1	IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEVADA
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4	JASON RICHARD LOFTHOUSE,) Electronically Filed May 22 2020 09:40 a.m
5	Appellant, Appellant, Appellant, Appellant, Appellant,
6	Appellant,) Clerk of Supreme Cour) Case No. 70587
7	vs.) E-File
8	THE STATE OF NEVADA,
9	Respondent.
10)
11	APPELLANT'S MOTION FOR BAIL PENDING APPEAL
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13	COMES NOW Appellant, JASON RICHARD LOFTHOUSE, by and
14 15	through Chief Deputy Public Defender, WILLIAM M. WATERS, pursuant
16	to NRAP 27, NRAP 8(e), and NRS 178.488(3), moves this Honorable Court
17	for bail pending resolution of LOFTHOUSE's appeal.
18 19	This Motion is based upon the attached declaration of counsel, the
20	briefing filed in this case, and any exhibits and appendix on file.
21	DATED this 22 day of May, 2020.
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23	DARIN F. IMLAY CLARK COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER
24	
25	By /s/ William M. Waters
26	WILLIAM M. WATERS, #9456
27	Deputy Public Defender
28	309 So. Third Street, Suite #226 Las Vegas, Nevada 89155-2610 (702) 455-4576

POINTS AND AUTHORITIES

PERTINENT PROCEDURAL AND FACTUAL HISTORY

The State filed a criminal complaint on June 9, 2015 charging Lofthouse with one count of Sexual Conduct between Certain Employees or Volunteers of School and Pupil¹ and one count of First-Degree Kidnapping.² AA I 1-2. The complaint alleged Lofthouse, a history teacher at Rancho High School, engaged in sexual conduct with his student M.T. <u>Id</u>.

Police arrested Lofthouse on June 4, 2015. <u>Id</u>. at 3. The court arraigned Lofthouse on June 9, 2015 and scheduled a preliminary hearing for June 23, 2015. <u>Id</u>. at 5. On June 23rd the court continued the preliminary hearing to July 9, 2015 at the State's request. <u>Id</u>. at 6.

Prior to the preliminary hearing the State filed an amended complaint adding 10 additional Sexual Conduct between School Employee and Pupil counts, two Open and Gross Lewdness counts³; and an additional First-Degree Kidnapping count. <u>Id</u>. at 9-13. The State filed the Information and an Amended Information in the district court on July 16, 2015.⁴ <u>Id</u>. at 15, 21. At his arraignment Lofthouse pleaded not guilty and waived his right to a speedy trial. AA II 419. The arraignment court scheduled calendar call

¹ NRS 201.540.

² NRS 200.310.

³ NRS 201.210.

⁴ It is unclear how the Amended Information differed from the Information.

for October 27, 2015 and jury trial for November 2, 2015. <u>Id.</u> at 420. The court later reset jury trial to January 25, 2016. AA II 425-26, 441. Eventually, the parties agreed to continue the trial to March 21, 2016. <u>Id.</u> at 495.

Trial began on March 21, 2016 and concluded on March 25th. See AA III 508; AA VI 1408. The jury convicted Lofthouse of all charges. AA II 265-68. At Lofthouse's sentencing hearing the Court ordered certain counts to run concurrent and others to run consecutive and imposed a total sentence of 72 to 180 months in prison. AA VI 1445-49. The Court filed the Judgment of Conviction ("JOC") on May 20, 2016. AA II 380.

On May 26, 2016 Lofthouse's trial attorneys moved to withdraw. AA II 383. The district court granted the request on June 9, 2016 and appointed the Clark County Public Defender to represent Lofthouse. <u>Id.</u> at 391-92. That same day Lofthouse filed a proper person Notice of Appeal. <u>Id.</u> at 389-90. On July 13, 2017, upon limited remand from this Court, the district court modified Lofthouse's sentence to remove lifetime supervision but also illegally increased Lofthouse's maximum sentence to 228 months. AA VII 1588.

Lofthouse filed his Opening Brief on September 29, 2017. The State filed its Answering Brief on February 5, 2018. Lofthouse filed his Reply Brief on April 9, 2018. This Court entertained oral argument in Lofthouse's

case on October 1, 2018. Since briefing has been completed, approximately 770 days have passed. Since oral argument in Lofthouse's case, approximately 597 days have passed. Lofthouse has been housed at High Desert State Prison in Indian Springs, Nevada, since his conviction.

ARGUMENT

I. This Court has the Authority to Grant Bail in Lofthouse's case.

All applications for relief in this Court must be made by motion. Nevada Rule of Appellate Procedure 27(a)(1) ("NRAP"). NRAP 8(e) states that, "[a]dmission to bail shall be as provided in NRS 178.4873 through 178.488." Pursuant to NRS 178.488(3), "[p]ending appeal or certiorari to the appellate court of competent jurisdiction pursuant to the rules fixed by the Supreme Court pursuant to Section 4 of Article 6 of the Nevada Constitution, bail may be allowed by the district court or any judge thereof, by the Court of Appeals or any judge thereof or by the Supreme Court or a justice thereof."

A. <u>Lofthouse is a Good Candidate for Release on Bail</u> <u>Pending Resolution of His Appeal</u>.

In deciding whether to grant an appellant bail pending appeal, this Court considers whether the appeal is "frivolous or taken for delay, or of whether the applicant's release on bail would pose a danger to the community or a risk of flight." <u>Bergna v. State</u>, 120 Nev. 869, 874 (2004).

Moreover, the Court considers "the nature and quality of the evidence adduced at trial and the circumstances of the offense are highly relevant considerations in evaluating these factors." <u>Id</u>. at 877. Additionally, "evaluation of these concerns may encompass a wide range of information, including the applicant's prior criminal record, attempted escapes from confinement, community associations, and employment status." <u>Id</u>.

1. Lofthouse's appeal is not frivolous nor taken for delay.

Here, Lofthouse's appeal is not frivolous. Rather, Lofthouse's appeal presents numerous legitimate issues, some which are issues of first impression and are issues of statewide public importance. Additionally, Lofthouse's appeal asserts numerous district court and prosecutorial errors which violated Lofthouse's fundamental right to a fair trial. Indeed, this Court would not have entertained oral argument in Lofthouse's case had it believed his appeal was frivolous.

Similarly, Lofthouse's appeal was not "taken for delay." Lofthouse is currently serving a 6 to 19-year sentence in the Nevada Department of Corrections for engaging in a consensual sexual relationship with a 17-year-old student. But for Lofthouse's status as the alleged victim's teacher, he committed no crime. Additionally, given the length of time this Court has had Lofthouse's case under submission, it could hardly be said that Lofthouse files the instant Motion seeking to delay resolution of his appeal.

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2. Lofthouse does not pose a danger to the community nor a flight risk should he be released pending resolution of his appeal.

The State alleged that Lofthouse, a history teacher at Rancho High School, engaged in sexual conduct with his student M.T. both at Rancho High School and at two Hotels in Las Vegas, Nevada. The jury convicted Lofthouse for ten (10) counts of Sexual Conduct between Certain Employees or Volunteers of School and Pupil and two (2) counts of First-Degree Kidnapping. The district court sentenced Lofthouse to 6 to 19 years in prison.

M.T. was 17 years old at the time of the offenses and accordingly, could legally consent to engage in sexual conduct with another person. See NRS 200.364(6). Lofthouse's actions with M.T. only became "criminal" based upon his status as M.T.'s teacher. Lofthouse never denied that he had sexual relations with M.T. and M.T. steadfastly maintained Lofthouse never forced her to do anything she did not want to do. However, Lofthouse maintained as a matter of law he did not kidnap M.T.

To date, Lofthouse has served approximately 1,460 days in custody. This amounts to almost 5 years for engaging in sexual conduct with a person capable of giving consent. Although Lofthouse acknowledges his status as M.T.'s teacher criminalized his conduct, the penalty for Sexual Conduct between Certain Employees or Volunteers of School and Pupil is one (1) to

five (5) years and is probationable. The only reason Lofthouse is in prison is because the State maliciously prosecuted him for kidnapping.

As noted in the briefing in this case, it is unclear under Nevada law whether the State could even charge Lofthouse for kidnapping under the facts of the case. Even if the State could, the district court deprived Lofthouse of his fundamental right to present a defense by refusing to instruct the jury pursuant to this Court's decision in Mendoza v. State, 122 Nev. 267, 274-75 (2006). Had the district court complied with its obligations to ensure Lofthouse received a fair trial, he very likely would not have been convicted for kidnapping and would have been either granted probation or would have almost certainly expired any prison sentence by now.

Moreover, the district court violated the Nevada Constitutional right against double jeopardy when it resentenced Lofthouse to additional time in prison after Lofthouse noted the court originally imposed an illegal sentence. Had the court complied with this Court's decisional caselaw when correcting the illegal sentence, Lofthouse would likely have already been paroled. See Miranda v. State, 114 Nev. 385, 387 (1998) (citing U.S. v. Fogel, 829 F.2d 77, 88 (D.C. Cir. 1987)).

Lofthouse is hopeful this Court ultimately decides in his favor on appeal. Should the Court do so, and remand his case for a new trial, the

likelihood he will be released without bail pending re-trial is substantial. See Valdez-Jimenez v. Eighth Judicial District Court, 136 Nev. Adv. Op. 20 (April 9, 2020). Alternatively, should the Court agree with Lofthouse that he could not be charged with Kidnapping, then Lofthouse would be immediately eligible for parole. Under either scenario Lofthouse is not a flight risk.

Additionally, Lofthouse is not a danger to the community. In the five years since Lofthouse's conviction he has had no contact with the alleged victim in this case. The alleged victim, M.T., is now 22 years old. M.T. was attending college at the time of Lofthouse's trial and assuming she continued her academic pursuits, she would have graduated by now. Lofthouse has no desire contact M.T. whatsoever should he be released. Significantly, based upon his conviction, Lofthouse can never teach in Nevada again. Therefore, this Court need not worry that Lofthouse will find employment in a school setting upon release. Additionally, although it is not clear that Lofthouse is mandated to comply with sex offender registration laws while his case is pending on appeal, Lofthouse asserts he will comply anyway upon release.

Prior to his arrest in the instant case, Lofthouse had no prior criminal record whatsoever. Lofthouse has no prior attempts at escape from confinement either. Rather, prior to his arrest and incarceration, Lofthouse was a respected teacher and member of the community. Admittedly,

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Lofthouse made a terrible decision to engage in a consensual sexual relationship with a student. However, that decision has cost him dearly. Lofthouse has lost his marriage, his employment, and the ability to have a relationship with his three (3) children during their formative years. Nevertheless, Lofthouse has tremendous family support. In fact, he and his ex-wife maintain a good relationship. Additionally, Lofthouse's ex-wife desires that Lofthouse maintain a relationship with his children. To that end, Lofthouse's ex-wife takes the children to visit Lofthouse in prison as much as possible. Should he be released, Lofthouse will live with his ex-wife and their children while he attempts to find employment.

3. Special justification for release pending appeal.

On January 30, 2020, during the pendency of Lofthouse's appeal, the World Health Organization declared a public health emergency related to the COVID-19 outbreak in Wuhan, China. See The World Health Organization, http://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/events-On April 1, 2020, the Secretary General of the United as-they-happen. Nations stated that COVID-19 poses the graves threat to humanity since World П. See York Times, War New https://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2020/04/01/us/01reuters-healthcoronavirus-un.html?search ResultPosition=1. Nevada Governor Sisolak 2 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 5 | H

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issued a State of Emergency on March 12, 2020.⁵ Then, on March 31, 2020, he endorsed a statewide "stay at home" order.⁶ Pursuant to this March 31, 2020 Order, Nevada schools and non-essential businesses closed. Courts, prosecutors, and public defenders began operating with skeleton crews. The rights of criminal defendants were deprioritized.⁷

The spread of the COVID-19 virus across the world, including every state in the country, poses an unprecedented danger that no person fully understands. We have been told by the authorities to stay home, wash hands repeatedly, and socially distance ourselves by not getting closer than six feet to anyone. The Center for Disease Control ("CDC") states that there is a "high-risk of severe illness" for those individuals who are: (1) aged 65 years or older; (2) living in a long-term care facility; (3) **people with serious**

See http://gov.nv.gov/News/Emergency_Orders/2020/2020-03-12_-COVID-19 Declaration of Emergency/, (last visited May 21, 2020).

See http://gov.nv.gov/News/Emergency Orders/2020/2020-03-31 - COVID-19 Declaration of Emergency Directive 010 - Stay at Home Order (Attachments)/ (last visited May 21, 2020).

⁷ See DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY, Directive 009 (March 31, 2020) ("Any specific time limit for the commencements, filing, or service of process of any legal action, notice, motion, or other process or proceeding, whether promulgated by statute, ordinance, order, rule, or regulation, or part thereof, is hereby tolled from the date of this Directive until 30 days from the date the state of emergency declared on March 12, 2020 is terminated."); Eighth Judicial District Court Administrative Order: 20-01 (March 13, 2020); NEVADA GOVERNOR EXTENDS STATE SHUTDOWN UNTIL END AT APRIL. **ORDERS** RESIDENTS TO STAY HOME. https://thehill.com/homenews/state-watch/490630-nevada-governor-extendsstate-shutdown-until-end-of-april-orders (last visited April 2, 2020).

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heart conditions; (4) people with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma; (5) people of any age with severe obesity; or (6) people with an underlying medical condition, such diabetes. CDC. See https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/ 2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/ groups-at-higher-risk.html. Under the best of circumstances, the conditions of a detention facility maximize virus transmission.

Custodial facilities are particularly vulnerable to the COVID-19 outbreak for a variety of reasons, including inadequate medical facilities, limited personal protective equipment (PPE), an insufficient number of care providers to meet the needs of a massive jail population, stagnant air, inmates with compromised immune systems, inmates with chronic health conditions not well controlled in the carceral context, the rapidly aging inmate population, the constant influx of inmates, the traffic of personnel coming and going, and overpopulation.8

Indeed, when coronavirus suddenly exploded in China's prisons, there were reports of more than 500 cases spreading across five (5) facilities in

⁸ See, e.g., ARE OUR PRISONS AND JAILS READY FOR COVID-19? https://www.aclu.org/news/prisoners-rights/are-our-prisons-and-jails-readyfor-covid-19/ (last visited March 25, 2020); THIS CHART SHOWS WHY THE PRISON POPULATION IS SO VULNERABLE TO COVID-19. https://www.themarshallproject.org/2020/03/19/this-chart-shows-why-theprison-population-is-so-vulnerable-to-covid-19 (last visited March 25, 2020).

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three provinces.⁹ At Riker's Island in New York, the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases exploded from one (1) to 200 in twelve (12) days because the virus "spreads like wildfire," precipitating a "public health disaster." Nevada prisons will be no exception, unless the State learns from the experiences of other jurisdictions and take immediate action.

Prisons are Petri dishes for viral proliferation, endangering inmates, officers, healthcare providers, civilian staff, and community members. The situation cannot be controlled sans "social distancing," which requires significant depopulation and a corresponding reduction in corrections staff. As such, the release of inmates from jails and prisons is crucial in battling

⁹ 1. THEY WERE ALREADY IN CHINA'S PRISONS. NOW THE CORONAVIRUS IS THERE, TOO, https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2020-02-28/lawyers-activists-pastors-uighurs-families-of-detainees-in-china-fear-coronavirus-spread-outbreak-in-camps-and-prisons (last visited March 25, 2020).

¹⁰ 38 TEST POSITIVE FOR CORONAVIRUS AT RIKERS ISLAND. NEARBY NYC JAILS, https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/38-testpositive-for-coronavirus-at-rikers-island-nearby-nycjails/2020/03/22/f3ed5fca-6b1a-11ea-abef-020f086a3fab story.html (last checked 3/23/2020); "IT **SPREADS** LIKE WILDFIRE": THE CORONAVIRUS COMES TO NEW YORK'S PRISONS https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/it-spreads-like-wildfire-covid-19-comes-to-new-yorks-prisons (last visited March 25, 2020); Coronavirus spread at Rikers is a 'public health disaster', says jail's top doctor, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/apr/01/rikers-island-jailcoronavirus-public-health-disaster (last visited April 1, 2020).

1	the spread of COVID-19. ¹¹ Government officials have called for a reduction
2 3	in incarcerated populations, recognizing that jails are "a tinderbox for the
4	virus, not just inside correctional facilities, but society at large."12
5	Neighboring California, for example, will release 3,500 incarcerated persons
6 7	as COVID-19 rips through its prisons. 13 The Iranian government released
8	70,000 prisoners to combat the spread of the disease. 14 Governments the
9 10	world over recognize the tragedy that will result when officers and civilian
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13	11 ACLU SEEKS MORE STEPS TO CURB VIRUS SPREAD IN NEVADA PRISONS, https://www.reviewjournal.com/local/local-las-
14	vegas/aclu-seeks-more-steps-to-curb-virus-spread-in-nevada-prisons-
15	1993964/ (last visited March 30, 2020).
16	12 38 TEST POSITIVE FOR CORONAVIRUS AT RIKERS ISLAND

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^{12 38} TEST POSITIVE FOR CORONAVIRUS AT RIKERS ISLAND, NEARBY NYC JAILS, https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/38-testpositive-for-coronavirus-at-rikers-island-nearby-nycjails/2020/03/22/f3ed5fca-6b1a-11ea-abef-020f086a3fab story.html (last checked WILDFIRE": THE 3/23/2020); "IT SPREADS LIKE CORONAVIRUS COMES TO NEW YORK'S PRISONS

https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/it-spreads-like-wildfire-covid-19-comes-to-new-yorks-prisons (last visited March 25, 2020).

¹³ Id.; see also CALIFORNIA TO RELEASE 3,500 INMATES EARLY AS **SPREADS INSIDE CORONAVIRUS** PRISONS, https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-03-31/coronaviruscalifornia-release-3500-inmates-prisons (last visited April 1, 2020).

¹⁴ IRAN RELEASES ABOUT 70,000 PRISONERS AS CORONAVIRUS **TOLL** DEATH **REACHES** https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/iranreleases-about-70000-prisoners-as-coronavirus-death-toll-reaches-237/articleshow/74552060.cms (last visited March 25, 2020).

personnel staffing our jails become too ill to work, or when inmates become infected in an ideal environment for viral transmission.

On May 20, 2020, the first inmate within the Nevada Department of Corrections tested positive for Covid-19. See Las Vegas Sun, https://lasvegassun.com/news/2020/may/20/first-inmate-tests-positive-forcovid-19-in-nevada/, accessed May 21, 2020. However, it is actually unclear whether this inmate was indeed the "first" to test positive as NDOC has given conflicting statements about whether it has been testing inmates in its facilities. See https://www.nevadacurrent.com/2020/04/16/ndoc-directorspoke-in-error-inmates-are-being-tested-for-covid-19/, accessed May 22, 2020. Nevertheless, the alleged "first" inmate to test positive was housed at High Desert State Prison. Id. Prior to this "first" positive test, "19 Department of Corrections employees [had] been diagnosed with the virus, including four at High Desert[.]" Id. Therefore, the virus is likely spreading throughout High Desert State Prison, which is where Lofthouse is housed.

Lofthouse was born with a transposition of the greater right ventricle. "Transposition of the great arteries changes the way blood circulates through the body, leaving a shortage of oxygen in blood flowing from the heart to the rest of the body. Without an adequate supply of oxygen-rich blood, the body can't function properly[.]" See <a href="https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/transposition-of-the-great-arteries/symptoms-causes/syc-conditions/transposition-of-the-great-arteries/symptoms-causes/syc-conditions/transposition-of-the-great-arteries/symptoms-causes/syc-

20350589, accessed May 22, 2020. Although Lofthouse had surgery to repair this condition shortly after his birth, given the unknowns associated with Covid-19 it is unclear what could happen to Lofthouse should he contract the virus. Rather than wait to find out, this Court should release him on bail pending appeal due to his status as a low-risk, non-violent offender.

CONCLUSION

Based upon the foregoing arguments, LOFTHOUSE respectfully requests this Court grant his Motion for Bail Pending Appeal.

DATED this 22 day of May, 2020.

DARIN F. IMLAY CLARK COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE 1 2 I hereby certify that this document was filed electronically with the 3 Nevada Supreme Court on the 22 day of May, 2020. Electronic Service of the 4 5 foregoing document shall be made in accordance with the Master Service List as 6 follows: 8 AARON D. FORD WILLIAM M. WATERS ALEXANDER CHEN **HOWARD S. BROOKS** 10 I further certify that I served a copy of this document by mailing a 11 true and correct copy thereof, postage pre-paid, addressed to: 12 JASON RICHARD LOFTHOUSE 13 NDOC No: 1159974 14 c/o High Desert State Prison 15 P.O. Box 650 Indian Springs, NV 89070 16 17 18 BY /s/ Carrie M. Connolly 19 Employee, Clark County Public Defender's Office 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28