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SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FOR THE COUNTY OF ALAMEDA

FNU LINAKI, as an individual and on behalf of
all others similarly situated, and as a private
attorney general,

Plaintiff,

vs.

GENJI PACIFIC, LLC, (also known as HANA
GROUP OPS, LLC) a Delaware limited liability
company; and DOES 1 through 50, inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No. RG20074795

[Hon. Stephen Kaus, Department 19]

**PLAINTIFF'S NOTICE OF MOTION AND
MOTION FOR FINAL APPROVAL OF
CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT;
MEMORANDUM OF POINTS AND
AUTHORITIES IN SUPPORT**

*[Filed concurrently with Declaration of Larry W.
Lee; Declaration of Simon L. Yang; Declaration
of William L. Marder; Declaration of Fnu Linaki;
Declaration of Taylor Mitzner; [Proposed] Order
and Final Judgment]*

Date: February 22, 2023
Time: 3:00 p.m.
Department: 19
Reservation No.: A-20074795001
Complaint Filed: September 23, 2020

1 **TO THE COURT, DEFENDANT, AND ITS COUNSEL OF RECORD:**

2 **PLEASE TAKE NOTICE** that on February 22, 2023, at 3:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as the
3 matter may be heard in Department 19, of the above-entitled court located at 1221 Oak Street, Oakland,
4 California 94612, Plaintiff, Fnu Linaki, will and hereby does seek an Order:

- 5 1. granting final approval to the Joint Stipulation of Class Action and Representative Action
6 Settlement (the “Agreement”) in this action;
- 7 2. approving distribution of the settlement funds to Settlement Class Members and Aggrieved
8 Employees pursuant to the terms of the Agreement;
- 9 3. approving Plaintiff’s request for a service award of \$10,000.00 to the Class Representative
10 pursuant to the terms of the Agreement;
- 11 4. approving Class Counsel’s request for an award of attorneys’ fees of 33⅓% of the
12 \$750,000.00 Gross Settlement Amount, or \$250,000.00, and reimbursement of litigation
13 costs of \$12,882.84 pursuant to the terms of the Agreement;
- 14 5. approving Plaintiff’s request for payment of the settlement administration costs to Phoenix
15 Settlement Administrators in the amount of \$11,500.00 pursuant to the terms of the
16 Agreement;
- 17 6. approving Plaintiff’s request for payment to the Labor & Workforce Development Agency of
18 \$75,000.00 pursuant to the terms of the Agreement; and
- 19 7. entering final judgment as to all members of the Settlement Class, the Aggrieved Employees,
20 and the State of California (including the Labor and Workforce Development Agency) in this
21 action.

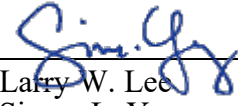
22 This motion is made pursuant to Rule 3.769 of the California Rules of Court, which provides for
23 Court approval of the settlement of a purported class action and allows the Court to grant final
24 certification of a class for settlement purposes. The overwhelmingly positive Class response—as shown
25 by the lack of objections to the settlement and the fact that only one Class Member opted out—supports
26 that the settlement is fair, reasonable, and adequate, and should be granted final approval.

27 This motion will be based on the attached Memorandum of Points and Authorities, the
28 supporting Declarations of Larry W. Lee, Simon L. Yang, William L. Marder, Plaintiff Fnu Linaki, and

1 Taylor Mitzner of Phoenix Settlement Administrators, upon the oral arguments of counsel (should there
2 be any), and on the complete records and file herein.

3 DATED: January 27, 2023

DIVERSITY LAW GROUP, P.C.

4
5 By: 
6 Larry W. Lee
7 Simon L. Yang
8 Attorneys for Plaintiff
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1 **MEMORANDUM OF POINTS AND AUTHORITIES**

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SUMMARY OF MOTION

On September 23, 2020, Plaintiff, Fnu Linaki, filed this class and Labor Code Private Attorneys General Act of 2004 (“PAGA”) action against Defendant, Genji Pacific, LLC, also known as Hana Group Ops, LLC, in the Superior Court of California for the County of Alameda. The operative complaint alleges claims for failure to pay proper overtime, failure to timely pay wages during and upon separation of employment, failure to issue accurate itemized wage statements, unfair competition, and penalties pursuant to PAGA. The lawsuit seeks to remedy (i) alleged underpayments of overtime as a result of failing to factor non-discretionary compensation into the regular rate of pay and (ii) untimely payment of wages more than seven days after the close of a pay period.

Plaintiff now seeks the Court’s final approval of the Joint Stipulation of Class Action and Representative Action Settlement (the “Agreement”). The Agreement provides for a \$750,000.00 fund to be created for the benefit of the Class, from which attorneys’ fees, litigation costs, service award to the Class Representative, payment to the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency (“LWDA”), and costs of settlement administration are to be paid. The net settlement fund after these deductions will be paid to Class Members and Aggrieved Employees.

The history of this litigation was previously detailed in Plaintiff’s Preliminary Approval Motion. On October 12, 2022, the Court preliminarily approved this settlement. It directed distribution of the Notice of Class Action Settlement (“Class Notice”) and scheduled the hearing for final approval of settlement (the “Preliminary Approval Order”).

As directed by the Court, the Administrator, Phoenix Settlement Administrators, distributed the Class Notice to 647 Class Members. Declaration of Taylor Mitzner on behalf of Phoenix Settlement Administrators (“Admin Decl.”) ¶ 5. Only one request for exclusion has been received, and no objections have been filed. *Id.* ¶¶ 8, 9. As such, there is a 99.85% participation rate. *Id.* ¶ 11. Thus, an inference can be made that the Class supports the Court’s Preliminary Approval Order finding that the Agreement is fair and reasonable.

In addition to the results of the notice process, the points discussed in Plaintiff’s Preliminary Approval Motion also support final approval of the settlement:

- The settlement provides a total settlement sum of \$750,000.00;

- 1 ▪ The settlement is fair given that Class Members will receive (*after* deductions for fees,
2 costs, etc.) a substantial amount of money (on average, each Settlement Class Member
3 will receive approximately \$565.97, and each Aggrieved Employee will additionally
4 receive another \$62.97, *see* Admin Decl. ¶¶ 14, 15);
- 5 ▪ Class Members did not need to submit claim forms to participate in the settlement, but
6 are being paid automatically;
- 7 ▪ The allocation reflects that payment of claims will be paid to all Class Members in
8 proportion to the number of applicable wage statements received by each Class Member
9 during the Class Period;
- 10 ▪ Plaintiff conducted significant investigation in this case, including formal and informal
11 discovery and exchanges of information by Plaintiff and Defendant of class data for the
12 entire class necessary for Plaintiff to fully evaluate this case;
- 13 ▪ A highly regarded administrator, Phoenix Settlement Administrators, was retained for
14 fees of \$11,500.00 only; and
- 15 ▪ California's LWDA will also be the beneficiary of this settlement as it will receive
16 \$75,000.00, should this settlement be granted final approval.

17 Accordingly, the Court should grant Final Approval consistent with the Preliminary Approval Order.

18 DISCUSSION

19 I. Class Members Were Provided Notice of the Settlement.

20 The notice procedures required by the Preliminary Approval Order, have been followed and
21 satisfy all due process rights of Class Members. The Preliminary Approval Order contemplated that the
22 Class Notice, as approved in the Preliminary Approval Order, be sent to all Class Members by first class
23 mail, as specified in the Agreement. Furthermore, the Preliminary Approval Order contemplated that
24 Phoenix Settlement Administrators would serve as the Administrator.

25 As clearly stated in the Admin Declaration, notice was provided to Class Members, as required
26 by the Preliminary Approval Order. On October 26, 2022, the Administrator received a Class Member
27 mailing list from Defendant's counsel that included 647 Class Members. Admin Decl. ¶ 3. On
28 November 7, 2022, each of the persons identified on the mailing list were sent the Class Notice via first
class mail. *Id.* ¶ 5. From the date of mailing, 52 Class Notices were returned due to an incorrect address
and 47 Class Notices were then re-mailed to an updated address after performing an address trace. *Id.* ¶
6. Seven of the re-mailed Class Notices were returned as undeliverable. *Id.* ¶ 7. As a result, 12 Class
Notices remained undeliverable because either an updated address could not be located despite skip
tracing efforts or the re-mailing to an updated address was also returned as undeliverable. *Id.* ¶ 7. The

1 Class Notice delivered to 635 of 647 Class Members provided Class Members with Class Counsel’s
2 contact information, where they could further seek information regarding the settlement, leave questions
3 for the Administrator, and update their address.

4 Plaintiff provided the “best notice practicable” in this case as necessary to protect the due
5 process rights of class members. *See Phillips Petroleum Co. v. Shutts*, 472 U.S. 797, 811-12 (1985)
6 (providing “best notice practicable” with description of the litigation and explanation of opt-out rights
7 satisfies due process); *Eisen v. Carlisle & Jacquelin*, 417 U.S. 156, 174-75 (1974) (explaining individual
8 notice must be sent to class members who can be identified through reasonable means); *Mullane v.*
9 *Central Hanover Bank & Trust Co.*, 339 U.S. 306, 314 (1950) (stating best practicable notice is that
10 which is “reasonably calculated, under all the circumstances, to apprise interested parties of the
11 pendency of the action and afford them an opportunity to present their objections”).

12 Here, Class Members were mailed a notice that explained the settlement and allowed Class
13 Members to seek information, ask questions, and object, if so desired. As such, proper notice has been
14 given to the Class Members. Thus, the Court may determine the fairness and adequacy of the settlement
15 and enter its Order granting final approval, secure in the knowledge that all absent Class Members have
16 been given the opportunity to participate fully in the claims, exclusion, and the approval process.

17 **II. The Fair, Adequate, and Reasonable Settlement Should Be Given Final Approval.**

18 **A. The Strength of the Case and Likelihood of Class Certification Support Approval.**

19 The Court already addressed the requirements for certifying a class for settlement purposes in its
20 Order granting preliminary approval. Plaintiff briefly addresses the requirements again here.

21 **1. The Class Is Ascertainable.**

22 “Whether a class is ascertainable is determined by examining (1) the class definition, (2) the size
23 of the class, and (3) the means available for identifying the class members.” *Reyes v. San Diego County*
24 *Board of Supervisors*, 196 Cal. App. 3d 1263, 1271 (1987); *see also* Code Civ. Proc. § 382.

25 Here, the Class is defined to include Overtime Class Members and Late Paid Class Members.
26 Overtime Class Members include all individuals who were employed by Defendant in California as non-
27 exempt employees and earned overtime and non-discretionary compensation, including the Ooiri bonus,
28 in the same month at any time from September 1, 2016, through January 13, 2022. Agreement ¶ 7. Late

1 Paid Class Members include all individuals who were employed by Defendant in California as either
2 exempt or non-exempt employees whose wages were not paid within seven days of the last day of the
3 pay period at any time from August 26, 2019, through January 13, 2022. *Id.*

4 There are 647 individuals that comprise the Class. Admin Decl. ¶ 3. This is more than the
5 minimum required to certify a class. Within the context of manageability, the issue is whether there
6 exists sufficient means for identifying class members at the remedial stage. *Reyes*, 196 Cal. App. 3d at
7 1274-75. Here, Class Members have already been identified by Defendant and already sent notice.

8 **2. There Is a Community of Interest.**

9 The “community of interest” requirement embodies three separate factors: (1) predominant
10 common questions of law or fact; (2) class representatives whose claims are typical of the class; and (3)
11 class representatives who can adequately represent the class. *Richmond v. Dart Industries, Inc.*, 29 Cal.
12 3d 462, 470 (1981); *Reese v. Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.*, 73 Cal. App. 4th 1225, 1234 (1999).

13 **a. There Are Predominant Common Questions of Law and Fact.**

14 “The ultimate question in every case of this type [class actions] is whether ... the issues which
15 may be jointly tried, when compared with those requiring separate adjudication, are so numerous and
16 substantial that the maintenance of a class action would be advantageous to the judicial process and to
17 the litigants.” *Lockheed Martin Corp. v. Superior Court*, 29 Cal. 4th 1096, 1104-05 (2003).

18 Plaintiff alleges that Defendant, as a matter of its corporate policy, practice, or procedure,
19 violated the Labor Code by its (i) alleged underpayments of overtime as a result of failing to factor non-
20 discretionary compensation into the regular rate of pay and (ii) untimely payments of wages more than
21 seven days after the close of a pay period. Defendant denies that liability could be established on a class-
22 wide basis and contends instead that liability would need to be conducted on a case-by-case basis.

23 **b. Plaintiff’s Claims Are Typical of the Class Claims.**

24 A class representative’s claim must be “typical” but not necessarily identical to the claims of
25 other class members; it is sufficient that the representative is similarly situated so that he or she will
26 have the motive to litigate on behalf of the class. *Classen v. Weller*, 145 Cal. App. 3d 27, 45 (1983).
27 Courts look to “whether the action is based on conduct which is not unique to the named Plaintiff” and
28 whether other class members were injured by the same conduct. *Hanon v. Dataproducts Corp.*, 976 F.2d

1 497, 508 (9th Cir. 1992). The purpose of the typicality requirement “is to assure that the interest of the
2 named representative aligns with the interests of the class.” *Id.* at 508.

3 Plaintiff was employed by Defendant and alleges that she was subjected to the same payroll
4 policies as all other Class Members. Specifically, like other members of the Class, Plaintiff alleges she
5 was underpaid overtime wages in light of incentives and bonuses she earned. Declaration of Fnu Linaki
6 (“Linaki Decl.”) ¶ 2. She also alleges she was not paid her wages within seven days of the last day of
7 each pay period. *Id.* In sum, Plaintiff alleges she was subjected to the same policies and practices as
8 other Class Members. Plaintiff’s claims thus are typical to those of Class Members.

9 **c. Plaintiff Adequately Represented the Class.**

10 The class representative, through qualified counsel, must be capable of “vigorously and
11 tenaciously” protecting the interests of the class members. *Simons v. Horowitz*, 151 Cal. App. 3d 834,
12 846 (1984). Here, Plaintiff does not have any interests adverse to the Class, nor have any such issues
13 been raised or presented. Plaintiff has taken all necessary steps to represent the interests of the Class,
14 including providing information and documents to her counsel and reviewing pleadings in this case.
15 Linaki Decl. ¶¶ 3-5. For such reasons, Plaintiff has adequately represented Class Members.

16 **B. Defendant’s Allegations and Position on Class Certification Support Approval.**

17 Defendant asserts that even assuming that a class could have been certified, Plaintiff would be
18 unable to establish classwide liability. For example, Defendant contended that there were pay periods in
19 which all work was performed during either the first through fifteenth day of a month or the sixteenth
20 through last day of a month—such that Defendant’s payments of wages were not untimely under Labor
21 Code section 204. Likewise, with respect to overtime liability, Defendant contended that it would not be
22 subject to Labor Code section 203 penalties, based on a good faith defense. Based thereon, Defendant
23 continues to maintain that it is not liable for the allegations made by Plaintiff.

24 **C. Risks, Expenses, and Complexity of Further Litigation Support Approval.**

25 Plaintiff believes that a class can be certified. However, Plaintiff also believes in the fairness of
26 the settlement that is based on factoring in the uncertainty and risks to Plaintiff involved in not
27 prevailing on one or more of the causes of action or theories alleged in the operative Complaint, the
28 possibility of non-certification, and potential for appeals.

1 There is always a risk that the court will not grant certification of the class. As Defendant alleges
2 that a class could not have been certified, there was at least a substantial risk that Plaintiff would not
3 have obtained the total amount of damages alleged, and a substantial number of complex issues that
4 would have necessitated significant expenditure of time and expenses. Therefore, the risks, expenses,
5 and complexity of further litigation warrant granting of this motion.

6 **D. The Settlement Terms and Negotiation—as Well as the Class Member Response—**
7 **All Support the Conclusion that the Settlement is Fair, Adequate, and Reasonable.**

8 Without reiterating the details in the Preliminary Approval Motion showing that the Agreement
9 (and the negotiation process that led up to it) is fair and adequate, the Parties highlight the following
10 facts. The Agreement was the product of negotiation between highly able and experienced attorneys on
11 both sides who possessed the relevant data and extensive legal research which they had carefully
12 analyzed. Declaration of Larry W. Lee (“Lee Decl.”) ¶¶ 4-5.

13 Following notice to the Class, only one request for exclusion and no objections to the settlement
14 have been received. Admin Decl. ¶¶ 8-9. The Court may appropriately infer that the class action
15 settlement is fair, adequate, and reasonable, given that not a single Class Member has submitted an
16 objection. *See Class Plaintiffs v. City of Seattle*, 955 F.2d 1268, 1291 (9th Cir. 1992). Indeed, the Class
17 Member response suggests the preliminarily approval settlement should now be granted final approval.

18 **III. Well-Established Legal Principles Support Final Approval of the Settlement.**

19 On a motion for final approval of a class action settlement under Code of Civil Procedure section
20 382 and Rule 3.769 of the California Rules of Court, a court’s inquiry is whether the settlement is “fair,
21 adequate and reasonable.” *Officers for Justice v. Civil Serv. Comm’n*, 688 F.2d 615, 625 (9th Cir. 1982).
22 A settlement is fair, adequate, and reasonable, and therefore merits final approval, when “the interests of
23 the class are better served by the settlement than by further litigation.” *See Manual for Complex*
24 *Litigation, Fourth* § 21.6 at 309 (Fed. Jud. Ctr., 4th ed. 2004) (“MCL”). The law favors settlement,
25 particularly in class actions and other complex cases, where substantial resources can be conserved by
26 avoiding the time, cost, and rigors of formal litigation. *See* 4 Alba Conte & Herbert B. Newberg,
27 *Newberg on Class Actions* § 11.41 (4th ed. 2002); *Class Plaintiffs v. City of Seattle*, 955 F.2d 1268,
28 1276 (9th Cir. 1992); *Van Bronkhorst v. Safeco Corp.*, 529 F.2d 943, 950 (9th Cir. 1976).

1 Although the Court possesses “broad discretion” in determining that a proposed class action
2 settlement is fair, the Court’s role must be limited to the extent necessary to reach a reasoned judgment
3 that the agreement is not the product of fraud or overreaching by, or collusion between, the negotiating
4 parties, and that the settlement, taken as a whole, is fair, reasonable, and adequate to all concerned. *See*
5 *Officers for Justice*, 688 F.2d at 625. Accordingly, the Court should give due regard to what is otherwise
6 a “private consensual agreement” between the parties. *Id.*; *see also Church v. Consolidated Freightways,*
7 *Inc.*, 1993 WL 149840 (N.D. Cal. 1993); *In re Wash. Pub. Power Supply Sys. Sec. Litig.*, 720 F. Supp.
8 1379 (D. Ariz. 1989), *aff’d sub nom.*; *City of Seattle*, 955 F.2d 1268; MCL § 21.6 at 309 (“The judicial
9 role in reviewing a proposed settlement is critical, but limited to approving the proposed settlement,
10 disapproving it, or imposing conditions on it. The judge cannot rewrite the agreement”).

11 As the Court of Appeal has cautioned:

12 It cannot be overemphasized that neither the trial court in approving the settlement nor
13 this Court in reviewing that approval have the right or duty to reach any ultimate
14 conclusions on the issues of fact and law which underlie the merits of the dispute. It is
15 well settled that in the judicial consideration of proposed settlements, ‘the [trial] judge
does not try out or attempt to decide the merits of the controversy,’ [citation] and the
appellate court ‘need not and should not reach any dispositive conclusions on the
admittedly unsettled legal issue.

16 *7-Eleven Owners for Fair Franchising v. Southland Corp.*, 85 Cal. App. 4th 1135, 1146 (2000).

17 A court’s review and approval of a PAGA settlement is subject to a similar standard as that for
18 class action settlement approval. A court should evaluate a PAGA settlement to determine whether it is
19 fair, reasonable, and adequate in view of PAGA’s purposes to remediate present labor law violations,
20 deter future ones, and to maximize enforcement of state labor laws. *Moniz v. Adecco USA, Inc.*, 72 Cal.
21 App. 5th 56, 77 (2021).

22 **A. The Settlement is Presumed to Be Fair**

23 The Court should begin with the presumption that the settlement is fair and should be approved:

24 [A] presumption of fairness exists where: (1) the settlement is reached through arm’s-
25 length bargaining; (2) investigation and discovery are sufficient to allow counsel and the
26 court to act intelligently; (3) counsel is experienced in similar litigation; and (4) the
percentage of objectors is small.

27 *Dunk v. Ford Motor Co.*, 48 Cal. App. 4th 1794, 1802 (1996); *accord, Ellis v. Naval Air Rework*
28 *Facility*, 87 F.R.D. 15, 18 (N.D. Cal. 1980); *In re Wash. Pub Power Supply*, 720 F. Supp. at 1387.

1 The settlement in the case at bar warrants approval and carries a presumption of fairness. As
2 previously noted in the application for Preliminary Approval, this current settlement was negotiated at
3 arm’s length. Lee Decl. ¶¶ 4-5. Class Counsel engaged in extensive factual investigation before settling,
4 including the exchange of formal and informal discovery and class data enabling Class Counsel to
5 evaluate the full extent of Defendant’s potential liability. *Id.* ¶ 4. Further, Class Counsel is highly
6 experienced in this type of litigation. As shown in the supporting declarations, Class Counsel has
7 significant experience in class actions and employment wage and hour matters. *Id.* ¶¶ 6-8; Declaration of
8 Simon L. Yang (“Yang Decl.”) ¶¶ 4-6; Declaration of William L. Marder (“Marder Decl.”) ¶¶ 3-10.

9 **B. Two-Way Costs and Other Risks Inherent in Litigation Favor Final Approval.**

10 To assess the fairness, adequacy, and reasonableness of a class action settlement, the Court also
11 should weigh the immediacy and certainty of substantial settlement proceeds against the risks inherent in
12 continued litigation. *See also In re General Motors Corp.*, 55 F.3d 768, 806 (3d Cir. 1995) (“present
13 value of the damages plaintiffs would likely recover if successful, appropriately discounted for the risk
14 of not prevailing, should be compared with the amount of the proposed settlement”); *Girsh v. Jepson*,
15 521 F.2d 153, 157 (3d Cir. 1975); *Boyd v. Bechtel Corp.*, 485 F. Supp. 610, 616-17 (N.D. Cal. 1979).

16 If Plaintiff pursued this case without settlement and failed to prevail, Plaintiff would have been
17 potentially responsible for Defendant’s costs. As such, should any current or former employees of
18 Defendant bring individual claims on the same causes of action, they would each face the uncertainty of
19 prevailing and the possibility of paying costs to Defendant. Accordingly, such claims likely would not
20 be brought by many of these current and former employees—thus, this lawsuit achieves a true benefit
21 for the Class that they might not otherwise get or seek as individuals. Here, given that a fair and
22 reasonable settlement has been reached, neither Plaintiff nor any of the Class Members will be required
23 to pay for Defendant’s litigation costs.

24 The risks of this case were weighed by Class Counsel and should be considered a significant
25 factor by the Court in its determination of final approval. Class Counsel obtained a significant settlement
26 for the Class that resulted in a fair recovery which at the same time provides for finality and no risk of
27 costs by the Class Members or Class Representative.

1 The Agreement also affords the Class prompt, fair relief while avoiding significant legal and
2 factual battles that otherwise may have prevented the Class from obtaining any recovery at all. While
3 Class Counsel believe the Class Members' claims are meritorious and can be successfully litigated, they
4 are experienced and fully understand the inherent risks and uncertainty involved with such matters as the
5 resolution of class certification, the outcome of a potential trial, and the outcome of any appeals that
6 would inevitably follow should the Class prevail at trial. Class Counsel has also assessed the same risks
7 in connection with the current settlement. Because the settlement provides immediate and substantial
8 relief, without the attendant risks and delay of continued litigation—not to mention the threat of
9 litigation fees and costs—Class Counsel believe that the settlement warrants the Court's final approval.

10 **C. The Complexity, Expense, and Likely Duration of Continued Litigation Against**
11 **Defendant Favor Final Approval.**

12 Another factor considered by courts in approving a settlement is the complexity, expense, and
13 likely duration of the litigation. *See Officers for Justice*, 688 F.2d at 625; *Girsh*, 521 F.2d at 157. In
14 applying this factor, courts weigh the benefits of settlement against the expense and delay involved in
15 achieving a favorable result at trial. *Young v. Katz*, 447 F.2d 431, 433-34 (5th Cir. 1971).

16 As noted above, continued litigation could have led to appeals on several issues. On the other
17 hand, the settlement that was reached provides to all Class Members—regardless of their means—fair
18 relief in a prompt and efficient manner. Were the Court to deny final approval, the Class Members
19 would be left without a remedy as a practical matter and courts across the State would have to address
20 the issues presented here in a piecemeal, costly, and time-consuming manner. The settlement in this case
21 is therefore consistent with the “overriding public interest in settling and quieting litigation” that is
22 “particularly true in class action suits.” *See Van Bronkhorst*, 529 F.2d at 950; *see also 4 Newberg* §
23 11.41. Here, litigation of this case through trial would have required years of litigation.

24 **D. The Opinion of Experienced Counsel Favors Final Approval.**

25 Class Counsel supports the settlement as fair, reasonable, and adequate, as in the best interest of
26 the Class Members as a whole, and fair, reasonable, and adequate in view of PAGA's purposes. Lee
27 Decl. ¶ 5; Yang Decl. ¶ 2; Marder Decl. ¶ 2. Similarly, counsel for Defendant is in favor of this
28 settlement. The endorsement of qualified and well-informed counsel of a settlement as fair, reasonable,

1 and adequate is entitled to significant weight by the Court in its final approval determination. *See*
2 *Officers for Justice*, 688 F.2d at 625; *Ellis*, 87 F.R.D. at 18; *Boyd*, 485 F. Supp. at 617; *Linney v.*
3 *Cellular Alaska P'ship*, 151 F.3d 1234, 1242 (9th Cir. 1998).

4 **IV. The Proposed Payments and Procedures Should Be Approved.**

5 **A. The Proposed Procedure for Uncashed Settlement Checks Should Be Approved.**

6 As referenced in the Motion for Preliminary Approval, to the extent any uncashed settlement
7 funds remain after 180 days, the Parties have agreed that the funds (upon the expiration date) would
8 escheat to the State Controller Unclaimed Property Fund in the name of the Settlement Class Member.
9 None of the settlement funds will revert to Defendant or be diverted to a *cy pres* recipient.

10 **B. The Requested Class Representative Service Award Should Be Approved.**

11 Class Representative Fnu Linaki requests a service award of \$10,000.00. Plaintiff met with Class
12 Counsel to provide substantive information regarding Defendant's practices. Linaki Decl. ¶ 3. Plaintiff
13 provided invaluable information, evidence, and documents that resulted in this settlement.

14 In addition to the invaluable services that she provided, Plaintiff took significant risks, both
15 professionally and monetarily, in acting as Class Representative to seek benefits for the Class. Because
16 the claims alleged by the Class Representative involved the payment of costs to the prevailing party,
17 Plaintiff could have possibly faced paying the costs of Defendant had she not prevailed in this action.
18 Moreover, Plaintiff understood that an individual case would have resolved much faster than a class
19 action and involved much less financial risk than a class action. Despite this, however, Plaintiff agreed
20 to pursue this case on behalf of the Class. Linaki Decl. ¶ 8.

21 Also, given that future employers are much less likely to hire individuals who have filed
22 employment-related lawsuits, particularly cases of this nature, the Class Representative also faces
23 significant risk in not being able to find suitable employment, all as a result of filing of this case against
24 Defendant. Plaintiff took these risks upon herself to the benefit of the Class. Linaki Decl. ¶ 8. Class
25 Members did not have to file individual lawsuits and bear the risks of payment of costs if they did not
26 prevail, nor did they have to face the potential for retaliation and not getting future employment had they
27 filed a lawsuit which is a public record. These are significant benefits that weigh in favor of granting the
28 requested award. Moreover, this litigation has resulted in a significantly valuable benefit to the Class,

1 and Plaintiff took on substantial risks in helping to get this financial benefit to the Class. As such, the
2 award should be granted to Plaintiff for her commitment, dedication, and risks taken for this litigation.

3 Equally important, Plaintiff provided a general release and waiver of the protections of Civil
4 Code section 1542. Linaki Decl. ¶ 9. This is a more extensive release than that provided by the Class at
5 large and also supports the request for the award.¹

6 **C. The Requested Attorneys' Fees Should Be Approved.**

7 **1. The Percentage of the Fund Method Supports the Requested Fees.**

8 Class Counsel seeks a fee award calculated at 33⅓% of the total value of the settlement for the
9 successful prosecution and resolution of this action. California state and federal courts have recognized
10 that an appropriate method for determining award of attorneys' fees is based on a percentage of the total
11 value of benefits to class members by the settlement. *Wershba v. Apple Computer, Inc.*, 91 Cal. App. 4th
12 224, 254 (2001); *Serrano v. Priest*, 20 Cal. 3d 25, 34 (1977) ; *Boeing Co. v. Van Gemert*, 444 U.S. 472,
13 478 (1980); *Vincent v. Hughes Air West, Inc.*, 557 F.2d 759, 769 (9th Cir. 1997). The purpose of this
14 equitable doctrine is to avoid unjust enrichment to the Class and to "spread litigation costs
15 proportionally among all the beneficiaries so that the active beneficiary does not bear the entire burden
16 alone." *Vincent*, 557 F.2d at 769.

17 The California Supreme Court has provided guidance regarding the award of attorneys' fees in
18 wage and hour class action settlements. Under California law, the award of attorneys' fees in common
19 fund wage and hour class action settlements should start with the percentage method. *See Laffitte v.*
20 *Robert Half Int'l*, 1 Cal. 5th 480, 503 (2016) ("We join the overwhelming majority of federal and state
21 courts in holding that when class action litigation establishes a monetary fund for the benefit of the class
22 members, and the trial court in its equitable powers awards class counsel a fee out of that fund, the court

23
24 ¹ Courts have routinely granted approval of settlements containing such incentive awards. *See Van*
25 *Vranken v. Atlantic Richfield Co.*, 901 F. Supp. 294, 299-300 (N.D. Cal. 1995) (incentive award of

26 \$50,000); *In re Dun & Bradstreet Credit Servs. Customer Litig.*, 130 F.R.D. 366, 374 (S.D. Ohio 1990)

27 (two incentive awards of \$55,000, and three incentive awards of \$35,000); *Brotherton v. Cleveland*, 141

28 F. Supp. 2d 907, 913-14 (S.D. Ohio 2001) (granting a \$50,000 incentive award); *Enter. Energy Corp. v.*
Columbia Gas Transmission Corp., 137 F.R.D. 240, 251-52 (S.D. Ohio 1991) (\$50,000 awarded to each
class representative); *Glass v. UBS Fin. Servs.*, 2007 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 8476, at *51-52 (N.D. Cal. Jan.
27, 2007) (awarding \$25,000 incentive award in FLSA overtime wages class action); *Cook v. Niedert*,
142 F.3d 1004, 1016 (7th Cir. 1998) (affirming \$25,000 incentive award to class representative).

1 may determine the amount of a reasonable fee by choosing an appropriate percentage of the fund
2 created”). Under the percentage of the fund method, a court’s objective remains to “mimic the market”
3 in fixing a reasonable fee. *See Gaskill v. Gordon*, 160 F.3d 361, 363 (7th Cir. 1998) (Posner, J.) (“When
4 a fee is set by a court rather than by contract, the object is to set it at a level that will approximate what
5 the market will set The judge, in other words, is trying to mimic the market in legal services.”).

6 First, the fee award representing 33⅓% of the fund clearly falls within that range and is
7 consistent with other rulings of other courts and comprehensive surveys of class action settlements and
8 fee awards. Attorneys’ fees awards of 35% of the fund are within the expected range in the “market in
9 legal services. *See Fitzpatrick, An Empirical Study of Class Action Settlements and Their Fee Award*, 7
10 J. Empirical Leg. Stud. 811, 833 (2010) (analyzing 444 cases between 2006-2007 and concluding that
11 “[m]ost fee awards were between 25 percent and 35 percent”).²

12 Second, the results delivered by Class Counsel also support the requested percentage of the fund.
13 Here, Plaintiff and her counsel secured a \$750,000.00 settlement and only one of the Class Members
14 chose to opt out. Zero chose to object.

15 Third, “the response of the class members to attorneys’ fee notice, though not decisive, is
16 relevant to the . . . reasonable determination” regarding fees. *Swedish Hospital v. Shalala*, 1 F.3d 1261,
17 1272 (D.C. Cir. 1993). A positive response rate tends to suggest that the court’s “approximation of the
18 market” for fees is well supported. *Id.* at 1269. Here, the Class Notice specifically notified the Class that
19 Class Counsel would be seeking \$250,000.00 in attorneys’ fees. Again, there were no objections.

20 Fourth, it is recognized that one of the primary factors justifying an enhanced attorney’s fees
21 reward is the attendant risks inherent in the litigation. As observed in *City of Detroit v. Grinnell Corp.*:

22 No one expects a lawyer whose compensation is contingent upon his success to charge, when
23 successful, as little as he would charge a client who had agreed to pay for his services, regardless
24 of success. Nor, particularly in complicated cases producing large recoveries, is it just to make a
fee depend solely on the reasonable amount of time expended.

25 ² Such a fee award mimics the market and “is supported by the fact that typical contingency fee
26 agreements provide that class counsel will recover 33% if the case is resolved before trial and 40% if the
27 case is tried.” *Fernandez v. Victoria Secret Stores LLC*, 2008 WL 8150856, at *16 n.59 (C.D. Cal. July
28 21, 2008) (citing Brickman, *Effective Hourly Rates of Contingency-Fee Lawyers: Competing Data and
Non-Competitive Fees* (Fall 2003) 81 Wash U. L. Q. 653, 659 n. 11). Indeed, a fee award of 35% of the
fund is consistent with “empirical studies [that] show that . . . fee awards in class actions average around
one-third of the recovery.” *Chavez v. Netflix, Inc.*, 162 Cal. App. 4th 43, 66 n.11 (2008).

1 495 F.2d 448, 470 (2d Cir. 1974). Here, it is clear that a settlement fund of \$750,000.00 has been
2 created. For Class Counsel, the fees here were wholly contingent in nature and the case presented far
3 more risk than the usual contingent fee case. Among the risks was the cost inherent in class action
4 litigation, as well as a long battle with a corporate Defendant who had retained a premier and highly
5 experienced defense firm. For such reasons, Class Counsel’s request for attorneys’ fees in the amount of
6 \$250,000.00 is fair, reasonable, and adequate.

7 **2. The Lodestar Cross-Check Supports the Requested Fees.**

8 The amount requested is reasonable for an additional reason. While the primary method
9 employed to determine fees is the percentage method, courts have discretion to use the lodestar method
10 to “cross-check” the amount of fees calculated by way of percentage. The *Laffitte* court emphasized,
11 however, that “the lodestar calculation, when used in this manner, does not override the trial court’s
12 primary determination of the fee as a percentage of the common fund and thus does not impose an
13 absolute maximum or minimum on the potential fee award.” *Laffitte*, 1 Cal. 5th at 505 (emphasis
14 added); *In re Rite Aid Corp. Secs. Litig.*, 396 F.3d 294, 306-307 (3d Cir. 2005) (“[The lodestar cross-
15 check does not trump the primary reliance on the percentage of common fund method”).

16 Courts find reasonable multipliers in a lodestar cross-check can “range from 2 to 4 or even
17 higher.” *Wershba v. Apple Computer, Inc.*, 91 Cal. App. 4th 224, 255 (2001).³ Indeed, the intermediate
18 court in *Laffitte*—after finding that “2 to 4” is a reasonable range for multipliers on a cross-check—
19 affirmed a 2.13 multiplier. *Laffitte*, 231 Cal. App. 4th at 881-82.⁴ Moreover, the Ninth Circuit has cited
20 with approval a comprehensive study of fees awarded by the percentage method showing that the
21 majority of multipliers awarded are “in the 1.5-3.0” range. *See Vizcaino v. Microsoft Corp.*, 290 F.3d
22 1043, 1051 (9th Cir. 2002) (affirming a multiplier of 3.65 in an employment class action case and
23 analyzing the multiplier awarded in over 30 cases).⁵

24 _____
25 ³ *Accord Chavez*, 162 Cal. App. 4th at 60 (applying a 2.5 multiplier on a lodestar cross-check); *Sutter*
26 *Health Uninsured Pricing Cases*, 171 Cal. App. 4th 495, 512 (2009) (applying a 2.52 multiplier on a
cross-check); *City of Oakland v. Oakland Raiders*, 203 Cal. App. 3d 78 (1988) (affirming a 2.34
multiplier without remand).

27 ⁴ The intermediate court opinion was affirmed in full upon review by the California Supreme Court.

28 ⁵ Federal district courts applying California law have likewise routinely approved cross-check
multipliers between 2.0 and 3.0 in employment cases. *See, e.g., Willner v. Manpower Inc.*, 2015 WL

1 With respect to Class Counsel's lodestar, at least 258.3 hours have been expended by Class
2 Counsel litigating this case. Lee Decl. ¶ 10, Ex. B; Yang Decl. ¶ 8, Ex. A; Marder Decl. ¶ 12, Ex. A.
3 Moreover, Class Counsel expects to incur approximately 15.0 hours of anticipated time spent to attend
4 the final approval hearing and secure final approval, as well as after approval to respond to phone calls
5 and correspondence from the administrator, defense counsel, and Class Members. Lee Decl. ¶ 10; Yang
6 Decl. ¶ 8. Courts are quite liberal in the evidence required to prove an attorney's hours. Detailed time
7 records are not required; an attorney's testimony alone may suffice: "Testimony of an attorney as to the
8 number of hours worked on a particular case is sufficient evidence to support an award of attorney fees,
9 even in the absence of detailed time records." *Martino v. Denevi*, 182 Cal. App. 3d 553, 559 (1986).

10 Reasonable hours include, in addition to time spent during litigation, the time spent before the
11 action is filed, including time spent interviewing the clients, investigating the facts and the law, and
12 preparing the initial pleadings. *New York Gaslight Club, Inc. v. Carey*, 447 U.S. 54, 62 (1980). The fee
13 award should also include fees incurred to establish and defend the attorneys' fee claim. *Serrano v.*
14 *Unruh*, 32 Cal. 3d 621, 639 (1982). The hours for which Plaintiff's Counsel seeks compensation involve
15 only these types of tasks. Thus, the number of hours for which fees are sought is reasonable.

16 A reasonable hourly rate is the prevailing rate charged by attorneys of similar skill and
17 experience in the relevant community. *PLCM Group, Inc. v. Drexler*, 22 Cal. 4th 1084, 1095 (2000).
18 The court may consider other factors when determining a reasonable hourly rate, e.g., the attorney's skill
19 and experience, the nature of the work performed, the relevant area of expertise and the attorney's
20 customary billing rates. *Flannery v. California Highway Patrol*, 61 Cal. App. 4th 629, 632-33 (1998).

21 Here, Mr. Lee's hourly rate is \$800. Lee Decl. ¶ 10. Mr. Marder's hourly rate is \$750. Marder
22 Decl. ¶ 11. Mr. Yang's hourly rate is \$725. Yang Decl. ¶ 7. Plaintiff's Counsel's skill and experience
23 justify the requested rates. As shown in the supporting declarations, Plaintiff's Counsel has significant
24

25
26 3863625, at *7 (N.D. Cal. June 22, 2015) (affirming a 2.10 multiplier on settlement of California Labor
27 Code violations); *Dyer v. Wells Fargo Bank, N.A.*, 303 F.R.D. 326, 334 (N.D. Cal. 2014) (approving
28 attorneys' fees that resulted in lodestar multiplier of 2.83); *Hopkins v. Stryker Sales Corp.*, 2013 WL
496358, at *5 (N.D. Cal. Feb. 6, 2013) (approving a multiplier of 2.76 in settlement of Labor Code
violations). Other courts have found even higher multipliers to be reasonable by comparison to other
cases. *See Craft v. County of San Bernardino*, 624 F. Supp. 2d 1113, 1125-26 (C.D. Cal. 2008)
(approving a 5.2 multiplier after surveying a large body of cases affirming a higher multiplier).

1 experience in the area of employment and wage and hour class and representative actions. Plaintiff's
2 Counsel's practices focus on representing employees in employment matters, particularly wage and hour
3 cases on a contingency basis. Lee Decl. ¶¶ 6-8; Marder Decl. ¶¶ 5-12 Yang Decl. ¶¶ 4-6.

4 Based on the rates and 273.3 total hours, the lodestar for Class Counsel through the finalization
5 of this settlement will be approximately \$205,900.00. Lee Decl. ¶ 10; Yang Decl. ¶ 8; Marder Decl. ¶¶
6 11-12. The requested attorneys' fees result in a low multiplier of approximately 1.21 and are reasonable
7 and fair, based on the factors described above. A cross-check thus supports the fee requested.

8 **D. The Court Should Approve the Request for Reimbursement of Costs.**

9 The request for reimbursement of costs, in the amount of \$12,882.84 is fair and reasonable. As
10 set forth in Plaintiff's counsel's declaration, the costs were all directly incurred in the prosecution of this
11 action. Lee Decl. ¶ 9, Ex. A. As such, this request should be approved.

12 **E. The Administrator's Fees and Costs Should Be Approved.**

13 Pursuant to the terms of the Agreement, the fees and costs of the Administrator, Phoenix
14 Administrators, are to be paid out of the class settlement funds. As shown in the Declaration of Taylor
15 Mitzner, the settlement administration fees expended in this matter amount to a total of \$11,500.00,
16 which is less than the amount that was agreed upon by the Parties. Admin Decl. ¶ 18. For such reasons,
17 it is requested that the Administrator's fees be approved.

18 **V. Notice to the LWDA Has Been Provided.**

19 On October 26, 2022, Plaintiff uploaded the Order Granting Plaintiff's Motion for Preliminary
20 Approval of Class Action Settlement to the LWDA's website. Lee Decl. ¶ 11. Concurrent with the filing
21 of this motion, Plaintiff also has uploaded the final approval motion to the LWDA. *Id.*

22 **CONCLUSION**

23 Plaintiff respectfully submits that the standards for final approval have been met and the terms of
24 the Agreement are fair, adequate, and reasonable. Accordingly, Plaintiff respectfully requests that the
25 Court enter an Order in the form proposed and submitted.

26 DATED: January 27, 2023

DIVERSITY LAW GROUP, P.C.

27 By: 
Simon L. Yang
28 Attorneys for Plaintiff