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ELECTRONICALLY FILED
SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF TULARE

09/23/2020

STEPHANIE CAMERON, CLERK
Nay Saelee, Deputy

Attorneys for Plaintiff, the Class, and Aggrieved Employees

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

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

Plaintiffs,

vs.

SUN VALLEY RAISINS, INC., a
California corporation; and DOES 1 through
50, inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No.: VCU284414

**CLASS AND REPRESENTATIVE ACTION
COMPLAINT FOR:**

(1) VIOLATION OF LAB. CODE § 226(a);
(2) VIOLATION OF LAB. CODE §§ 2698 *ET*
SEQ.

DEMAND OVER \$25,000.00

Case Management Conference

01/27/2021 08:30 AM - Department 02

Assigned to Judicial Officer

Nathan Ide

For All Purposes

On behalf of himself and other similarly situated current and former employees of Defendants, and as a proxy for the State of California, Plaintiff, Rodolfo Telez, submits this Class and Representative Action Complaint against Defendant, Sun Valley Raisins, Inc., and Does 1 through 50 (collectively, “Defendants”).

INTRODUCTION

1. This class and representative action challenges systemic illegal employment practices resulting in violations of the California Labor Code against individuals who worked for Defendants. The Complaint seeks penalties and other relief for Defendants’ violations of Labor Code section 226(a).¹

2. Plaintiff is informed and believes that Defendants have jointly and severally acted intentionally and with deliberate indifference and conscious disregard to the rights of employees by failing to provide accurate and complete wage statements. Specifically, Defendants failed to list the name and address of the legal entity that is the employer on its wage statements. Instead, the wage statements showed “SVR – Sanitation,” without any address. Defendants thus violated Section 226(a) as to Plaintiff and other employees. Defendants thus violate Section 226(a).

3. Plaintiff is informed and believes that Defendants have engaged in, among other things, a system of willful violations of the Labor Code by creating and maintaining policies, practices, and customs that knowingly deny its employees the above stated rights and benefits.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

4. The Complaint seeks relief in excess of \$25,000.00. The Court has jurisdiction of Defendants’ violations of Section 226(a).

5. Venue is proper in the County of Tulare. Plaintiff lives in Dinuba, California, and was hired in Visalia, California.

PARTIES

6. Plaintiff began working as a manager for Defendants in 2018. Until his employment ended in June of 2020, Plaintiff was provided wage statements that failed to list the name and address of the legal entity that is the employer. Instead, the wage statements showed

¹ Except as otherwise noted, all “Section” references are to the Labor Code.

1 “SVR – Sanitation,” without any address. Plaintiff is a victim of the policies, practices, and
2 customs of Defendants complained of in this action in ways that have deprived him of the rights
3 guaranteed by the Labor Code.

4 7. Plaintiff is informed and believes that Defendant, Sun Valley Raisins, Inc., was
5 and is a California corporation. Plaintiff is informed and believes that at all times herein
6 mentioned named defendants and Does 1 through 50, are and were corporations, business
7 entities, individuals, or partnerships that are and were licensed to do business and actually doing
8 business in the State of California. Based upon all the facts and circumstances incident to
9 Defendants’ business, Defendants are subject to Section 226(a).

10 8. Plaintiff does not know the true names or capacities of the defendants sued herein
11 as Does 1 through 50, whether individual, partner, or corporate, and for that reason, said
12 defendants are sued under such fictitious names. Plaintiff prays for leave to amend this
13 Complaint when the true names and capacities are known. Plaintiff is informed and believes that
14 each of said fictitious defendants was responsible in some way for the matters alleged herein and
15 proximately caused the illegal employment practices, wrongs, and injuries complained of herein.

16 9. At all times herein mentioned, each of said Defendants participated in the doing
17 of the acts alleged herein. Defendants, and each of them, were the agents, servants, or employees
18 of each of the other Defendants, as well as the agents of all Defendants, and were acting within
19 the course and scope of said agency and employment.

20 10. Plaintiff is informed and believes that at all times material hereto, each of said
21 Defendants was the agent, employee, alter ego, or joint venturer of, or was working in concert
22 with, each of the other Defendants and was acting within the course and scope of such agency,
23 employment, joint venture, or concerted activity. To the extent said acts, conduct, or omissions
24 were perpetrated by certain Defendants, each of the remaining Defendants confirmed and ratified
25 said acts, conduct, or omissions of the acting Defendants.

26 11. Plaintiff is informed and believes that at all times material hereto each of the
27 Defendants (i) aided and abetted the acts and omissions of each of the other Defendants in
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proximately causing the alleged harms, or (ii) were members of, engaged in, and acting within the course and scope of, and in pursuance of, a joint venture, partnership, or common enterprise.

CLASS ACTION ALLEGATIONS

12. **Definition:** Pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure section 382. Plaintiff seeks class certification of all current and former employees of Defendants in the State of California since April 6, 2019.

13. **Numerosity and Ascertainability:** The members of the Class are so numerous that joinder of all members would be impractical, if not impossible. The identities of the members of the Class are readily ascertainable by review of Defendants' records, including payroll records. Defendants violated Section 226(a) by failing to provide complete and accurate itemized wage statements to Plaintiff and other employees.

14. **Adequacy of Representation:** Plaintiff is fully prepared to take all necessary steps to represent fairly and adequately the interests of the Class defined above. Plaintiff's attorneys are ready, willing, and able to fully and adequately represent Plaintiff and the Class. Plaintiff's attorneys have prosecuted and settled wage-and-hour class actions in the past and continue to litigate numerous wage-and-hour class actions currently pending in California state and federal courts.

15. **Common Question of Law and Fact:** There are predominant common questions of law and fact and a community of interest amongst the claims of Plaintiff and of the Class. Plaintiff is informed and believes that Defendants uniformly administer a corporate policy and practice of failing to provide complete and accurate itemized wage statements that list the name and address of the legal entity that is the employer on its wage statements and instead showed "SVR – Sanitation," without any address, in violation of Section 226(a).

16. **Typicality:** The claims of Plaintiff are typical of the claims of all members of the Class in that Plaintiff suffered the alleged harms in a similar and typical manner as other members of the Class suffered. As with other members of the Class, Plaintiff was provided wage statements that failed to list the name and address of the legal entity that is the employer on its

wage statements and instead showed “SVR – Sanitation,” without any address. Plaintiff thus is a member of the Class and has suffered the alleged violations of the Labor Code.

17. The Labor Code is broadly remedial in nature. Its laws serve an important public interest in establishing minimum working conditions and requirements in California. These labor standards protect employees from onerous terms and conditions of employment or exploitation by employers who have superior economic and bargaining power.

18. The nature of this action and the format of laws available to Plaintiff and members of the Class make the class action format a particularly efficient and appropriate procedure to redress the wrongs alleged herein. If each employee were required to file an individual lawsuit, the corporate Defendants would necessarily gain an unconscionable advantage since they would be able to exploit and overwhelm the limited resources of each individual plaintiff with their vastly superior financial and legal resources. Requiring each member of the Class to pursue an individual remedy would also discourage the assertion of lawful claims by employees who would be disinclined to file an action against their former or current employer for real and justifiable fear of retaliation and permanent damage to their careers at their current or subsequent employment.

19. The prosecution of separate actions by individual members of the Class, even if possible, would create a substantial risk of (a) inconsistent or varying adjudications with respect to individual members of the Class that would establish potentially incompatible standards of conduct for Defendants, or (b) adjudications with respect to individual members of the Class that would, as a practical matter, be dispositive of, or substantially impair or impede the ability to protect, the interests of other members of the Class not parties to the adjudications. Further, the claims of the individual members of the Class are not sufficiently large to warrant vigorous individual prosecution considering the concomitant costs and expenses.

20. Defendants’ pattern, practice, and uniform administration of corporate policy in violation of the Labor Code is unlawful. Proof of a common business practice or factual pattern will establish the rights of Plaintiff and the Class to applicable penalties, reasonable attorneys’ fees, and costs of suit, pursuant to Section 226 and Code of Civil Procedure section 1021.5.

1 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

2 **Violation of Labor Code § 226(a)**

3 **(By Plaintiff and the Class Against All Defendants)**

4 21. The preceding paragraphs are re-alleged and incorporated by this reference.

5 22. Section 226(a) requires employers to provide itemized wage statements to its
6 employees that show accurate information, including without limitation, the name and address of
7 the legal entity that is the employer.

8 23. Defendants fail to provide complete and accurate itemized wage statements to
9 Plaintiff and the Class in violation of Section 226(a). Plaintiff and the Class are provided wage
10 statements that fail to list the name and address of the legal entity that is the employer. Rather,
11 the wage statements show “SVR – Sanitation,” without any address for the employer.
12 Defendants thus violate Section 226(a).

13 24. Such a pattern, practice, and uniform administration of corporate policy is
14 unlawful and entitles Plaintiff and the Class to recover applicable penalties pursuant to Section
15 226, attorneys’ fees, and costs of suit.

16 **SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION**

17 **Violation of Labor Code §§ 2698 *Et Seq.***

18 **(By Plaintiff and Aggrieved Employees Against All Defendants)**

19 25. The preceding paragraphs are re-alleged and incorporated by this reference.

20 26. Pursuant to the Labor Code Private Attorneys General Act of 2004, Labor Code
21 §§ 2698 *et seq.* (“PAGA”), Plaintiff brings this cause of action as a proxy for the State of
22 California. In this capacity, Plaintiff seeks penalties for Defendants’ violations of Section 226(a)
23 committed since April 6, 2019, against all aggrieved employees. Under Section 2699(c), Plaintiff
24 is an “aggrieved employee,” as one or more of the alleged violations was committed against
25 Plaintiff as an employee of Defendants.

26 27. As stated herein, Defendants violate Section 226(a) by failing to provide accurate
27 itemized wage statements to Plaintiff and other aggrieved employees, who were provided wage
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statements that failed to list the name and address of the legal entity that is the employer on its wage statements and instead showed “SVR – Sanitation,” without any address for the employer.

28. On or about September 4, 2020, Plaintiff sent written notice to the Labor & Workforce Development Agency (“LWDA”) of specific facts and theories for Defendants’ violations of Section 226(a). Plaintiff simultaneously sent written notice to Defendants via certified mail. As of the date of the filing of this Complaint, the LWDA has neither responded nor indicated that it intends to investigate the allegations in the written notice.

29. As such, pursuant to Section 2699(a) and (f), Plaintiff seeks recovery of all applicable civil penalties for Defendants’ violations of Sections 226(a) against all aggrieved employees for the period described above.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays for judgment for himself and all others on whose behalf this suit is brought against Defendants, jointly and severally, as follows:

1. For an order certifying the proposed Class;
2. For an order appointing Plaintiff as the representative of the Class;
3. For an order appointing Counsel for Plaintiff as Class Counsel;
4. Upon the First Cause of Action for penalties pursuant to Section 226, and for costs and attorneys’ fees;
5. Upon the Second Cause of Action for penalties according to proof pursuant to Sections 226.3 and 2698 *et seq.*, and for costs and attorneys’ fees;
6. Upon each cause of action for attorneys’ fees and costs as provided by Sections 226 and 2699, and Code of Civil Procedure section 1021.5; and
7. For such other and further relief that the Court may deem just and proper.

DATED: September 23, 2020

DIVERSITY LAW GROUP, P.C.

By: 

Larry W. Lee
Simon L. Yang
Attorneys for Plaintiff