

March 12, 2021

PAGA NOTICE FILED ELECTRONICALLY

Re: *Notice Letter of Cia Edwards Slater on Behalf of Herself and Aggrieved Employees Under California Labor section 2699.3*

Employers: Jo-Ann Stores, LLC
5555 Darrow Road
Hudson, Ohio 44236

Leonard Green & Partners, L.P.
11111 Santa Monica Blvd, Ste 2000
Los Angeles, California 90025

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter shall constitute notice under Labor Code section 2699.3 (hereinafter “PAGA Notice”). The \$75 filing fee for the PAGA Notice was paid online by credit card at the time this PAGA Notice was submitted online to the Department of Industrial Relations.

This PAGA Notice concerns Cia Edwards Slater’s (“Employee”) and other similarly aggrieved employees of Jo-Ann Stores, LLC (“Jo-Ann”) and Leonard Green & Partners, L.P. (“Leonard Green” and, collectively with Jo-Ann, “Employers”). Employee was employed as a non-exempt employee of Employers, with duties that included, but were not limited to, assisting in the selection, and cutting, of fabrics for customers and teaching customers sewing skills from approximately October of 2009 and through as recently as December of 2020. In connection with the alleged claims for failure to comply with Labor Code section 2810.5, Labor Code section 203, Labor Code section 226, Labor Code section 246, *et seq.*, Labor Code section 2802, restraints on competition, whistleblowing and freedom of speech, Employee seeks to represent all employees of Employers. With all other claims mentioned herein, Employee seeks to represent only non-exempt employees of Employers.

Employee and other aggrieved employees are covered by Labor Code section 510 and applicable Wage Orders. Employee is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Employers had and have a policy or practice of requiring their employees to work more than eight (8) hours per day, forty (40) hours per week, and/or seven (7) straight workdays in a workweek without paying them proper overtime wages, as a result of, without limitation, failing to accurately track and/or pay for all minutes actually worked; engaging, suffering, or permitting employees to work off the clock, including, without limitation, by requiring employees: to come early to work and leave late work without being able to clock in for all that time, to suffer under Employers’ control due to long lines for clocking in, to complete pre-shift tasks before clocking in and post-shift tasks after clocking out, to clock out for meal periods and continue working, to clock out for rest periods, to don and doff uniforms and/or safety equipment off the clock, to attend company

meetings off the clock, to make phone calls or drive off the clock, and/or go through security screenings and/or temperature checks off the clock; failing to include all forms of remuneration, including non-discretionary bonuses, incentive pay, meal allowances, and other forms of remuneration into the regular rate of pay for the pay periods where overtime was worked and the additional compensation was earned for the purpose of calculating the overtime rate of pay; detrimental rounding of employee time entries, editing and/or manipulation of time entries to show less hours than actually worked, and for paying straight pay instead of overtime pay to the detriment of Employee and other aggrieved employees. Consequently, Employee is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Employers violated Labor Code sections 510, 1194, and applicable Wage Orders based on their practice of providing total compensation that is less than the required legal overtime compensation for the overtime worked, entitling Employee and other aggrieved employees to damages. Employers would also be liable for civil penalties pursuant to Labor Code sections 558 and 2699.

Employee is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Employers had and have a practice or policy of failing to compensate Employee and other aggrieved employees with minimum wages for all hours worked or otherwise under Employers' control as a result of, without limitation, failing to accurately track and/or pay for all minutes actually worked; engaging, suffering, or permitting employees to work off the clock, including, without limitation, by requiring employees: to come early to work and leave late work without being able to clock in for all that time, to suffer under Employers' control due to long lines for clocking in, to complete pre-shift tasks before clocking in and post-shift tasks after clocking out, to clock out for meal periods and continue working, to clock out for rest periods, to don and doff uniforms and/or safety equipment off the clock, to attend company meetings off the clock, to make phone calls or drive off the clock; detrimental rounding of employee time entries; editing and/or manipulation of time entries to show less hours than actually worked; and failing to pay split shift premiums. In addition, Employee and other aggrieved employees were required to report to work, and did report, but were not put to work and/or were furnished less than half their usual or scheduled day's work without being paid for half the usual or scheduled work at their regular rate of pay. As such, Employee is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Employers violated, without limitation, Labor Code sections 221, 223, 1197, 1182.12, Cal. Code Regs, title 8, section 110404(5)(A), and applicable Wage Orders based on their continued failure to pay minimum wages for all hours worked, entitling Employee and other aggrieved employees to actual and liquidated damages under, without limitation, Labor Code sections 1194 and 1194.2. Employers would also be liable for civil penalties pursuant to Labor Code sections 558, 1197.1, and 2699.

Employee is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Employers had and have a policy or practice of compelling their employees to work in excess of five (5) and ten (10) hours per day without being afforded uninterrupted, timely, and complete 30-minute meal periods or compensation in lieu thereof including, without limitation: by interrupting meal periods; not providing timely meal periods; failing to provide first and second meal periods; providing short meal periods; requiring that employees carry cellular telephones or walkie-talkies during meal periods; not permitting employees to leave the premises; otherwise requiring on-duty/on-call meal periods; and auto-deducting meal periods that could not be auto-deducted by law or during which

employees worked. Consequently, Employee is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Employers violated Labor Code section 512, entitling Employee and other aggrieved employees to premium payments under Labor Code section 226.7. However, Employee is informed and believes that those premium payments under Labor Code section 226.7 were not made, either, for these non-compliant meal periods. Employers would thus be liable for civil penalties pursuant to Labor Code sections 558 and 2699 for both failing to authorize the taking of compliant meal periods, as well as for failing to provide premium pay under Labor Code section 226.7.

Employee is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Employers maintain policies or practices of compelling their non-exempt employees, including, without limitation, Employee, to work over four-hour periods (or major fractions thereof) without authorizing and permitting Employee and other aggrieved employees to take uninterrupted, timely, and complete ten-minute rest periods in which the employees are completely relieved of all of their duties, including, without limitation: by failing to provide rest periods all together; requiring that they be bundled together and/or with meal periods; interrupting them; requiring that employees carry cellular telephones or walkie-talkies during rest periods not providing them in a timely fashion; and not permitting employees to leave the premises; and otherwise requiring on-duty/on-call rest periods. As such, Employee is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Employee and other aggrieved employees are entitled to relief under, without limitation, Labor Code section 226.7. However, Employee is informed and believes that those premium payments under Labor Code section 226.7 were not made, either, for these non-compliant rest periods. Employers would thus be liable for civil penalties pursuant to Labor Code sections 558 and 2699 for both failing to authorize the taking of compliant rest periods, as well as for failing to provide premium pay under Labor Code section 226.7.

Employee is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Employers maintain policies or practices of failing to permit Employee and other aggrieved employees from taking cooldown rest periods in the shade as required under California Code of Regulations, Title 8, Section 3395 and premium pay in lieu thereof under Labor Code section 226.7. As a result, Employers would be liable for civil penalties under Labor Code sections 558 and 2699.

In addition to the above, Employee is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges that Employers failed and continue to fail to keep adequate or accurate time records including wage statements and similar payroll documents under Labor Code section 226, documents signed to obtain or hold employment under Labor Code section 432, personnel records under Labor Code section 1198.5, and time records under Labor Code section 1174, making it difficult for Employee and other aggrieved employees to calculate their unpaid wages and/or premium payments. Employers also failed to provide these documents to Employee and other aggrieved employees upon request. This would entitle Employee and other aggrieved employees to penalties prescribed by Labor Code sections 226 and 1198.5. Employers would also be liable for civil penalties pursuant to Labor Code sections 558, 1174.5 and 2699.

As a result of, among other things, Employers' herein-described policy or practice of failing to: accurately record time; failing to pay overtime and minimum wages; provide meal periods; provide rest periods; and provide compensation in lieu of meal or rest periods; as described above, Employee is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Employers also intentionally failed and continues to fail to furnish aggrieved employees, including, without limitation, Employee, with itemized wage statements that accurately reflect: gross wages earned; total hours worked by the employee; net wages earned; all deductions; all applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay period and the corresponding number of hours worked at each hourly rate by the employee; the legal name and address of the other; and other such information as required by Labor Code section 226, subdivision (a). Specifically, Employers intentionally failed to furnish employees with itemized wage statements that accurately reflect the hours worked by Ms. Slater and other aggrieved employees and the rates of pay at which they were or should have been paid, thus resulting in a failure to reflect gross and net wages earned and paid at each rate, as well. Consequently, since Employers would have failed to comply with Labor Code section 226, subdivision (a), Employee and other aggrieved employees would be entitled to recover penalties under, without limitation, Labor Code section 226, subdivision (e). Employers would also be liable for civil penalties pursuant to Labor Code sections 226.3, 558, and 2699.

Employee is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Employers also failed and refused, and continue to fail and refuse, to timely pay compensation to Employee and other terminated or resigned employees, including but not limited to, all overtime wages owed; all minimum wages owed; and all premium pay owed as set out above. Consequently, Employers would be liable for waiting time penalties for having violated California Labor Code sections 201, 202, and 203. Employers would also be liable for civil penalties pursuant to Labor Code sections 558 and 2699.

Employee is further informed and believes, and based thereon alleges that Employers failed and refused, and continues to fail and refuse, to comply with the notice requirements of Labor Code section 2810.5 (*i.e.*, the Wage Theft Protection Act of 2011) by, among other things, failing to provide Employee and other aggrieved employees with the rates of pay and overtime rates of pay applicable to their employment, allowances claimed as part of the minimum wage, the regular payday designated by Employers, the name of the employer, including any "doing business as" names used, the name, address and telephone number of the workers' compensation insurance carrier, information regarding paid sick leave, and other pertinent information required to be disclosed by Employers under Labor Code section 2810.5. Employee is informed and believes that failure to provide such information, including rates of pay that are in effect, has permitted Employers to pay employees at rates of pay that were not agreed upon and violate minimum wage and overtime wage laws in California. Among other relief, employees may collect from Employers in connection with these violations' civil penalties pursuant to Labor Code sections 558 and 2699.

Employee is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges that Employers also failed and refused, and continues to fail and refuse, to reimburse employees, including, without limitation, Employee and other aggrieved employees, with their costs incurred for driving personal

vehicles (*i.e.*, mileage and gas), purchasing uniforms, providing uniform and other deposits, separately laundering mandatory uniforms, for the purchase of tools and safety equipment, and for the purchase and maintenance of cellular phones and cellular phone plans, in direct consequence of the discharge of their duties, or of their obedience to the directions of Employers, as required by Labor Code section 2802, and other statutory and common law offenses. As a result, Employers are liable to reimburse Employee and other aggrieved employees for these costs incurred in furtherance of work duties. In addition, Employers would be liable for civil penalties pursuant to Labor Code sections 558 and 2699.

Employee is further informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Employers have or had a policy or practice of failing to reimburse deposits made, including uniform deposits together with all interest owed at the separation of employment in violation of Labor Code section 404, entitling Employee and other aggrieved employees to damages in the amount of the deposit and accrued interest. Employers would also be liable for civil penalties under Labor Code sections 558 and 2699.

Employee is further informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Employers have or had a policy or practice of failing to provide Employee and other aggrieved employees with the amount of paid sick leave required to be provided pursuant to California and local laws (including, without limitation, Labor Code section 246, *et seq.*, and, when applicable, Los Angeles Municipal Code section 187.01 *et seq.*). Employee is further informed and believes that Employers also did not permit its use upon request by Employee and other aggrieved employees as contemplated under California and local laws. As such, Employers would be liable for civil penalties for violation of the paid sick leave regulations under Labor Code sections 558 and 2699.

Employee is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges that Employers had and have a policy or practice of failing to pay aggrieved employees their paid time off and vacation time owed upon separation of employment as wages at their final rate of pay in violation of Labor Code section 227.3 and applicable Wage Orders. As such, Employers would be liable for civil penalties for violation of Labor Code section 227.3 under Labor Code section 558 and 2699.

Employee is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges that Employers had and have a policy or practice of failing to pay aggrieved employees their wages in accordance with Labor Code Section 204, which requires that: “[l]abor performed between the 1st and 15th days, inclusive, of any calendar month shall be paid for between the 16th and 26th day of the month during which the labor was performed, and labor performed between the 16th and the last day, inclusive of any calendar month, shall be paid for between the 1st and 10th day of the following month.” Employee is informed and believes and based thereon alleges that Employers did not and do not pay Employee and other aggrieved employees in accordance with Labor Code Section 204. As such, Employee is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges that Employers violated Labor Code section 204. Employers would be liable for civil penalties pursuant to Labor Code sections 210, 558 and 2699.

Employee is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges that Employers had and have a policy or practice of failing to provide all working employees with suitable seats when the nature of the work reasonably permits the use of seats. Employee is further informed and believes, and based thereon alleges that Employers have failed to place an adequate number of seats in reasonable proximity to the work area and/or permitted employees to use such seats when it does not interfere with the performance of their duties when employees are not engaged in the active duties of their employment and the nature of their work requires standing.

Employee is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges that Employers had and have a policy or practice of preventing Employee and/or other aggrieved employees from using or disclosing the skills, knowledge and experience they obtained at Employers for purposes of competing with Employers, including, without limitation, preventing Employees from disclosing their wages in negotiating a new job with a prospective employer, and from disclosing who else works at Employers and under what circumstances that they might be receptive to an offer from a rival employer. As such, Employee is informed and believes that this violates Business and Professions Code sections 17200, 16600 and 16700, and, by virtue thereof, various provisions of the Labor Code, including Labor Code sections 232, 232.5, and 1197.5, subdivision (k). Employers would be liable for civil penalties pursuant to Labor Code section 2699.

Employee is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges that Employers had and have a policy or practice of preventing Employee and/or other aggrieved employees from disclosing violations of state and federal law, either within Employers to their managers or outside Employers to private attorneys or government officials, among others, in violation of Business and Professions Code section 17200, and, thus, in violation of Labor Code section 1102.5. In addition, Employee is informed and believes that these policies and/or practices prevent Employee and/or other aggrieved employees from disclosing information about unsafe or discriminatory working conditions, or about wage and hour violations in violation of Labor Code section 232 and 232.5. These violations of the Labor Code would expose Employers to liability for civil penalties pursuant to Labor Code section 2699.

Employee is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges that Employers had and have a policy or practice of preventing Employee and/or other aggrieved employees from engaging in lawful conduct during non-work hours, thus violating state statutes entitling employees to disclose wages, working conditions, and illegal conduct, including, without limitation, Labor Code sections 96, subdivision (k), 98.6, 232, 232.5, and 1197.5, subdivision (k). Employee is informed and believes that this lawful conduct includes the exercise of Employee and/or other aggrieved employee's constitutional rights of freedom of speech and economic liberty and would thus expose Employers to liability for civil penalties pursuant to Labor Code section 2699.

Pursuant to Labor Code section 2699.3, subdivision (a)(2)(A), please advise within sixty-five (65) calendar days of the postmarked date of this notice whether the LWDA intends to investigate the violations alleged above. Our office understands that if we do not receive a response within sixty-five (65) calendar days of the postmark date of this PAGA Notice that the LWDA intends to investigate these allegations, Employee may immediately thereafter file a civil

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complaint against Employers to allege causes of action for civil penalties under the Private Attorney General Act for the herein-described alleged violations of the Labor Code.

Very truly yours,

BIBIYAN LAW GROUP, P.C.

/s/ David D. Bibiyan
David D. Bibiyan

cc: Jo-Ann Stores, LLC (via U.S. Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested)
Leonard Green & Partners, L.P. (via U.S. Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested)