

SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

THIS SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT (the "Agreement") is made and entered into between Serendipity Hearing, Inc., d/b/a Sonus Hearing Care, ("Respondent"), and the United States Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Office of Special Counsel for Immigration-Related Unfair Employment Practices ("Office of Special Counsel").

WHEREAS, on February 13, 2014, the Office of Special Counsel received a charge filed by the Charging Party against Respondent DJ# 197-12C-1442 (the "OSC Charge") alleging a violation of the unfair immigration-related employment practices provision of 8 U.S.C. § 1324b (the "Act").

WHEREAS, the Office of Special Counsel concluded based upon its investigation of the OSC Charge, that there is reasonable cause to believe that Respondent committed document abuse against the Charging Party in violation of the Act.

WHEREAS, the Office of Special Counsel and Respondent wish to resolve the OSC Charge without further delay or expense and hereby acknowledge that they are voluntarily entering into this Agreement.

WHEREAS Respondent understands its obligation under 8 U.S.C. § 1324b to treat all individuals equally, without regard to citizenship or immigration status, or national origin, during the hiring, firing, and employment eligibility verification and re-verification process.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the premises and mutual promises herein contained and to fully and finally resolve the OSC Charge as of the date of this Agreement, it is agreed as follows:

1. Respondent shall pay a civil penalty to the United States Treasury in the amount of Four Hundred dollars (\$400.00).
2. The monies discussed in paragraph 1 shall be paid via the FedWire electronic fund transfer system within ten (10) business days from the effective date of this Agreement. The Office of Special Counsel shall provide Respondent with fund transfer instructions. On the day of payment, Respondent shall confirm via email to Luz V. Lopez-Ortiz at Luz.V.Lopez-Ortiz@usdoj.gov that payment was made.
3. Respondent shall pay the Charging Party sixteen thousand, seven hundred and twenty seven dollars (\$16,727.00), which includes back pay and accumulated interest on back pay. Respondent may withhold applicable taxes based on the tax rates of the current calendar year. Respondent shall follow the applicable instructions contained in IRS Publication 957.
4. The monies discussed in paragraph 3 shall be paid by cashier's check payable to the Charging Party and mailed to the Charging Party via express delivery service express mail or delivered by another method as agreed upon by the parties within five (5) business days of the effective date of this Agreement. On the day the check is mailed or otherwise transmitted, Respondent shall send via email to Luz V. Lopez-Ortiz at

Luz.V.Lopez-Ortiz@usdoj.gov a copy of such check and the express delivery service tracking number, if applicable.

5. Any release of claims Respondent requires Charging Party to sign as a condition of the payment of monies discussed in paragraph 3 shall be submitted to the Charging Party's attorney, if one has been retained.
6. Respondent shall not intimidate, threaten, coerce, or retaliate against the Charging Party or any other person for his or her participation in this matter or the exercise of any right or privilege secured by 8 U.S.C. § 1324b.
7. Respondent shall post the Office of Special Counsel "If You Have The Right to Work" poster ("OSC Poster"), in color and measuring no smaller than 11" x 14", an image of which is available at <http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/osc/htm/worker.php#>, in all places where notices to employees and job applicants are normally posted. The OSC Poster will be posted within fourteen (14) days of the effective date of this Agreement and will remain posted for three (3) years thereafter. The OSC Poster shall be posted in English and any other available language that is the preferred language of Respondent's employees, if that language is known.
8. For the duration of this Agreement, Respondent shall ensure that all individuals who are responsible for formulating, carrying out, and/or conducting training on Respondent's hiring, firing, equal employment, and employment eligibility verification policies, including all managers and employees who have any role making employment eligibility decisions, such as completing the Form I-9 ("Human Resources Personnel"), are in possession of the most current version of the Form I-9, USCIS Employment Eligibility Verification Handbook for Employers (M-274) ("Handbook"), available at www.uscis.gov/I-9Central. Copies of the documents and future revisions of the Form I-9 and Handbook can be obtained from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services at www.uscis.gov.
9. Within thirty (30) days of the effective date of this Agreement, Respondent shall revise its employment policies as they relate to nondiscrimination and provide them for review and approval by the Office of Special Counsel. The employment policies shall be revised to:
 - (a) Prohibit (1) any requests for employment eligibility verification documents from any individual prior to making an offer of employment; (2) discrimination on the basis of citizenship status or national origin in the recruiting, hiring, and firing process; and (3) any difference in treatment of individuals, on the basis of citizenship status or national origin, during the employment eligibility verification and re-verification process;
 - (b) Refer applicants and employees who complain, formally or informally, of discrimination in the hiring, firing, or employment eligibility verification and re-verification process immediately to the Office of Special Counsel

by directing the affected individual to the OSC Poster and the Office of Special Counsel's worker hotline and website, and advise the affected individual of his or her right to file a charge of discrimination with the Office of Special Counsel; and

- (c) Prohibit any reprisal action against an employee for having opposed any employment practice made unlawful by 8 U.S.C. § 1324b, or for filing any charge, or participating in any lawful manner in any investigation or action under 8 U.S.C. § 1324b.

10. During the twelve (12) months following the effective date of this Agreement (the "Reporting Period"), Respondent shall provide any changes in employment policies as they relate to nondiscrimination on the basis of citizenship status and national origin to the Office of Special Counsel for approval at least thirty (30) days prior to the effective date of such revised policies.

11. Within ninety (90) days of the effective date of this Agreement, all Human Resources Personnel shall join the Office of Special Counsel's email distribution list and shall attend a training on their responsibilities to comply with 8 U.S.C. § 1324b in the employment eligibility verification and re-verification process.

- (a) The training will consist of viewing a remote webinar presentation. Participants shall register for the webinar presentation at www.justice.gov/crt/about/osc/webinars.php.
- (b) All employees will be paid their normal rate of pay during the training, and the training will occur during their normally scheduled workdays and work hours. Respondent shall bear all costs associated with these training sessions.
- (c) For a period of twelve (12) months from the effective date of this Agreement, all new Human Resources Personnel hired by Respondent after the training described in this paragraph has been conducted shall attend an Office of Special Counsel Employer/HR webinar within sixty (60) days of hire. Any individuals who have not been trained within sixty (60) days of hire pursuant to this paragraph shall not be permitted to perform any employment eligibility verification functions.
- (d) Respondent shall compile attendance records listing the individuals who attend the training described in this paragraph, including their full name, title, and signature, as well as the date of the training. Respondent shall send such records via email to Luz.V.Lopez-Ortiz@usdoj.gov within ten (10) days of each training session.

12. During the Reporting Period, the Office of Special Counsel reserves the right to make reasonable inquiries necessary to determine Respondent's compliance with this Agreement. As a part of such review, the Office of Special Counsel may require written

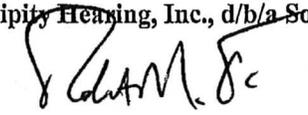
reports concerning compliance, inspect Respondent's premises, examine witnesses, and examine and copy Respondent's documents.

13. Every six (6) months during the Reporting Period, Respondent shall provide the Office of Special Counsel with copies of the completed Forms I-9, including attachments, for all employees Respondent hired in that six-month period. Respondent shall provide the documents in electronic form unless otherwise requested.
14. If the Office of Special Counsel has reason to believe that Respondent is in violation of any provision of this Agreement, the Office of Special Counsel may in its sole discretion notify Respondent of the purported violation without opening an investigation. Respondent will then be given a thirty (30) day period from the date it is notified by the Office of Special Counsel in which to cure the violation before Respondent is deemed by the Office of Special Counsel to be in violation of this Agreement.
15. This Agreement does not affect the right of any individual to file a charge alleging an unfair immigration related employment practice against Respondent with the Office of Special Counsel, the authority of the Office of Special Counsel to investigate or file a complaint on behalf of any such individual, or the authority of the Office of Special Counsel to conduct an independent investigation of Respondent's employment practices.
16. The provisions of paragraph 1 notwithstanding, the Office of Special Counsel shall not seek from Respondent any additional civil penalty for unfair documentary practices in violation of 8 U.S.C. § 1324b that are subject of the OSC Charge through the date this Agreement is signed by all parties.
17. This Agreement may be enforced in the United States District Court for the Central District of California or any other court of competent jurisdiction.
18. The Office of Special Counsel and Respondent agree that, as of the effective date of this Agreement, litigation concerning the violations of 8 U.S.C. § 1324b that the Office of Special Counsel has reasonable cause to believe that Respondent committed is not reasonably foreseeable. To the extent that either party previously implemented a litigation hold to preserve documents, electronically stored information, or things related to this matter, the party is no longer required to maintain such a litigation hold. Nothing in this paragraph relieves either party of any other obligations imposed by this Agreement.
19. Should any provision of this Agreement be declared or determined by any court to be illegal or invalid, the validity of the remaining parts, terms or provisions shall not be affected thereby and said illegal or invalid part, term or provision shall be deemed not to be a part of this Agreement. Respondent and the Office of Special Counsel shall not, individually or in combination with another, seek to have any court declare or determine that any provision of this Agreement invalid.
20. The Office of Special Counsel, Charging Party and Respondent shall bear their own costs, attorneys' fees and other expenses incurred in this action.

21. This Agreement may be executed in multiple counterparts, each of which together shall be considered an original but all of which shall constitute one agreement. The parties shall be bound by facsimile signatures.

Serendipity Hearing, Inc., d/b/a Sonus Hearing Care

By:



Robert M. Orr
Legal Counsel

Dated:

OCT 7, 2014

Office of Special Counsel for Immigration-Related Unfair Employment Practices

By:



Alberto Ruisanchez
Deputy Special Counsel

Dated:

10-24-2014

C. Sebastian Aloit
Special Litigation Counsel

Luz V. Lopez-Ortiz
Trial Attorney

Ryan Thompson
Paralegal