State of Florida)
) ss.
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I, Tatiana Cox Lopez, declare as follows:

1. I am a resident of Oldsmar, Florida. I am an adult over the age of 18 years, have personal knowledge as to all matters contained herein, and am fully competent to make this declaration.

2. My husband and I are the parents of two children. Our daughter A.C. is thirteen years old and in sixth grade for the 2025-2026 school year. She will be in seventh grade in the fall. Our daughter Am.C. is five years old and in kindergarten for the 2025-2026 school year. She will be in first grade in the fall. We homeschool both of our daughters.

3. My husband and I have sole legal and physical custody of A.C. and Am.C.

4. I was formerly employed as a paralegal. During the COVID pandemic, my husband and I started a nonprofit to promote kayak fishing and environmental conservation. We currently operate our business in addition to homeschooling our daughters.

5. Our daughter A.C. has received a Family Empowerment Scholarship through Step Up for Students since 2024.

6. I first heard about the various scholarships from a friend whose daughter was slightly older than my daughter and attended the same Catholic school I wanted my daughter to attend. We used the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship to afford enrolling A.C. in Catholic school.

7. When A.C. was in early elementary grades, we enrolled her in two different private Catholic schools. Even though she switched schools starting in second grade, she was struggling in some of her classes. She had such difficulty with math that she was falling behind in her grade level and becoming increasingly frustrated with the subject.

8. The traditional "one-size-fits-all" classroom was inappropriate for A.C.'s needs. She was eventually diagnosed with ADHD and dyslexia, and we thought she needed an environment that focused more on her learning needs than the standard classroom environment could provide.

9. In the middle of the spring semester of fourth grade, we switched A.C. to homeschool. I also contacted Step Up for Students about A.C. leaving Catholic school, and they introduced me to the Unique Abilities and Personalized Education Plan options for homeschool scholarships. I switched A.C. to the Unique Abilities scholarship in 2024.

10. To help A.C. catch up, for the last few months of fourth grade we used what homeschoolers commonly refer to as the "unschool" method—instead of following a strict curriculum right away, A.C. learned through her interests, hands-on activities, outdoor experiences, reading together, and everyday life skills. We leaned toward an unschool approach because A.C. was very overwhelmed and frustrated with traditional learning after struggling in school. Unschooling gave her time to rebuild her confidence and allowed me to understand better how she learned best without the pressure she had previously felt in the classroom. In those first few months of homeschool, A.C. repeated fourth grade math to help her prepare for fifth grade, but otherwise focused on the child-directed learning that is typical of the unschool method.

11. As A.C. moved into fifth and sixth grades, we gradually added more structure and routines into our homeschool days. Once we better understood her learning disability and learning style, we were able to choose curriculum and teaching methods that worked better for her needs. She now has a healthier balance between structured academics and hands-on learning opportunities, and I've seen a big improvement not only academically, but also in her confidence, independence, and overall attitude toward learning.

12. Because of the flexibility that the scholarship gave our family, we were able to tailor A.C.'s education to her needs. Using scholarship funds, we were able to pay for curriculum and textbooks for homeschool and to pay for individual online tutors for classes like math. She now loves math and is succeeding with it on grade level.

13. Without the scholarship for A.C., we would struggle to provide the education she needs because of the costs to our family. If the court were to stop the scholarship program, it would have a tremendous impact on our family both financially and emotionally. The scholarship has allowed us to provide my older daughter with educational support, curriculum, learning opportunities, and specialized support related to her learning disability that truly fit her unique needs. Before homeschooling, we watched her struggle academically and emotionally in a traditional classroom environment, and it was heartbreaking to see her confidence decline. Losing the scholarship would create a major financial burden, and we would likely have to make very difficult decisions about her education and potentially place her back into an environment where she was not thriving.

14. Beyond academics, homeschooling has positively impacted our entire family. It has reduced stress, improved my daughter's self-esteem, strengthened our relationship, and allowed her to rediscover a love for learning. The flexibility and support system that has helped my daughter succeed and grow into a more confident and capable child.

15. Because of A.C.'s success with the scholarship, we also enrolled Am.C. in the scholarship program. A.C. receives the Unique Abilities scholarship, while Am.C. receives the Personalized Education Program scholarship.

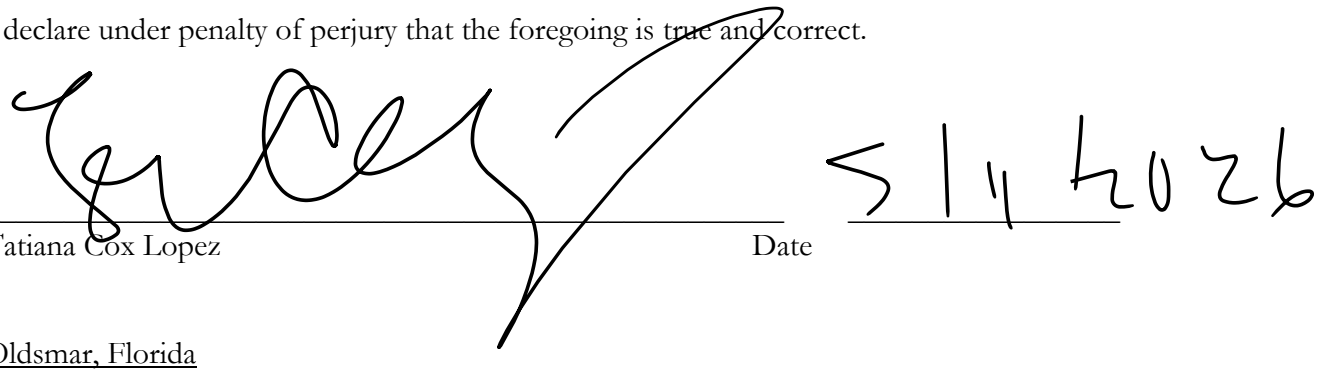
16. Am.C. has a very similar learning style to her older sister, and because of the experience we went through with our oldest daughter, we were able to recognize early the type of support and learning environment Am.C would need to succeed. Through homeschooling, we have been able to tailor her

education to her own pace, allowing her to fully understand concepts before moving forward instead of feeling pressured to keep up in a traditional classroom setting.

17. Thanks to the scholarship program, we are able to provide Am.C. with educational resources, curriculum, and learning opportunities that fit her individual needs and learning style. It has given us the ability to create a more personalized and supportive education experience for her, giving Am.C. a better chance to learn confidently, comfortably, and at a pace that truly works for her.

18. Without the scholarship for Am.C., we would also have to make very difficult decisions about her education. Based on her similarities to her older sister, I believe placing her back into a traditional classroom setting would harm her educational progress.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.



Tatiana Cox Lopez — Date: 5/4/2026

Oldsmar, Florida
City and State