

**LOUISIANA STATE BOARD OF
SOCIAL WORK EXAMINERS**

IN THE MATTER OF

MELISSA MONTROSE

LCSW LICENSE NO. 17136

COMPLAINT NO. 2024-33

CONSENT AGREEMENT AND ORDER

WHEREAS, Melissa Montrose ("Ms. Montrose") is a credentialed social worker subject to the jurisdiction and the rules and regulations of the Louisiana State Board of Social Work Examiners ("Board" or "LABSWE");

WHEREAS, on September 25, 2023, the Board received a complaint against Ms. Montrose wherein it was alleged that Ms. Montrose was selling emotional support animal letters online for a fee through Pettable.com to individuals whom she does not know, has not met with, and is not treating beyond a phone call of ten minutes or less.

WHEREAS, by letter dated October 10, 2023, the Board notified Ms. Montrose of the complaint filed against her, provided Ms. Montrose with a summary of the nature of the complaint, and requested that Ms. Montrose provide a response to the complaint;

WHEREAS, by letter dated December 14, 2023, Ms. Montrose responded to the complaint through counsel, giving her response to the allegations contained therein;

WHEREAS, pursuant to a complaint and an administrative investigation, Ms. Montrose has indicated, through counsel, her desire to resolve this matter through a Consent Agreement and Order as provided for in Rule No. 907 of the Board's Rules, Standards and Procedures and La. R.S. 49:975(D) of the Louisiana Administrative Procedure Act;

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WHEREAS, Ms. Montrose has admitted to the following:

1. Ms. Montrose is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker ("LCSW") licensed by the Board to engage in the practice of social work in the State of Louisiana pursuant to the Social Work Practice Act, La. R.S. 37:2701 *et. seq.*, as evidenced by License Number 17136.
2. On the basis of a fifteen (15) minute or less telehealth consultation and screening responses, Ms. Montrose made a diagnosis and determination that her client, J.R., qualified for an emotional support animal.
3. On the basis of a fifteen (15) minute or less telehealth consultation and screening responses, Ms. Montrose made a diagnosis and determination that her client, D.M., qualified for an emotional support animal.
4. Ms. Montrose had no established therapeutic relationship with either client prior to their telehealth consultations.
5. Ms. Montrose made a client diagnosis on the basis of inadequate assessment which did not gather information about her client's functioning at work, family or support systems, thorough social history, or thorough medical history, nor document whether a precipitating event had occurred.
6. Ms. Montrose made no treatment recommendations for either client other than an emotional support animal.
7. Ms. Montrose did not develop or document a plan of care for her clients which included goals based on the assessment or diagnosis.
8. Ms. Montrose did not make or maintain records of services provided to her clients.

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WHEREAS, by making a diagnosis on the basis of an inadequate assessment and by failing to create/document a plan of care for the client, Ms. Montrose violated La. R.S. 37:2717(A)(5), (7) & (11), La. Admin Code tit. 46:XXV §111(A), (C), & (C)(5).

WHEREAS, undersigned counsel has confirmed through Ms. Montrose's counsel her desire to resolve this matter through a Consent Agreement and Order;

WHEREAS, Ms. Montrose agrees not to repeat the misconduct mentioned in this Consent Agreement and Order, and acknowledges that any further misconduct mentioned in this Consent Agreement and Order will be considered a violation of the terms of this Consent Agreement and Order and shall be cause for further disciplinary action;

WHEREAS, Ms. Montrose recognizes her right to have an administrative adjudication of the charges outlined in the complaint and notice letter, at which time Ms. Montrose would be entitled to be represented by legal counsel, to call witnesses, and to present witnesses on her behalf in defense or in mitigation of the charges made, and to a decision thereon by the Board based upon written findings of fact and conclusions of law in accordance with the Louisiana Administrative Procedure Act. Ms. Montrose nonetheless waives her right to formal adjudication and, pursuant to La. R.S. 49:975(D), consents to the entry of the Consent Agreement and Order set forth hereinafter. Ms. Montrose also acknowledges that she waives any rights to which she may be entitled pursuant to the Louisiana Administrative Procedure Act, La. R.S. 49:951, *et seq.*, or which she otherwise may be afforded by any law, to contest her agreement to, or the force and effect of this Consent Agreement and Order, in any Court or other forum.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that in consideration of the foregoing and pursuant to the authority vested in the Board by La. R.S. 49:975(D), the Board orders and Ms. Montrose accepts the following administrative action which is a final decision pursuant to La. R.S. 49:977:

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1. The LCSW credential of Ms. Montrose to be engaged in the practice of social work in the State of Louisiana, as evidenced by license number 17136 shall be, and is hereby REPRIMANDED. Accordingly, Ms. Montrose accepts and shall maintain strict compliance with the following terms and conditions.
2. Ms. Montrose shall pay a fine in the amount of FIVE HUNDRED AND 00/100 DOLLARS (\$500.00) within one (1) year from the date all parties sign this Consent Agreement and Order. The payments shall be made on a quarterly basis with the first payment due within ninety (90) days from the date all parties sign this Consent Agreement and Order. Payment shall be made by credit card, certified check, or money order.
3. Ms. Montrose shall reimburse legal costs associated with Complaint No. 2024-33 in the amount of ONE THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED FIFTY AND 00/100 DOLLARS (\$1,650.00) within one (1) year from the date all parties sign this Consent Agreement and Order. The payments shall be made on a quarterly basis with the first payment due within ninety (90) days from the date all parties sign this Consent Agreement and Order. Payment shall be made by credit card, certified check, or money order.
4. Ms. Montrose shall complete a total of six (6) hours of continuing education in the area of assessments and diagnosis. These hours are to be pre-approved by the Board prior to completion. These continuing education hours must be completed in addition to all standard renewal requirements for her LCSW licensure. Ms. Montrose shall provide the Board with evidence of attendance within twelve (12) months after all parties sign this Consent Agreement and Order.

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5. Ms. Montrose shall pass the Board's Open Book Examination on the Social Work Practice Act and Rules, Standards & Procedures within three (3) months after the date the parties sign this Consent Agreement and Order.
6. Ms. Montrose specifically acknowledges that failure to comply with the terms of this Consent Agreement and Order may result in a denial, revocation, or suspension of any license, certificate, or registration issued by, or applied for, in accordance with La. R.S. 37:2717.
7. Ms. Montrose further acknowledges that failure to reimburse the fees set forth above at Paragraphs 2 and 3 will require the Board to take further action in collection of this debt. Respondent has twelve (12) months to reimburse the expenses before the debt will be considered final and transferred to the Louisiana Office of Debt Recovery (ODR). After transfer, the debt is subject to an additional collection fee of up to twenty-five percent (25%) of the total debt liability, as provided for in La. R.S. 47:1676 (B).
8. Ms. Montrose shall report the terms of this Consent Agreement and Order to any board or agency with which she is licensed, certified, or registered.
9. By agreeing to the terms of this Consent Agreement and Order, Ms. Montrose waives all rights to appeal this adjudication.

Effect of Non-Acceptance of Agreement. Ms. Montrose acknowledges that this Consent Agreement and Order is subject to the approval of the Board. She further acknowledges and agrees that if the Board rejects this Consent Agreement and Order, it will be void, and an Administrative Complaint may be filed relative to the allegations contained herein. If this Consent Agreement and Order is rejected by the Board, it will not constitute a waiver of Ms. Montrose's right to a hearing

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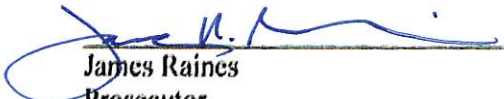
on the matters alleged in an Administrative Complaint and the admissions contained herein will have no effect. She further agrees that if the Board rejects this Consent Agreement and Order, the members of the Board may decide the matter after a hearing, and their consideration of this Consent Agreement and Order shall not alone be grounds for recusal of any member of the Board, including any claims that the Board is biased against her, that it cannot fairly decide the case, or that it has received *ex parte* communication.

Address of Board. All payments ordered and any reports required by this Consent Agreement and Order shall be addressed to: Louisiana State Board of Social Work Examiners, 18550 Highland Road, Suite B, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70809.

IT IS HEREBY FURTHER ORDERED that this Consent Agreement and Order shall take effect immediately upon its adoption by the Board and is a public record of the Board. The terms of this Consent Agreement and Order may be published and reported in, including but not limited to, the LABSWE Newsletter, the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB), and the National Practitioner Data Bank-Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank (NPDB-HIPDB).

The prosecutor acknowledges negotiation and preparation of this Consent Agreement and Order in order to resolve, with prejudice, all matters for which the social worker could be charged under Complaint 2024-33, and further certifies that this Consent Agreement and Order is consistent with the evidence, adequately addresses the complaint, and represents a true and correct statement of that which could be proven at a hearing of this matter.

DATED: 4/1/25


James Raines
Prosecutor

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I, Melissa Montrose, have read the Consent Agreement and Order, understand it, and agree to be bound by its terms and conditions. I specifically acknowledge that failure to comply with the terms of the Consent Agreement and Order may result in revocation or suspension of my license. The admissions contained herein will be considered proven and the only issue will be failure to follow the terms of the Consent Agreement and Order. I make these acknowledgements and waivers in support of a final disposition of the pending investigation of Complaint No. 2024-33 by Consent Agreement and Order pursuant to La. R.S. 49:975(D), in lieu of the institution and prosecution of formal administrative proceedings, and accordingly consent to the entirety of the Order set forth above and further waive any right to which I may be entitled under the Louisiana Administrative Procedure Act or any other law to contest, in any court, my agreement to this Order. By my subscription hereto, I also hereby authorize the Prosecutor to present this Order to the LABSWE for its consideration and to disclose to and discuss with the LABSWE the nature and results of the investigation of this matter. I herein waive any objection to such disclosure based on due process of law under either the State or Federal Constitution or under State statutory law, including La. R.S. 49:977.2, and further authorize the matter to be taken up in executive session by the Board, even in my absence. I expressly acknowledge that the disclosure of such information to the LABSWE shall be without prejudice to the Prosecutor's authority to file a formal Administrative Complaint, or the LABSWE's capacity to adjudicate such Administrative Complaint, should the LABSWE decline to approve this Consent Agreement and Order. I further acknowledge my awareness that should the LABSWE approve this Consent Agreement and Order that the Consent Agreement and Order will become a matter of public record.

DATED: 3/22/2025

MMontrose
Melissa Montrose

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO before me this 22nd day of March, 2025,
at New Orleans, Louisiana.

D. Baird
Notary Public
Print Name: Dara L. Baird
My Commission Expires: Upon my death



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ORDER

The Louisiana State Board of Social Work Examiners, having examined the Consent Agreement and Order, Case No. 2024-33, adopted the Consent Agreement and Order in this matter.

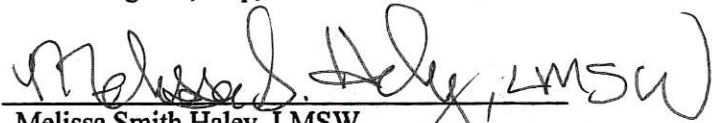
DATED this 25th day of April, 2025, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

**LOUISIANA STATE BOARD OF SOCIAL
WORK EXAMINERS**


Dr. Hyacinth McKee, LCSW-BACS


Dr. Jamie Barney, LCSW-BACS

Evan Bergeron, Esq., Consumer Member


Melissa Smith Haley, LMSW


Trinity George, RSW


Bora Sunseri, LCSW-BACS

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