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Plaintiff U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (the "EEOC" or "Commission") and Defendant Lutheran Social Services (hereafter "Defendant" or "Lutheran") hereby stipulate and agree to entry of this Consent Decree to resolve the Commission's complaint, filed under Title I of the Americans with Disabilities,

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Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA") and Title I of the Civil Rights Act of 1991 to address alleged unlawful employment practices on the basis of disability and to provide relief to Charging Party Matilde Navarro ("Navarro") who alleges she was adversely affected by such practices. Lutheran denies the charges by the EEOC.

II.

### PURPOSES AND SCOPE OF THE CONSENT DECREE

- A. The parties to this Consent Decree ("Decree") are the EEOC and Lutheran. This Decree shall be binding on and enforceable against Lutheran and its officers, directors, agents, successors and assigns.
- B. The parties have entered into this Decree for the following purposes:
  - 1. To provide monetary and injunctive relief;
  - 2. To ensure that Defendant's employment practices comport with federal law;
  - 3. To ensure training for Lutheran's managers and employees with respect to their obligations under the ADA;
  - 4. To continue to ensure that no one is subject to retaliation;
  - 5. To review and update Lutheran's procedures for handling requests for accommodation in the workplace; and
  - 6. To avoid the time, expense, and uncertainty of further litigation.

This Decree resolves all claims the EEOC has brought or could have brought against Lutheran arising out of this Complaint.

III.

## **RELEASE OF CLAIMS**

A. This Decree fully and completely resolves all issues, claims and allegations by the EEOC against Lutheran that are raised in the Complaint filed in this action in the United States District Court, Central District of California on October 1, 2004, captioned <u>U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission v. Lutheran</u>

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- Social Services of Southern California; Case No. SACV 04-1146 JVS (ANx) (the "Complaint"). Additionally, concurrently with the payments made by Lutheran as set forth herein, Ms. Navarro shall execute a general release of all claims in favor of Lutheran and its agents/employees.
- B. Nothing in this Decree shall be construed to preclude any party from bringing suit to enforce this Decree in the event that any party hereto fails to perform the promises and representations contained herein.
- C. Nothing in this Decree shall be construed to limit or reduce Lutheran's obligation to comply fully with Title VII or any other federal employment statute.
- D. This Decree in no way affects the EEOC's right to bring, process, investigate or litigate other charges that may be in existence or may later arise against Lutheran in accordance with standard EEOC procedures.
- E. The existence of this Consent Decree does not in any way constitute an admission by Lutheran Social Services of any wrongdoing or liability for the claims alleged, which claims are specifically denied by Lutheran Social Services.

#### IV.

# **JURISDICTION**

- A. The Court has jurisdiction over the parties and the subject matter of this lawsuit. The Complaint asserts claims that, if proven, would authorize the Court to grant the equitable relief set forth in this Decree.
- B. The terms and provisions of this Decree are fair, reasonable and just.
- C. This Decree conforms with the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and Title VII and is not in derogation of the rights or privileges of any person.
- D. The Court shall retain jurisdiction of this action during the duration of the Decree for the purposes of entering all orders, judgments and decrees that may be necessary to implement the relief provided herein.

V.

# EFFECTIVE DATE AND DURATION OF DECREE

A. The provisions and agreements contained herein are effective immediately upon the date which this Decree is entered by the Court ("the Effective Date").

- B. Except as otherwise provided herein, this Decree shall remain in effect for three (3) years after the Effective Date. However, within 30 days after Lutheran's last report is submitted to the EEOC, as required under section X.2 herein, the EEOC shall consider terminating the consent decree and such approval for terminating this decree shall not be unreasonably withheld.
- C. Upon the expiration of the Decree, the case will be dismissed with prejudice unless the Court dismisses the case sua sponte. This subsection shall not apply if at the time of expiration of the Decree, that there is a pending motion to ensure further compliance before the Court, requiring continued jurisdiction.

VI.

# **MODIFICATION AND SEVERABILITY**

- A. This Decree constitutes the complete understanding of the parties with respect to the matters contained herein. No waiver, modification or amendment of any provision of this Decree will be effective unless made in writing and signed by an authorized representative of each of the parties.
- B. If one or more provisions of the Decree are rendered unlawful or unenforceable, the parties shall make good faith efforts to agree upon appropriate amendments to this Decree in order to effectuate the purposes of the Decree. In any event, the remaining provisions will remain in full force and effect unless the purposes of the Decree cannot, despite the parties' best efforts, be achieved.
- C. By mutual agreement of the parties, this Decree may be amended or modified in the interests of justice and fairness in order to effectuate the provisions of this Decree.

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#### VII.

#### **COMPLIANCE AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

- A. The parties expressly agree that if the Commission has reason to believe that Lutheran has failed to comply with any provision of this Consent Decree, the Commission may bring an action before this Court to enforce the Decree. Prior to initiating such action, the Commission will notify Lutheran and its legal counsel of record, in writing, of the nature of the dispute. This notice shall specify the particular provision(s) that the Commission believes Lutheran has breached. Absent a showing by either party that the delay will cause irreparable harm, Lutheran shall have forty five (45) days to attempt to resolve or cure the breach, however the parties can agree to extend this period upon mutual consent.
- B. The parties agree to cooperate with each other and use their best efforts to resolve any dispute referenced in the EEOC notice.
- C. After forty five (45) days have passed with no resolution or agreement to extend the time further, the Commission may petition this Court for resolution of the dispute, seeking all available relief, including an extension of the term of the Decree for such period of time as Lutheran is shown to be in breach of the Decree and the Commission's costs and attorneys' fees incurred in securing compliance with the Decree.

#### VIII.

#### **MONETARY RELIEF**

In settlement of this lawsuit, Lutheran shall pay a total of \$80,800.00 to resolve this action. Of the \$80,800.00 total settlement, \$5,200.00 shall be designated as back pay and the remainder as compensatory damages. Lutheran shall forward, via certified mail, a check to the Charging Party within ten (10) calendar days of the effective date of this Consent Decree, in the amount of \$20,200.00. Thereafter, Lutheran shall make monthly payments to Navarro in the amount of \$2,811.00 for 18 months, beginning 30 days after the initial payment is

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made. Additionally, six months after the initial payment, Lutheran will make an additional lump sum payment of \$10,002.00. No interest charges shall accrue on any of the above periodic payments. To the extent any withholdings are made, FICA and federal and state withholding taxes shall be deducted from the amount that is designated as back pay only from the second lump sum installment. Lutheran shall pay the employer's share of FUTA and FICA on the back pay amount from the second lump sum installment and shall not deduct it from the settlement amount. The remainder of the settlement amount shall be to compensate Ms. Navarro for her compensatory damages and, as such, no withholding will be made for the amount designated as compensatory damages. Lutheran shall prepare and distribute 1099 tax reporting forms to the Charging Party and shall make appropriate reports to the Internal Revenue Service and other tax authorities for the amount designated as compensatory damages. Within three (3) business days of the issuance of each and every settlement check, Lutheran shall submit a copy of each check and related correspondence to the Regional Attorney, Anna Y. Park, U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 255 East Temple Street, 4th Floor, Los Angeles, CA. 90012.

IX.

#### **GENERAL INJUNCTIVE RELIEF**

## A. Non-Discrimination

# 1. Disability Discrimination

Lutheran, its officers, agents, employees, successors, assigns and all persons in active concert or participation with it are enjoined for the duration of the Decree from discriminating against any individual because of his or her disability or failing to reasonably accommodate an individual with a disability.

#### 2. Retaliation

Lutheran, its officers, agents, management (including all supervisory employees), successors, assigns, and all those in active concert or participation

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with them, or any of them, hereby agree not to engage in, implement or permit any action, policy or practice with the purpose of retaliating against any current or former employee or applicant of Lutheran, or either of them, because he or she has in the past, or during the term of this Decree: (a) opposed any practice made unlawful under the ADA; (b) filed a charge of discrimination alleging such practice; (c) testified or participated in any manner in any investigation (including without limitation, any internal investigation undertaken by Lutheran), or proceeding in connection with this case and/or relating to any claim of an ADA violation; (d) was identified as a possible witness or claimant in this action; (e) asserted any rights under this Decree; or (f) sought and/or received any relief in accordance with this Decree.

## **Equal Employment Opportunity Consultant**

Within thirty days after the Effective Date, Lutheran shall retain an outside Equal Employment Opportunity Consultant ("Consultant") with demonstrated experience in the area of employment discrimination and ADA accommodation issues, to implement and monitor Lutheran's compliance with the ADA and the provisions of this Decree. The Consultant shall be subject to the Commission's approval, which shall not be unreasonably withheld. If the Commission does not approve Lutheran's proposed Consultant, the Commission shall provide Lutheran with a list of at least three suggested candidates acceptable to the Commission. Lutheran shall bear all costs associated with the selection and retention of the Consultant and the performance of his/her/its duties. The Consultant's responsibilities shall include:

Ensuring that the defendant has developed an anti-discrimination 1. policy addressing ADA issues, including but not limited to a prohibition against discrimination on the basis of disability, a prohibition against retaliation for engaging in activities protected under the ADA, and a description of the

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employer's obligation to reasonably accommodate persons covered under the ADA;

- 2. Ensuring that Lutheran's procedures to handle complaints of discrimination, harassment and retaliation, on the basis of actual or perceived disability, comply with its obligations under this Decree;
- Ensuring that Lutheran has developed a reasonable accommodation procedure whereby the need for reasonable accommodation is identified, potential reasonable accommodations are explored, and appropriate reasonable accommodations are selected, which procedure shall require that all issues of reasonable accommodation be referred to the EEO Consultant for his/her direct attention and resolution; ensuring that Lutheran's anti-discrimination policy and reporting procedure effectively carries out its obligations under this Decree;
- Ensuring that managerial, human resources, and staff/hourly employees are trained on their rights and responsibilities under the ADA, including but not limited to issues of accommodation;
- Ensuring that all employees are trained on policies and procedures 5. relating to the ADA and retaliation;
- Monitoring all accommodation requests to ensure compliance with the 6. ADA;
- Ensuring that Lutheran properly communicates with complainants 7. regarding the complaint procedure, status of the complaint/investigation, results of the investigation, and any remedial action taken;
- 8. Ensuring that Lutheran's reports required by this Decree are accurately compiled and timely submitted;
- Ensuring that Lutheran's disciplinary policies hold employees and 9. managers accountable for failing to take appropriate action and/or for engaging in conduct prohibited under this Decree;
  - Further ensuring compliance with the terms of this Decree. 10.

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The Consultant shall ensure compliance for the foregoing provisions for the term of the Decree.

- Revision of Policies Concerning Disability Discrimination and Harassment D. Lutheran shall review, and if necessary to comply with this consent decree, revise its policy on disability discrimination and harassment, and provide a copy to the Commission within twenty-one (21) days after the Effective Date. The policy shall include:
  - A clear explanation of prohibited conduct; 1.
- 2. Assurance that employees who make complaints of disability harassment/discrimination or provide information related to such complaints will be protected against retaliation;
- A clearly described complaint process that provides accessible and confidential avenues of complaint with contact information including name (if applicable), address, and telephone number of persons both internal (i.e. human resources) and external to Lutheran (i.e. Commission and outside Consultant available to handle complaints concerning high level company officials of Defendants' corporate hierarchy) to whom employees may report disability discrimination and retaliation, including a written statement that the employee may report the discriminatory behavior to designated persons outside their chain of management;
- Assurance that the employer will protect the confidentiality of 4. discrimination complaints or accommodation requests to the extent possible;
- 5. A complaint process that provides a prompt, thorough, and impartial investigation;
- A procedure for communicating with the complainant in writing 6. regarding the status of the complaint/investigation, results of the investigation, and any remedial action taken; and

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7. Assurance that Lutheran will take immediate and appropriate corrective action when it determines that harassment/discrimination and/or retaliation has occurred.

EEOC shall comment on the policy within forty-five (45) days of receipt. Should the policy not require any revision, Lutheran shall confirm distribution of the policy no later than ten (10) days after the forty-five (45) day period. The policy shall be distributed in English and Spanish to all of Lutheran's employees, including management/supervisory staff, and shall be included in any relevant policy or employee manuals distributed to employees by Lutheran. Lutheran shall collect acknowledgments from each employee employed primarily in any of Lutheran's locations who receives the revised policy, in either English or Spanish depending on the language preference of each employee. Throughout the term of this Decree, Lutheran shall also post the policy, in English and Spanish, in a place that is conspicuous and accessible to all employees in a legible font that is a minimum of 15 points in size.

# E. Training

After the requirements under Section IX (D) are fulfilled, Lutheran shall within sixty (60) days thereafter, provide training to all of Lutheran's Orange County managerial/supervisory and human resources employees who shall be required to attend a training program of at least two (2) hours. The training shall be mandatory and occur once every year for the term of this Decree. Any Orange County managers/supervisors who failed to attend the training shall be trained within (30) days of the live training set forth above. The training for Human Resources employees shall encompass a separate component on their responsibilities under the ADA, including the role of the Human Resources department in identifying accommodation responsibilities under the ADA. All other managerial/supervisory employees outside of Orange County can attend training by video in lieu of live training as set forth above.

 Within ten (10) days after the training of managers/supervisors and human resources employees are trained, Lutheran's staff and non-managerial employees shall be given at least one live training on Lutheran's ADA policy and complaint procedures. The training on ADA policies and procedures can be part of any other regularly occurring meeting held by Lutheran. The training shall occur annually during the term of the Decree.

At a minimum, the disability non-discrimination training programs shall include the following:

- a. Instruction on the requirements of all applicable equal employment opportunity ("EEO") laws including, but not limited to the ADA including accommodation responsibilities;
- b. A review of defendant's disability non-discrimination, non-retaliation and reasonable accommodation policies and of the specific requirements of this Decree; and
- c. Training of management and human resources personnel in dealing with disability discrimination complaints and reasonable accommodation requests.

The training of managerial employees shall additionally include training on how to recognize and prevent disability discrimination and/or retaliation, how to recognize requests for accommodation under the ADA, how to engage in the interactive process, and how to go about accommodating individuals with a disability.

For the remainder of the term of this Decree, all new managerial, supervisory, and human resource Orange County employees and all employees recently promoted from a staff/hourly to a managerial position shall receive training, as appropriate, within thirty (30) days of hire or promotion.

After the initial training as specified above, all OC employees shall receive the training at least annually thereafter for the remainder of the term of this Decree.

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All employees required to attend such training shall verify their annual attendance in writing.

Within thirty (30) days after the requirements under Section IX (D) are fulfilled, Lutheran shall submit to the EEOC a description of the training to be provided and an outline of the curriculum developed for the trainees. Lutheran shall give the EEOC a minimum of five (5) business days' advance written notice of the date, time and location of each training program provided pursuant to this Decree, and agrees that an EEOC representative may attend the training program. Where practicable, the EEOC shall inform Lutheran prior to attending the training.

#### Performance Evaluations F.

Lutheran shall take reasonable measures to hold its managers and supervisors accountable for complying with Lutheran's anti-discrimination and anti-retaliation policies and procedures.

#### G. Complaint Procedure

Within sixty (60) days of the Effective Date, defendant shall review its internal complaint response procedure, and if necessary, revise or develop an internal complaint procedure to provide for the filing, investigation and, if appropriate, remedying of complaints of disability discrimination or retaliation. Lutheran's complaint procedure, and the identification of persons to whom complaints of disability discrimination shall be made, will be part of the training conducted by Lutheran.

#### Lutheran shall:

- 1. Publicize the complaint procedure;
- 2. Track and collect all complaints filed thereunder;
- 3. Investigate and resolve such complaints in a timely and effective manner; and
- 4. Retain records regarding resolution of all such complaints.

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- The internal complaint procedure shall incorporate the following elements: H.
  - A policy describing how investigations will be conducted; 1.
- 2. A prompt commencement and thorough investigation by a person trained to conduct such investigations who is not connected with the complaint;
- A statement that an investigation should include interviews of all 3. relevant witnesses, including the complainant, and reviews of all relevant documents;
- 4. A written record of all investigatory steps, and any findings and conclusions, and any actions taken;
  - 5. Provision for the reasonably prompt resolution of such complaints;
- An opportunity for the complainant to review and respond to tentative 6. findings, except in those circumstances in which it is necessary to take immediate action;
- 7. Confidentiality of the complaint and investigation to the extent possible;
- Appropriate communication of the final conclusions of the 8. investigation provided to the complainant;
- An appeal procedure to an appropriate Defendant representative, 9. should the complainant be dissatisfied with the results of the investigation; and
- 10. A notice that employees or applicants complaining of disability discrimination may use the company's internal complaint procedure and/or may file charges with the EEOC or state or local Fair Employment Practice (FEP) agencies. The notice shall also state that filing an internal complaint does not relieve the complainant of meeting any applicable deadline for the filing of a charge or complaint with EEOC or state or local FEP agencies.
- Defendant may encourage resolution of internal complaints at a local level prior to investigation, but not require such informal resolution. A complainant

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- The Internal Complaint Procedure will permit, but not require, an employee J. to initiate the complaint process by submitting a written complaint on a form designed for the purpose.
- Defendant will maintain a policy of nondiscrimination and equal treatment, K. including a policy of zero tolerance for unlawful discrimination, in all of its employment practices.
- The Internal Complaint Procedure is not intended to supplant the right of any L. employee to file a charge or complaint of discrimination or retaliation under any available municipal, state, or federal law.
- Defendant shall publish with the Internal Complaint Procedure the following M. elements that will be included in the procedure:
- A statement that it is unacceptable to retaliate against any associate for 1. use of the Internal Complaint Procedure, for assisting in the investigation of a complaint, or for otherwise assisting in the utilization of the procedure.
- A statement that if an allegation of discrimination or retaliation against 2. a manager or other associate is substantiated, then such conduct will result in appropriate discipline, up to and including discharge.

X.

### RECORD KEEPING AND REPORTING

#### Reporting and Record Keeping Α.

**Document Preservation** 1.

For the duration of the Decree, defendant agrees to maintain such records as are necessary to demonstrate their compliance with this Decree, including but not limited to the documents specifically identified below, and to verify that the reports submitted are accurate.

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#### 2. Reports

Initial Reporting: Within one-hundred twenty (120) days of the Effective Date of this Decree, defendant shall provide the EEOC with the following:

- a. Its anti-disability discrimination, non-retaliation and reasonable accommodation policy;
- Proposed disability discrimination training programs for all of its employees, including the identities of the persons and/or organizations proposed to conduct the training; and
- Procedure for tracking complaints of disability discrimination, identifying the need for reasonable accommodation and processes by which potential accommodations are considered;

Subsequent Reports: On an annual basis for term of the Decree, defendant shall provide the EEOC with a report of the foregoing. The closing period for the first report shall be six (6) months after the Initial Report identified above. The report shall set forth the following:

- a. All complaints of disability discrimination tracked by date, the identity of the person who handled the complaint, and resolution of the complaint. This includes requests for accommodation;
- b. All considerations regarding reasonable accommodation, whether initiated by request of the employee or at the instigation of the employer, tracked by date that the need for accommodation first came to Lutheran's attention, the identity of the person(s) who explored potential accommodations, all accommodations suggested by the employee, all accommodations considered by Lutheran, reasons any potential accommodation was rejected, and accommodation adopted, if any, and the dates of each interaction set forth above;

1	c.	Training conducted or attended by the defendant on anti-	
2		discrimination laws and requirements under the ADA;	
3	d.	Change in designation of the EEO consultant, if any;	
4	e.	All documents generated in connection with any complaint,	
5		investigation into, or resolution of every complaint of	
6		discrimination or retaliation for the duration of the Decree and	
7		the identities of the parties involved;	
8	f.	documents verifying the occurrence of all training sessions and	
9		names and positions of all attendees for each session as required	
10		under this Decree;	
11	g.	documents tracking and analyzing complaints filed against the	
12		same employee and location;	
13	h.	an analysis of the monitoring done for repeat complaints by	
14		employees and by location; and	
15	i.	a description detailing any changes of the procedures or record-	
16		keeping methods for centralized tracking of discrimination	
17	complaints and the monitoring of such complaints within thirty		
18	(30) days before implementing such changes.		
19		XI.	
20	COSTS OF ADMINISTRATION AND IMPLEMENTATION		
21	OF CONSENT DECREE		
22	Lutheran shall bear all costs associated with its administration and		
23	implementation of its obligations under this Consent Decree.		
24		XII.	
25		<b>COSTS AND ATTORNEYS' FEES</b>	
26	Each party shall bear its own costs of suit and attorneys' fees.		
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#### XIII.

#### MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

- A. During the term of this Consent Decree, Lutheran shall provide any potential successor-in-interest with a copy of this Consent Decree within a reasonable time of not less than thirty (30) days prior to the execution of any agreement for acquisition or assumption of control of any or all of Lutheran's facilities, or any other material change in corporate structure, and shall simultaneously inform the EEOC of same.
- B. During the term of this Consent Decree, Lutheran and its successors shall assure that each of its officers, managers and supervisors is aware of any term(s) of this Decree which may be related to his/her job duties.
- C. Unless otherwise stated, all notices, reports and correspondence required under this Decree shall be delivered to the attention of the Regional Attorney, Anna Y. Park, U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Los Angeles District Office, 255 E. Temple St., 4<sup>th</sup> Fl., Los Angeles, CA. 90012.
- D. The parties agree to entry of this Decree subject to final approval by the Court.

# [PROPOSED] ORDER

#### **GOOD CAUSE APPEARING:**

The Court hereby retains jurisdiction and the provisions of the foregoing Consent Decree are hereby approved and compliance with all provisions thereof is fair and adequate.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Date: 6.7.65

United States District Court Judge

# EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION

Cherry-Marie D. Rojas Connie Liem

Attorneys for Plaintiff

Attorneys for Defendant

Lutheran Social Services of Southern California