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The Honorable Nikki R. Haley
Office of the Governor
1205 Pendleton Street
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Governor Haley,

My name is Robert Langs and I have been waiting for a disability hearing for the past three years. My lawyer recently informed me that my chances for being successful with the court are very slim due to my age, 45. I was in an auto accident while working in 1994 which left me unable to work for a period of time. I was turned down for help in 1994 and my employer did not have workers comp insurance. I had no choice but to go back to work and hope to heal.

At that time I had bulging discs and stretched ligaments in both my back and neck. I had to be removed from physical therapy as it was causing me further damage. I worked for many years suffering through the pain. My former doctor, who has since retired, kept me going by administering steroid injections into my spine along with pain and depression medications.

I have had several jobs throughout my life. I grew up working at my father's gas station and then I had a carpet cleaning company for many years until my doctor informed me that if I don't stop cleaning carpets that I would become crippled from the continued damaging effect it was having on my back. I shoveled stone for Chemlawn, I worked in pest control and became the trouble shooter for the South Florida area Terminix. I worked my way up in the Trader Publishing Company for a while. I became a copier technician and then a copier service manager. All this time my back had been progressively deteriorating. The bulging discs became ruptured discs and the pain continuously worsened. Eventually, I started to work at my family's business. I ran a mall store in Greenville called SC Place. I had to hire a full time assistant to help me with the things that would damage my back or cause me pain. It was not full proof, but it kept me working as long as I could along with the continuous shots to my spine. Unfortunately, the recession beat me and the store and we had to close it.

Subsequently, I had a decal business (Eyecandy Decals) which sold decals all over the world to stores, etc.. As my back got even worse, I could not physically handle doing the trade shows anymore which is where the business would come from. So, you could imagine, Eyecandy Decals dwindled down to nothing as time went on.

Not being able to work and being in extreme pain 24/7 has paid a toll on me. My ruptured discs have now disintegrated. They call it Degenerative Disc Disease. My current doctor of several years continues to give me pain medication, anti-depressant and anxiety medications and my orthopedic surgeon has had me in physical therapy for months which they again had to end as it was doing more damage to my back. He had me get the epidural spinal injections which you now have to be admitted into the hospital for. They cost \$2300 plus hospital bills. They take two weeks to work and only last for about three weeks before the pain slowly comes back and then with a vengeance. The orthopedic doctor has referred me for more shots but, I already owe the hospital way too much money and he wanted to fuse my vertebrae and my hip together. He says no movement, no pain. I am contemplating it but do not know how I would pay for the procedure.

My family doctor who is heading my treatment referred me to a Neurological spine and surgery clinic to look at it in a different perspective. They will not take anyone on unless surgery can help them. I definitely want to go but, as without insurance, the initial visit is discounted to \$233 and I probably need a new MRI as my pain has worsened since the last one I had in 2013. My doctor has also referred me to a mental health clinic for therapy. I have not been able to go yet as I do not have the money or insurance for that as well. It is about \$160 per visit without insurance.

On a side note, I was forced to go to the hospital a few months ago as my back gave out while going up a couple of steps. After a few days of bad knee pain, I thought it was broken and I didn't want to wait any longer. It wasn't broken, thank God.

I do work somewhat. I sell decals that I create for Eyecandy Decals on Amazon.com . After my expenses, I make a few hundred dollars per month. I cannot stay at home 24/7 or I will go more crazy than I already am going. I share an office space where I go and make my decals and mail them out. I consider it therapy as I can see and talk to people on a daily basis and there is a couch there which I can stretch my back out on. It works out for me except when I get stuck in my chair and can't get up. I have had to have a stranger lift me up once after being stranded alone for over 20 minutes. Now I know the co-occupants in the office and they check up on me.

My wife works full time as a hair stylist. Between her income which is about \$750 per month after taxes and my decal money we cover our utility bills, auto insurance and we eat. We haven't been able to pay our mortgage for coming up on 1000 days. The mortgage company understands that my

disability hearing is coming up soon and I will be able to save my home. If I get turned down for disability this time, I will definitely lose my house and we will be homeless.

Sadly, I can go on and on about my situation. I already see how much I have written and fear it's too much. So, I will try to sum up my letter.

There is no way I can work for anyone on a consistent basis. I can do work but, then I cannot walk that night or the next few days. I can barely get up from a chair without help. I am not scared of working, **I AM TERRIFIED!** I already lost my cars during this experience (I do have transportation for us at the moment) and I really do not want my wife and I to be **HOMELESS**. If I get turned down for disability, I will appeal it over and over because **my case is real** and I desperately need help. Basically, I am begging you for help, assistance, influential consideration or just a kind word in my favor.

I really appreciate your time and look forward to hearing back from you,

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert J. Langs". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Robert Jay Langs