IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF ARIZONA

The State of Arizona ex re Mark Brnovich, the Attorney General, and the Civil Rights Division of the Arizona Department of Law,

Plaintiff,

and

Edward Litzinger, individually,

Intervenor-Plaintiff

VS.

Big Tex Trailer World, Inc., d/b/a Big Tex Trailers,

Defendant.

No. 4:19 cv-00521-DCB

CONSENT DECREE

BACKGROUND

The State of Arizona *ex rel*. Mark Brnovich, the Attorney General, and the Civil Rights Division of the Arizona Department of Law (the "State") filed this action against Defendant Big Tex Trailer World, Inc., d/b/a Big Tex Trailers, ("Defendant") to enforce the Arizona Civil Rights Act, A.R.S. § 41-1401 et seq. ("ACRA"). In the State's Complaint, the State alleged that Defendant discriminated against an employee, Ed Litzinger ("Litzinger"), by failing to reasonably accommodate his disability and by terminating Litzinger because of his disability in violation of the Arizona Civil Rights Act ("ACRA"), A.R.S. §§ 41-1463(F)(4), 41-1463(B)(1) ("State's Complaint"). Litzinger intervened in this

action ("Litzinger's Complaint") and alleged that Defendant refused to make a reasonable accommodation for Litzinger's disability and terminated his employment because of his disability in violation of the American with Disabilities Act ("ADA"), 42 U.S.C. §§ 12101-12117. Defendant disputes the State and Litzinger's allegations. This litigation is collectively referred to herein as "the Lawsuit."

COMPROMISE OF DISPUTED CLAIMS

The State and Defendant (collectively, the "Parties") desire to resolve the issues raised in the State's Complaint in order to avoid the time, expense, and uncertainty of further contested litigation. The Parties expressly acknowledge that this Consent Decree is the compromise of disputed claims and that there has been no adjudication of any claim or finding of any liability, or lack thereof, on the part of Defendant. The Parties agree to be bound by this Consent Decree and to not contest whether it was validly entered into in any subsequent proceeding to implement or enforce its terms. The Parties stipulate to the entry of this Consent Decree, do not object to the jurisdiction of the Court over this action, and waive a hearing and the entry of Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law.

It appearing to the Court that entry of this Consent Decree will fairly resolve this disputed claim,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, ADJUDGED AND DECREED as follows:

I. JURISDICTION

- 1. This Court has jurisdiction over the subject matter of this Action and over the Parties, and venue in Pima County is proper.
- 2. The Parties agree that this Decree is fair, reasonable, and equitable and does not violate the law or public policy,
- 3. This Decree becomes effective on the date of signing by the Court ("Effective Date").

II. TERM

- 4. The Court will retain jurisdiction over the subject matter of this Consent Decree, the State, and Defendant for eighteen (18) month from the Effective Date to effectuate and enforce this Consent Decree. Any time after one (1) year, the Parties may stipulate to reduce the timeframe for this Consent Decree.
- 5. The State may petition this Court for compliance with this Consent Decree at any time during the period that this Court maintains jurisdiction over this action in accordance with Paragraph 7 of this Section. Should the Court determine that Defendant has not complied with this Consent Decree, appropriate relief, including extension of this Consent Decree for such period as may be necessary to remedy its non-compliance, an award of attorney's fees and costs, and fines for contempt of court may be ordered.
- 6. Unless otherwise stipulated by the Parties, or the Court has extended this Consent Decree, the Consent Decree will automatically expire and the Court will lose jurisdiction over this action eighteen (18) months after Effective Date of the Consent Decree.
- 7. If the State believes that Defendant has failed to comply with any portion of this Consent Decree, the State shall notify Defendant's attorney of record in writing of the purported failure to comply with the terms of the Consent Decree ("Deficiency Notice"). Defendant shall have fourteen (14) business days from the mailing date of Deficiency Notice to cure all deficiencies and to come into compliance with this Consent Decree. The State may initiate an enforcement action if Defendant: (1) fails to timely respond to the State's Deficiency Notice; or (2) fails to cure all deficiencies and come into compliance with this Consent Decree.

III. RESOLUTION OF THE LAWSUIT

- 8. This Consent Decree is made between the State and Defendant.
- 9. This Consent Decree resolves the claims alleged in the State's Complaint.

- 10. The Consent Decree becomes effective and enforceable only if Litzinger executes and does not thereafter revoke the Litzinger Settlement (as defined in Paragraph 15, below) within the revocation period set forth therein.
- 11. By entering into this Decree, the State and Defendant do not intend to resolve any charges of discrimination currently pending before the State other than those that formed the foundation for the State's Complaint. The State does not waive or in any manner limit its right to process or seek relief from the Defendant in any other charge or investigation that may arise.
- 12. The Defendant and its directors, officers, supervisors, managers and successors will not interfere with the relief herein ordered, but shall cooperate in the implementation of this Consent Decree.
- 13. The State retains its independent right to file an enforcement action, in accordance with Paragraph 7, should the State believe that Defendant has not complied with the terms of the Consent Decree.
- 14. Upon Defendant's fulfillment of the obligations set forth in this Consent Decree, the State agrees to close ACRD charge No. TCRD-2018-0197. Although the State does not waive its right to process any other charge against Defendant, the State does waive its right to file a Divisional charge against Defendant relating to the matters that were alleged in the complaint and ACRD charge No. TCRD-2018-0197.

IV. MONETARY RELIEF

15. As part of its resolution of the Lawsuit, Defendant has entered into a separate settlement agreement with Litzinger (the "Litzinger Settlement"), the terms of which provide for payment to Litzinger of \$45,000. Such monetary settlement shall be delivered to Shannon Giles at Awerkamp, Bonilla & Giles, PLC, 6891 N. Oracle Rd., Suite 155, Tucson, AZ 85704-4287, for transmittal to Litzinger pursuant to the terms in the Litzinger Settlement. Defendant shall provide the State with proof of payment to Litzinger on the same date that the settlement payment is delivered to Shannon Giles.

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V. INJUNCTIVE RELIEF

16. <u>Compliance with the Arizona Civil Rights Act.</u>

- a. Defendant and its managers, supervisors, officers, directors, and agents, located, or conducting business, in Arizona, are enjoined from engaging in any employment practice which discriminates on the basis of disability, including but not limited to: failure to provide reasonable accommodations in accordance with ACRA; discriminatory discharge; retaliation; and implementation of employment methods of administration, policies, and/or procedures that otherwise violate the Arizona Civil Rights Act, A.R.S. § 41-1461, et seq. ("ACRA").
- b. Defendant and its managers, supervisors, officers, directors, and agents located, or conducting business, in Arizona, are enjoined from engaging in unlawful retaliation against any employee or applicant because of such employee's or applicant's opposition to any practice made unlawful under the ACRA, including but not limited to an employee or applicant requesting a reasonable accommodation; initiating an internal complaint of discrimination with Defendant; filing or causing to be filed a charge of discrimination with the State or any other agency charged with investigation of employment discrimination complaints, or whose statements serve as the basis of a charge; or because such person testifies or participates in the investigation or prosecution of an alleged violation of ACRA.
- c. Defendant agrees that Defendant and its employees, managers, supervisors, officers, directors and agents located, or conducting business, in Arizona have a legal duty to not engage in employment discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin or on the basis of disability, in violation of the ACRA.
- d. Defendant agrees that Defendant and its employees, managers, supervisors, officers, directors and agents located, or conducting business, in Arizona a have a legal duty to not engage in unlawful discrimination or retaliation against any Arizona employee or applicant because he/she has opposed any practice reasonably believed by him/her to be

unlawful under A.R.S. § 41-1461, et seq., or because he/she has requested a reasonable accommodation, filed an internal or external discrimination complaint, given testimony or assistance, or participated in any investigation or proceeding under the ACRA.

- e. The Parties agree that the obligations set forth in this Paragraph 16 are limited to Defendant's Arizona-based business operations.
- 17. **Poster.** Defendant agrees to keep posted at all times in a conspicuous, well-lighted place frequented by its employees and applicants for employment, at all of Defendant's Arizona locations, a poster which states that discrimination in employment based on disability, race, color, religion, age (40 and older), sex, or national origin is prohibited. Within thirty (30) days of the Effective Date of this Consent Decree, Defendant agrees to certify that such posters have been posted at all of Defendant's locations in Arizona and shall provide photographs to the Attorney General's Office, Civil Rights Division, c/o Leslie Ross, or her successor, 2005 N. Central Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona 85004 or by e-mail to Leslie.Ross@azag.gov, evidencing that such a poster has been posted at all of Defendant's Arizona locations.
- 18. <u>Neutral Employment Reference.</u> In the event that an inquiry is made to Defendant's Human Resources Department concerning Litzinger's prior employment with Defendant, Defendant agrees to provide a neutral reference for Litzinger. A "neutral reference" means Defendant will limit its substantive response to said inquiry to confirmation of Litzinger's dates of employment, his last job title, and his final rate of pay.

19. Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Retaliation Policy and Procedure.

a. Within sixty (60) days of the effective date of this Consent Decree, Defendant will confirm that its anti-discrimination and anti-retaliation policies and procedures, or as necessary, modify, its existing policies and procedures to: (a) prohibit discrimination based upon an employee or applicant's disability, race, national origin, color, sex, religion, genetic testing or age as provided by the applicable state and/or federal employment discrimination laws; (b) affirm that Defendant will provide reasonable accommodation to

qualified individuals with disabilities who are employees or applicants in accordance with applicable state and/or federal employment discrimination laws; and (c) prohibit retaliation against any employee or applicant for engaging in protected activity under applicable state and/or federal employment discrimination laws, including but not limited to, requesting a reasonable accommodation.

- b. At a minimum, these anti-discrimination and anti-retaliation policies and/or procedures will contain: (a) a specific commitment to these anti-discrimination, reasonable accommodation, and anti-retaliation provisions; (b) a statement that unlawful discrimination and/or retaliation violates applicable state and federal civil rights laws; and (c) a designated process by which an employee or applicant can internally file a complaint regarding issues of alleged discrimination and/or retaliation by using Defendant's Ethics Point hotline or website (atw.ethicspoint.com) and/or contacting Human Resources or any manager or supervisor. Defendant shall include the anti-discrimination and anti-retaliation policy in an Employee Handbook.
- c. Within sixty (60) days of the Effective Date of this Consent Decree, Defendant agrees to provide its anti-discrimination and anti-retaliation policies and procedures referenced in Paragraph 19 to the Attorney General's Office, Civil Rights Division, c/o Leslie Ross, or her successor, 2005 N. Central Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona 85004 or by e-mail to Leslie.Ross@azag.gov.
- d. Within ninety (90) days of the Effective Date of this Decree, Defendant will make its anti-discrimination and anti-retaliation policies and procedures referenced in Paragraph 19 available on its website to all employees, including new employees hired during the term of this Consent Decree, and will submit to the Attorney General's Office, Civil Rights Division, c/o Leslie Ross, or her successor, 2005 N. Central Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona 85004 or by e-mail to Leslie.Ross@azag.gov, a copy the policy posted on its website. Defendant's anti-discrimination and anti-retaliation policies and procedures shall be included in an Employee Handbook.

e. Defendant agrees to disseminate a copy of these anti-discrimination and antiretaliation policies and procedures to all new Arizona employees, managers, supervisors, and agents hired during the term of this Consent Decree.

20. Reasonable Accommodation Policy and Procedure.

- a. Within sixty (60) days of the Effective Date of this Consent Decree, Defendant will confirm that its reasonable accommodation policies and procedures are, or as necessary, modify, its existing reasonable accommodation policies and procedures for employees and applicants with disabilities to be in accordance with the ACRA and/or Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended ("ADA") and shall, within ninety (90) days of the Effective Date of this Consent Decree make the reasonable accommodation policy and procedure available to all employees on its website, including new employees hired during the term of this Consent Decree.
- b. At minimum, Defendant's reasonable accommodation policies and/or procedures will contain: (a) an affirmative statement that an applicant or employee need not use the specific term "reasonable accommodation" to request a reasonable accommodation from Defendant; (b) a clear procedure by which an employee or applicant may request a reasonable accommodation from Defendant's Human Resources Department; (c) a procedure that if an employee or applicant informs a supervisor or manager of his/her need for a reasonable accommodation, the supervisor or manger will direct him/her to Human Resources; (d) a statement that Defendant will issue the requestor an acknowledgement of receipt of his/her request for reasonable accommodation; (e) an assurance that Defendant will take prompt action upon receipt of a request for reasonable accommodation; (f) an assurance that Defendant will timely enter into a good faith interactive process with the employee or applicant to attempt to determine and provide an effective reasonable accommodation; (g) a procedure for notifying the requesting employee's supervisor of any reasonable accommodation(s) provided to the employee; and (h) a statement that Defendant will not retaliate against an employee or applicant for requesting a reasonable

accommodation, filing a complaint of discrimination, or participating in any investigation or proceeding under applicable state and/or federal employment laws.

- c. Within sixty (60) days of the Effective Date of this Decree, Defendant agrees to and shall provide to the Attorney General's Office, Civil Rights Division, c/o Leslie Ross, or by email to Leslie.Ross@azag.gov, or her successor, Defendant's reasonable accommodation policies and procedures for approval. Defendant's reasonable accommodation policies and procedures shall be included in an Employee Handbook.
- 21. Acknowledgment of Receipt of Employee Handbook. For the duration of the Consent Decree, Arizona employees, including those hired during the term of the Consent Decree, shall be instructed to acknowledge receipt of the Employee Handbook. The Employee Handbook shall contain the policies and procedures referenced in Paragraphs 19 and 20 of this Consent Decree. Defendant shall provide the State acknowledgement(s) of receipt of the Handbook, (containing the policies and provisions outlined in this Consent Decree) from Arizona employees. Defendant shall submit the signed acknowledgement(s) of receipt within one (1) month of the date of the acknowledgment to Attorney General's Office, Civil Rights Division, c/o Leslie Ross, or her successor, 2005 N. Central Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona 85004 or by e-mail to Leslie.Ross@azag.gov.

22. <u>Training</u>.

a. Defendant will hire a qualified individual or organization, approved by the State, to provide training to: (1) Defendant's Human Resources Leader and human resources personnel with direct responsibility over employees in Defendant's Arizona locations; and (2) all of Defendant's managers and regional managers who have direct supervisory responsibility over employees located in Arizona (the "Training Recipients") on the policies and procedures referenced in Paragraphs 19 and 20 of this Consent Decree. For purposes of this Consent Decree, a qualified trainer is a person or agency knowledgeable about the legal requirements under state and federal employment laws and

was not one of Defendant's employees involved in the acts alleged as discriminatory by Litzinger and/or the State.

- b. Within ninety (90) days of the Effective Date of this Consent Decree, the Training Recipients shall receive training, for one (1) hour, by a qualified trainer on anti-discrimination, reasonable accommodation, and anti-retaliation under ACRA and Title I of the ADA, the policies and procedures referenced in Paragraphs 19 and 20 of this Consent Decree, and specific procedures for handling reasonable accommodation requests in accordance with state and federal employment laws.
- c. The training may be completed via webinar, web recording, on-demand video, and/or video conference.
 - d. Defendant shall bear all costs of the training.
- e. Defendant agrees that individuals hired during the term of the Consent Decree who meet the description of Training Recipients shall receive the training outlined in Paragraph 22(b) within sixty (60) days of hire or ninety (90) days of the Effective Date of the Decree, whichever is later.
- f. Defendant shall provide written notice of completion of any training described within Paragraph 22 within ten (10) business days of such training to the Attorney General's Office, Civil Rights Division, c/o Leslie Ross, or her successor, 2005 N. Central Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona 85004 or by e-mail to Leslie.Ross@azag.gov. The notice of completion shall contain at a minimum the following: (i) the date, time and location of the training; (ii) a list of the names and positions of those persons who completed the training; and (iii) the name of the agency or individual presenting the training. Defendant may satisfy the requirement of identifying the attendees in requirement (ii), by attaching a copy of a registration list containing the date of the training and the name and position of each person in attendance.
- g. Defendant shall provide an initial copy of the training materials to the State at least two (2) weeks prior to the commencement of any training referenced in Paragraph

22 for the State's approval. Within five (5) business days of receipt, the State will respond with approval or necessary modifications. After the State's approval, Defendant need not provide further copies of the training materials to the State unless substantive changes are made, in which case Defendant agrees to provide a revised copy to the State for approval or modification.

VI. MONITORING

- 23. For the duration of this Consent Decree, Defendant shall maintain, for its Arizona business operations, the following documents and records set forth in this Monitoring Section.
- 24. This Section requires the retention of existing documents and records, and documents and records that are hereinafter created and maintained in the normal course of Defendant's business activities. The terms "Document" and "Records" shall have the broadest meaning accorded to it by Rule 34 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and shall include electronically stored information and tangible items, and all writings, recordings, and photographs as defined by Rule 1001 of the Federal Rules of Evidence.
- 25. For the duration of the Consent Decree, Defendant shall retain the hard-copy (when such documents are normally kept in hard-copy) and/or, where applicable, computer records relating to:
- a. Any and all complaints of discrimination based upon disability, whether submitted internally to Defendant or filed with a governmental entity;
- b. Any and all documents relating to any investigation of any complaint of discrimination based on disability; and
- c. Any and all documents related to requests (whether verbal or in writing) and responses to requests for reasonable accommodation made during the course of this Consent Decree, including documents relating to any interactive process, Defendant's determination

regarding the reasonable accommodation request, and, if denial is made, the reason for the denial. During the term of the Consent Decree, the State reserves the right to audit the documentation described in this Consent Decree. The State shall provide Defendant ten (10) business days, to comply with any request to review the documentation. If Defendant withholds any document, information, or electronically stored information based on a claim of attorney-client privilege and/or work product doctrine, Defendant shall produce a privilege log identifying in writing the information, document, or electronically stored information withheld and a detailed description of the nature of the information, document, or electronically stored information withheld to enable the State to assess the claim.

VII. GENERAL PROVISIONS

- 26. Unless otherwise specified, when this Decree requires submission of payments, reports, notices, or materials to the State, they shall be mailed to: the Attorney General's Office, Civil Rights Division, c/o Leslie Ross 2005 N. Central Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona 85004 or by e-mail to Leslie.Ross@azag.gov, or her successor.
- 27. This Consent Decree may be signed in counterparts, including facsimile copies, and when so signed, each counterpart shall be deemed an original and all counterparts shall constitute one instrument. The Parties agree, however, that they will also execute original documents and promptly send them to the State so that it may have an entire set of original documents.
- 28. This Consent Decree is final and binding on the present and future directors, officers, managers, agents, heirs, assigns, successors, successors-in-interest, receivers, trustees in bankruptcy, and personal representatives of Defendant. Defendant has a duty to inform any successor in interest of the obligations of this Consent Decree during its duration. During the term of this Decree, the Defendant, and any successors of the Defendant, shall provide a copy of this Consent Decree to any organization or person who proposes to acquire or merge with the Defendant during the term of this Consent Decree, or any successor of the Defendant, prior to the effectiveness of any such asset sale,

acquisition, or merger. This Paragraph shall not be deemed to limit any remedies available in the event of any finding by the Court regarding violation of this Consent Decree.

- 29. If any term of this Consent Decree is determined by any court to be unenforceable, the other terms of this Consent Decree shall nonetheless remain in full force and effect.
- 30. Failure by any party to seek enforcement of this Consent Decree pursuant to its terms with respect to any provision or instance shall not be construed as a waiver to such enforcement with regard to other instances or provisions.
- 31. The Parties represent that they have read this Consent Decree in its entirety, have had an opportunity to consult with counsel of their own choice, are satisfied that they understand and agree to all of its provisions, and have freely signed this Consent Decree without coercion.
- 32. A signatory to this document in a representative capacity for each party represents that he or she is authorized to bind that party to this Consent Decree.
- 33. This Consent Decree constitutes the entire agreement between the State and Defendant on the matters raised herein and no other statement, promise or agreement, either written or oral, made by any party or agents of any party, that is not contained in this written agreement, including its attachments, shall be enforceable.
- 34. This Consent Decree is not intended to remedy any other potential violations of the ACRA or any other law that is not specifically addressed in this Consent Decree.
- 35. This Consent Decree does not affect Defendant's continuing responsibility to comply with all aspects of the ACRA.
- 36. This Consent Decree will not constitute or evidence an admission by the Parties that an employment practice made unlawful by A.R.S. § 41-1461 *et seq.* occurred, nor should any such inference be drawn.

EFFECTUATING CONSENT DECREE

The parties agree to the entry of this Consent Decree upon final approval by 37. the Court. The Effective Date of this Consent Decree will be the date that it is entered by this Court.

Dated this 8th day of September, 2020.

United States District Judge

CONSENT TO DECREE

- 1. On behalf of Defendant, Big Tex Trailer World, Inc., d/b/a Big Tex Trailers, I acknowledge that I have read the foregoing Consent Decree, and that Defendant is aware of its right to a trial in this matter and has waived that right.
- 2. Defendant, Big Tex Trailer World, Inc., d/b/a Big Tex Trailers, agrees to the jurisdiction of the Court, and consents to entry of this Consent Decree.
- 3. Defendant, Big Tex Trailer World, Inc., d/b/a Big Tex Trailers, states that no promise of any kind or nature whatsoever (other than the terms of this Consent Decree) was made to induce it to enter into this Consent Decree, that it has entered into this Consent Decree voluntarily, and that this Consent Decree constitutes the entire agreement between the parties.
- 4. I, <u>Pramod Raju</u>, am the <u>Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer</u>, <u>ATW</u> of Big Tex Trailer World, Inc., d/b/a Big Tex Trailers, and as such, am authorized by Big Tex Trailer World, Inc., d/b/a Big Tex Trailers to enter into this Consent Decree for and on its behalf.
- 5. I further state that Defendant, Big Tex Trailer World, Inc., d/b/a Big Tex Trailers has been represented by counsel in this case, and that the terms of this Consent Decree have been explained to me to my satisfaction, and are fully understood by me.

Big Tex Trailer World, Inc., d/b/a Big Tex Trailers.

 $By_{.}$

Pramod Raju

Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, ATW

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1	State of Texas) SS.	
2	County of Dallas)	
3	SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 19th day of AUGUST.	
4	2020, by COLINIE D'SUMMITT	
5		Notary Public
6	My Commission Expires: 3-18-2023	
7		MOTARY PUBLIC - STATE OF TEXAS 101 7862262
8	APPROVED AS TO FORM AND CONTEN	T:
10	Defendant, Big Tex Trailer World, Inc.	Ogletree, Deakins, Nash, Smoak &
11	d/b/a Big Tex Trailers	STEWART, P.C.
12 13 14	By Pramod Raju Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, ATW	Bys/Alexandra J. Gill Alexandra J. Gill Tibor Nagy, Jr. Attorneys for Defendant
15 16	Defendant, Big Tex Trailer World, Inc. d/b/a Big Tex Trailers	Date:August 17, 2020
17	Date: 8/19/20	•
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19	MARK BRNOVICH Attorney General	
20	2	
21	By Sulli Res	
22	Leslie Ross Assistant Attorney General	
23 24	Attorneys for Plaintiff State of Arizona	
25	Date: 8/26/20	