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PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WHISTLE-BLOWER SUES ST. JOSEPH HOSPITAL

**RELIGIOUS HOSPITAL FORCES JOB APPLICANTS TO DIVULGE REPRODUCTIVE
DYSFUNCTIONS, INFERTILITY, PREGNANCY, VENEREAL DISEASE, STILL BORN
BIRTHS, MISCARRIAGES AND OTHER CONSTITUTIONALLY PRIVATE MATTERS**

**HR PROFESSIONAL FIRED
AFTER PROTESTING HOSPITAL POLICY**

Today, Grace Fontana, a former Human Resource professional with St. Joseph Hospital of Orange, filed a lawsuit against it in which she alleges multiple violations of the California Fair Employment and Housing Act arising out of the Hospital's policy and practice of forcing job applicants to reveal personal and intimate details about their private lives.

Ms. Fontana's complaint alleges that St. Joseph forced job applicants to answer questions such as whether the applicant had ever had: (1) venereal disease; (2) taken birth control pills; (3) problems with infertility; (4) children with birth defects; (5) stillborn children; (6) fetuses/unborn children with birth defects; (7) miscarriages; (8) problems with pregnancies; or (9) plans to become pregnant. More disturbingly, Ms. Fontana's complaint also alleges that St. Joseph forced applicants to identify whether they were married and, if so, to reveal whether their **spouses** had ever had problems with infertility, miscarriages and pregnancies, or were pregnant or planning to become pregnant.

Upon Ms. Fontana's discovery of these illegal practices, she immediately complained to St. Joseph that it had to stop making these inquiries. Ms. Fontana also informed St. Joseph that she was pregnant. Shortly thereafter, St. Joseph summarily fired Ms. Fontana.

Commenting about these practices, Ms. Fontana's attorney, Andrew H. Friedman of Helmer • Friedman, LLP said "California law clearly prohibits employers from asking these sorts of questions." V. James De Simone of Schonbrun, DeSimone, Seplow, Harris & Hoffman, LLP, Ms. Fontana's other attorney, said: "It is truly sad that an institution such as St. Joseph would find it necessary to pry into the private lives of its applicants and employees. This practice is not only distasteful but also unlawful." Ms. Fontana's attorneys will be asking the court to stop St. Joseph from making these unlawful inquiries.

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