVID-19, UTLA demanded a 1% "wealth" tax, a 3% income surtax
22	on milliona	ires, and increased property taxes on businesses in California.

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145.	UTLA also demanded a \$250 million payment from the federa
nment.	

- 146. From July to December 2020, UTLA and LAUSD officials were engaged in protracted negotiations in which LAUSD officials attempted to placate UTLA and meet its demands as the means of getting students back in physical classrooms.
- 147. Publicly available transcripts of these negotiations prove that while LAUSD was ready and willing for students to return to school, it was the obstruction of UTLA based on a political agenda that prevented schools from reopening.
- 148. In particular, several exchanges between Tony DiGrazia, the Labor Relations Director for Defendant LAUSD, Defendant Good, the Executive Director of UTLA, and other representatives of UTLA, exemplify this causal relationship. Exhibit I.
- 149. In a negotiation meeting on July 16, 2020, UTLA representative Victoria Casas stated: "It is time for us to take on social issues. Conceptual teaching. Social issues. Inequity. It is not ok to grow up in a system that doesn't recognize you. Social justice. Kids need to be educated on that. Can we put that into our priorities? Ethnic studies. The temperature is heating up around the country."
- 150. UTLA representative Arlene Inouye added: "An opportunity to recreate. Quality not quantity. Look at a different model that is exciting, trauma

informed, flexible."

- 151. Tony DiGrazia responded: "Ideas and concepts may have all the merit in the world. Given out limited time, just don't know if could tackle all that. When we started, said we would like to have this done. You've brought up a lot...just don't know if this is that time."
- 152. In a negotiation meeting on July 31, 2020, UTLA representative Javier Romo stated, in relevant part: "[F]or better or worse public schools have been for decades forced to cure ills of society. We need to come together to fix a broken society...Cecily [Myart-Cruz] signed [a] letter to put pressure on Board of Sup to provide funding to schools. This makes sense; it would make sense for us to collaborate to make the world for our kids better..."
- 153. Tony DiGrazia responded: "I don't disagree with any of you saying. What does this have to do with impact of COVID, and why in a labor agreement? It may be a good cause, I see where value in that, this is not in context other than you are a labor union. We hear what you are saying."
- 154. Defendant Good replied: "I think you are starting to see, and embrace, we unapologetically don't see us as a labor union. [UTLA sees itself] as social justice and leadership body. We have no hesitancy to say that loudly and proudly, and invite scorn cause people think we go outside our lane. We think we should push district to see its role differently. We don't call ourselves a labor union, we call ourselves UTLA. We want district to embrace that role as well."
  - 155. Again faced with a host of UTLA demands that were unrelated and

1	irrelevant to student or teacher health or safety, in another negotiation meeting
2	between LAUSD and UTLA on August 1, 2020, Tony DiGrazia again asked:
3	"What does this have to do with the impacts of COVID, and why does this belong
4	in a labor agreement?"
5	156. Defendant Good replied: "Unapologetically, don't see ourselves as
6	just a labor union, we see ourselves as a social justicewe don't see a lane we
7	cant go into."
8	157. By November 2020, the possibility of LAUSD schools re-opening
9	was still mired in negotiations with UTLA.
10	158. On November 20, 2020, UTLA President Cecily Myart-Cruz stated
11	that "[a] potential physical return would have to use a hybrid schedule, and frankly,
12	there is no such thing as a good hybrid schedule."
13	159. "Hybrid" learning means that students are put into groups, and time is
14	split between on-campus learning in a classroom with a teacher and on-line
15	instruction.
16	160. Myart-Cruz also stated that UTLA did not want its members to teach
17	both in-person and online students at the same time, and also seemed opposed to
18	the version of hybrid learning that would bring one cohort on campus at a time.
19	161. In January 2021 Facebook post, Myart-Cruz accused "wealthy white
20	and Middle Eastern parents" of stalking union members on social media regarding
21	the parents' desire to see their children return to physical classrooms.
22	162. On February 26, 2021, UTLA released a public statement outright
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rejecting "any fixed date" for re-opening schools.

- 163. UTLA further stated that any plan to re-open schools would have to be based on negotiations with teachers toward a "hybrid-model plan."
- 164. On March 1, 2021, Myart-Cruz stated that Governor Newsom's reopening plans were "propagating structural racism."
- 165. Myart-Cruz also claimed that minority communities are being "unfairly targeted by people who are not experiencing this disease in the same ways as students and families are in our communities."
- 166. In an interview with KABC in Los Angeles on March 2, 2021, Myart-Cruz criticized Governor Newsom's school re-opening plan because, as she stated, it was being driven by "white wealthy parents," and "[i]f this was a rich person's disease, we would've seen a very different response." Exhibit J.
- 167. Myart-Cruz further stated that "[i]f you condition funding on the reopening of schools, that money will only go to white and wealthier schools that do not have the transmission rates that low income black and brown communities do."
- 168. A subsequent survey of UTLA members was posed in March 2021, which asked whether the membership agreed to return to physical instruction without UTLA's demands being met.
- 169. These demands included giving school staff priority access to COVID-19 vaccinations, the provision of protective equipment, the enactment of strict social distancing measures, the installation of new school ventilation systems, and "a cleaning regimen" being implemented at all schools.

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The survey was composed of a single YES or NO vote.

The first question read: "A YES vote means you agree with UTLA's leadership and will join your union brothers, sisters and siblings in organizing to resist a forced return to school sites until the three conditions for safety mentioned above have been met."

172. The second question read: "A NO vote means you are willing to physically return to your school or place of work under unsafe conditions even if the infection rates are still in the Purple Tier without vaccinations, and without all of the safety conditions in place such as ppe, physical distancing, ventilation or daily cleaning."

173. Unsurprisingly given this framing of the issues, in early March 2021, 91% of participating UTLA members voted to keep LSUSD's schools closed.

174. In early March 2021, a private Facebook group called "UTLA FB Group - Members Only," which has about 5,700 members, posted a note reading: "Friendly reminder: If you are planning any trips for Spring Break, please keep it off of Social Media. It is hard to argue that it is unsafe for in-person instruction, if parents and the public see vacation photos and international travel."

175. Following protracted negotiations, on March 12, 2021, Myart-Cruz touted a tentative re-opening agreement between UTLA and LAUSD in which the District capitulated to UTLA's demands in order to re-open schools.

176. Exemplifying the gamesmanship motivating the continued opposition to re-opening, Myart-Cruz called the agreement a "win" for organized labor and

said it set the "gold standard" in terms of expectations for school re-openings and stated that it should serve as a national model for other unions.

- 177. Myart-Cruz also stated that the agreement happened "despite the unfair and malicious attacks by those who want nothing more than to destroy collective bargaining and the opportunities afforded from an equitable public education."
  - 178. The tentative agreement was ratified by LAUSD on March 11, 2021.
- 179. UTLA membership voted on the proposed agreement from March 18 to March 21, 2021. Eighty-nine percent of the participating members voted to approve the plan.
- 180. Even though it is tentatively approved, there is no guarantee that UTLA will allow its members to return to physical classrooms on the agreed upon date or will not order them to stay home at any subsequent point based on purported health and safety concerns.
- 181. Even if the agreement goes into effect as planned, it will not end or mitigate the continuing harm to LAUSD students, including Plaintiffs' children.
- 182. Under the agreement, elementary school students will receive instruction in a hybrid morning/afternoon model, with continued reliance on online "classes" that will continue to subject Plaintiffs' children to emotional and social isolation, and imperil their academic performance and future opportunities.
- 183. While Myart-Cruz has acknowledged that "students learn best in physical schools face to face with educators and the support providers they need

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and deserve," she has also stated that the union has the legal authority to veto any
attempt by LAUSD to order any members of her union to work on campus and is
prepared to do so.

#### F. Children and Families Continue to Suffer from UTLA's Obstruction.

- 184. Children and parents continue to suffer the negative effects of LAUSD's continued inability to re-open due to UTLA's obstruction.
- 185. This includes families from across the political and socio-economic spectrum who are frustrated and distressed by the continued school closures.
- 186. Specifically, a growing number of LAUSD parents of color have begun publicly calling for schools to re-open for families who want and need inperson learning options.
- 187. "I feel like I'm on a roller coaster," said Maggie Pulley, a teacher and mom of three kids from mid-City, including a 6th grader at LAUSD's Girls Academic Leadership Academy. "I'll get excited, and then I hear what UTLA said, and I'm like, 'Oh, there's no hope."
- 188. "I'm Black. My kids are Black. I'm an educator. UTLA is not advocating for what's best for kids. Sitting at home and languishing on Zoom is not what's best for kids," Pulley also said.
- 189. "If anyone needs their kids back, it's people of color and communities with low incomes," Ana Lemus, a Latina mom from South LA, said: "These shutdowns are disproportionately hurting kids who are in low-income communities, the majority who are people of color."

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- 190. Two parent advocacy groups, Open Schools California and Reopen California Schools, have garnered thousands of members statewide.
- 191. These groups have called for campuses to re-open, more transparency from school districts, and a seat at the table to discuss re-opening plans.
- 192. LAUSD parents desperate to get their kids back in class have increasingly been taking to the streets to petition their government for a redress of grievances.
- 193. On February 22, 2021, dozens of parents and students joined a protest outside the Federal Building in Los Angeles against both LAUSD and UTLA.
- 194. The protesters demanded that schools re-open for in-class learning due to remote learning failing to properly educate students and disadvantaging poorer students.
- 195. In an interview with the California Globe granted with the permission of her parents, "Cicily," a Los Angeles student at the recent protest, stated: "I think the teachers are failing us for putting themselves over everyone else...We're arguing with them more about this point too. My sister's teacher cut off early without taking any more questions because a lot of students kept asking why she wanted a vaccine over all of our futures. It's not pretty."
- 196. On February 27, 2021, dozens of LAUSD parents and students gathered outside the Federal Building in Westwood in a desperate effort to re-open schools.
  - 197. Organizers gathered a handful of parents on a school bus to make

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1	205.	LAUSD acted on behalf of UTLA, a party whose interest was
2	contrary to	the interests of its students, including Plaintiffs' children.
3	206.	UTLA used the tragedy of COVID-19 as an excuse to extract
4	concessions	based on its preferred personal and ideological policies by holding the
5	education as	nd future of LAUSD's children hostage.
6	207.	The students and their parents did not give informed consent for
7	LAUSD to	act on behalf of UTLA, a party whose interest was contrary to the
8	interests of	its students, including Plaintiffs' children.
9	208.	As a result of this breach, Plaintiffs and their children suffered harm,
10	and continu	e to suffer harm.
11	209.	LAUSD's conduct was a substantial factor in causing Plaintiffs and
12	their childre	ens' harm.
13		COUNT II
14	AIDI	NG AND ABETTING IN BREACH OF FIDUCIARY DUTY
15		(Against UTLA)
16	210.	Plaintiffs hereby incorporate all of the above allegations.
17	211.	LAUSD has a duty, based on the doctrine of in loco parentis to
18	protect the l	nealth and safety of students, and to maintain proper and appropriate
19	conditions of	conducive to learning. This duty extends outside school grounds.
20	212.	By failing to safely return to in-person instruction because of the
21	personal and	d ideological demands of UTLA, and continuing to place students'
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1	mental, social, and academic well-being at risk, LAUSD breached its duty of	
2	undivided loyalty to its students, including Plaintiffs' children.	
3	213. UTLA used the tragedy of COVID-19 as an excuse to extract	
4	concessions based on its preferred personal and ideological policies by holding the	
5	education and future of LAUSD's children hostage.	
6	214. UTLA was willing for teachers to remain out of the classroom, and	
7	children, including Plaintiffs, to suffer the mental, social, and academic	
8	consequences.	
9	215. UTLA had actual knowledge of LAUSD's breach of its duty to its	
10	students, including Plaintiffs' children.	
11	216. UTLA rendered substantial assistance or encouragement to LAUSD's	
12	breach of its duty to its students, including Plaintiffs' children.	
13	217. UTLA's conduct was a substantial factor in causing continuing harm	
14	to the students, including Plaintiffs' children.	
15	218. Plaintiffs' children suffered harm, and continue to suffer harm.	
16	COUNT III	
17	INTERFERENCE WITH CONTRACTUAL RELATIONS	
18	(Against UTLA)	
19	219. Plaintiffs hereby incorporate all of the above allegations.	
20	220. LAUSD has an implied contract based upon a course of conduct with	
21	the students of LAUSD, including Plaintiffs, that LAUSD will make decisions and	
22	act in the best interests of those students, including Plaintiffs' children.	
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FREEDOM
P.O. Box 552, Olympia, WA 98507 P: 360.956.3482   F: 360.352.1874

## COUNT IV FAILURE TO PERFORM FOR BENEFIT OF THIRD-PARTY BENEFICIARIES

#### (Against LAUSD and UTLA)

- 229. Plaintiffs hereby incorporate all of the above allegations.
- 230. LAUSD and UTLA have a contract (the CBA) for which the students, including Plaintiffs, are third-party beneficiaries. A true and correct copy of the CBA is attached hereto as Exhibit K.
- 231. That the students, including Plaintiffs, are third-party beneficiaries, is apparent from the purpose of the CBA. *See* Exhibit K, Art. IX, § 4.0 and Art. IX-B, § 1.0.
- 232. Plaintiffs' children are clearly third-party beneficiaries of the CBA because but for teaching them, there would be no need for an agreement between LAUSD and UTLA, and, in fact, LAUSD does not exist but to serve students such as the Plaintiffs' children.
- 233. Further, the applicable collective bargaining agreement between LAUSD and UTLA states that "[n]either UTLA nor its officers or representatives or affiliates shall *cause*, *encourage*, *condone or participate* in any strike, *slowdown or other work stoppage* during the term of this Agreement. In the event of any actual or threatened strike, slowdown or other work stoppage, UTLA and its officers, representatives and affiliates *will take all reasonable steps* within their control to avert or end the same." (emphasis added).

1	234.	By failing to perform according to the terms of this contract by safely
2	rendering ir	person instruction, LAUSD and UTLA robbed students, including
3	Plaintiffs, o	f the benefit of the bargain.
4	235.	Plaintiffs have the legal right to enforce the terms of the contract
5	between LA	AUSD and UTLA, which was entered into for the benefit of their
6	children.	
7		COUNT V
8		VIOLATION OF CALIFORNIA CONSTITUTION
9		(Against LAUSD)
10	236.	Plaintiffs hereby incorporate all of the above allegations.
11	237.	The California Constitution requires the provision of an in-person
12	education in	n each district at least six months of every year. See CA Const. art. IX,
13	§ 5.	
14	238.	Article IX, § 5 makes no exception for on-line instruction or
15	asynchrono	us instruction.
16	239.	On-line instruction and asynchronous instruction does not satisfy the
17	requiremen	ts of Article IX, § 5.
18	240.	By failing to provide in-person instruction for at least six months in
19	2020, LAU	SD violated the terms of Article IX, § 5, of the California Constitution.
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#### PRAYER FOR RELIEF

Wherefore, the Plaintiffs respectfully request that this Court:

#### A) Issue a declaratory judgment:

- 1. That LAUSD owes its students, including Plaintiffs' children, a duty to make decisions and act in their best interests, and breached this duty by refusing to safely return to in-person instruction according to the demands of UTLA, causing Plaintiffs' children harm;
- 2. That LAUSD has an implied contract with Plaintiffs to make decisions and act in Plaintiffs' children best interests, and breached this contract by refusing to safely return to in-person instruction because of UTLA, causing the Plaintiffs' children harm;
- 3. That UTLA had actual knowledge of, and substantial assistance in, LAUSD's breach of its duties to Plaintiffs' children, and that this conduct was a substantial factor in causing Plaintiffs' children harm;
- 4. That UTLA had knowledge of the contract between LAUSD and Plaintiffs, and acted intentionally to induce a breach of this contract and disrupt the contractual relationship between LAUSD and Plaintiffs, resulting in harm to Plaintiffs' children;
- 5. That Plaintiffs' children are the third-party beneficiaries of the contract between LAUSD and UTLA, and that by failing to perform according to the terms of that agreement, LAUSD and UTLA robbed Plaintiffs' children of the benefit of the bargain;

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6. That the California Constitution requires the provision of in-person instruction by each district for at least six months out of each year, and by failing to provide that in-person instruction, LAUSD violated Article IX, § 5.

#### B) Issue a permanent injunction:

- 1. Ordering UTLA to cease aiding and abetting LAUSD's breach of their fiduciary duties to act and make decisions in the best interests of Plaintiffs' children;
- 2. Ordering UTLA to cease inducing a breach of the contract between LAUSD and Plaintiffs by interfering in their contractual relationship;
- 3. Ordering UTLA to cease preventing LAUSD from safely returning to in-person instruction for the benefit of Plaintiffs' children.

#### C) Enter a judgment:

- 1. Awarding Plaintiffs compensatory damages in an amount equal to the annual per-pupil spending within the jurisdiction of LAUSD, approximately \$15,920 per student, to be used to satisfy tuition at an institution that does provide in-person learning.
- 2. Awarding Plaintiffs other compensatory damages in an amount to be determined at trial.

#### D) Other applicable relief:

- 1. For costs of this suit, including reasonable attorneys' fees; and
- 2. For any further relief as the Court may deem just and proper.

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1	Date: April 1, 2021	Respectfully submitted,
2		Timothy Snowball, Cal Bar No. 317379 Shella Sadovnik, Cal Bar No. 267551
3		Freedom Foundation PO Box 552
4		Olympia, WA 98507
5		Telephone: (360) 956-3482 <u>tsnowball@freedomfoundation.com</u> <u>ssadovnik@freedomfoundation.com</u>
6		Attorneys for Plaintiffs
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