

Arby Aiwazian (SBN 269827)
Joanna Ghosh (SBN 272479)
Brittany Shaw (SBN 331773)
LAWYERS for JUSTICE, PC
410 West Arden Avenue, Suite 203
Glendale, California 91203
Tel: (818) 265-1020 / Fax: (818) 265-1021

Attorneys for Plaintiff

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

CHRIS BRONKEN, individually, and on
behalf of other aggrieved employees pursuant
to the California Private Attorneys General
Act;

Plaintiff,

vs.

MILLIE AND SEVERSON, INC., a Nevada
corporation; and DOES 1 through 100,
inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No.: 30-2021-01221405-CU-OE-CXC

Honorable William Claster
Department CX-101

ROA #108

**PLAINTIFF'S NOTICE OF MOTION
AND MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF
PRIVATE ATTORNEYS GENERAL
ACT (CAL. LABOR CODE § 2698,
ET SEQ.) SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT
AND AWARD OF ATTORNEYS' FEES
AND COSTS, AND SETTLEMENT
ADMINISTRATION COSTS;
MEMORANDUM OF POINTS AND
AUTHORITIES**

[Declaration of Plaintiff's Counsel
(Brittany Shaw); Declaration of Plaintiff
(Chris Bronken); and [Proposed] Order and
Judgment filed concurrently herewith]

Reservation ID: 74436962
Date: December 27, 2024
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Department: CX-101

Complaint Filed: September 15, 2021
Trial Date: None Set

1 **PLEASE TAKE NOTICE** that on December 27, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. or as soon thereafter
2 as the matter may be heard before the William Claster in Department CX-101 of the Superior
3 Court of the State of California, for the County of Orange, located at 751 West Santa Ana Blvd.,
4 Santa Ana, CA 92701, Plaintiff Chris Bronken (“Plaintiff”) will and hereby does move for entry
5 of the following orders:

- 6 1. Granting approval, pursuant to California Labor Code section 2699(l)(2), of the
7 settlement between Plaintiff and Defendant Millie & Severson, Inc. (“Defendant”) of
8 the claims brought pursuant to the Private Attorneys General Act of 2004 (“PAGA”),
9 as set forth in the Private Attorneys General Act Settlement Agreement and Release
10 (“Settlement,” “Agreement,” or “Settlement Agreement”), attached as “**EXHIBIT 1**”
11 to the Declaration of Brittany Shaw, including and not limited to, the plan of allocation
12 and distribution of the Total Settlement Amount for payment of the LWDA Payment
13 to the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency (“LWDA”), Individual
14 Settlement Shares to the Aggrieved Employees, Attorneys’ Fees and Costs to
15 Plaintiff’s Counsel, and Settlement Administration Costs to the PAGA Settlement
16 Administrator;
- 17 2. Approving the Net Settlement Amount, estimated to be no less than \$191,005.61
18 which will be distributed to the LWDA and the Aggrieved Employees, pursuant to
19 California Labor Code section 2699(i), of which seventy-five percent (75%) will be
20 paid to the LWDA (“LWDA Payment”) and twenty-five percent (25%) will be paid
21 to the Aggrieved Employees (“Employees’ Portion”);
- 22 3. Appointing Atticus Administration LLC (“Atticus”) as the PAGA Settlement
23 Administrator;
- 24 4. Directing Defendant to transmit the Total Settlement Amount, and directing the
25 PAGA Settlement Administrator to distribute payments in accordance with the
26 Settlement Agreement;
- 27 5. Directing the mailing of Individual Settlement Share checks to the Aggrieved
28 Employees along with the Cover Letter, which is substantially similar in content and

form to that attached as “**EXHIBIT A**” to the [Proposed] Order and Judgment Granting Approval of Private Attorneys General Act (Cal. Labor Code § 2698, *Et Seq.*) Settlement Agreement and Award of Attorneys’ Fees and Costs, and Settlement Administration Costs (“[Proposed] Order and Judgement”) filed concurrently herewith;

6. Awarding up to \$10,000.00 to the PAGA Settlement Administrator as Settlement Administration Costs; and

7. Awarding to Lawyers for Justice, PC (“Plaintiff’s Counsel”) \$111,375.00 as compensation for reasonable attorneys’ fees and \$12,619.39 for reimbursement of litigation costs and expenses (“Attorneys’ Fees and Costs”), pursuant to California Labor Code section 2699(g)(1).

Unless otherwise specified, all citations and references to the Private Attorneys General Act of 2004, California Labor Code sections 2698, *et seq.* are to the version of statute prior to the recent amendment effective July 1, 2024; the amended statute does not apply to the above-captioned action and the Settlement pursuant to California Labor Code section 2699(v)(1), as amended, because the above-captioned action was filed prior to June 19, 2024.

The Settlement Agreement and moving and supporting papers for this motion are being concurrently submitted to the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency in conformity with California Labor Code section 2699(l)(2).

This motion is made pursuant to California Labor Code section 2699(l)(2), which provides for review and approval by the Court of the settlement of a civil action filed pursuant to PAGA, and Rule 3.1113(e) of the California Rules of Court, which permits the Court to extend the page limit for memoranda.

///

///

///

///

///

1 This motion will be based upon the following Memorandum of Points and Authorities,
2 the Settlement Agreement, the Declarations of Plaintiff's Counsel (Brittany Shaw) and Plaintiff
3 Chris Bronken in support thereof, as well as the pleadings and other records on file with the
4 Court in this matter, and such evidence and oral argument as may be presented at the hearing on
5 this motion.

6 Dated: November 27, 2024

LAWYERS for JUSTICE, PC

7
8 By: Brittany L Shaw
9 Brittany Shaw
Attorneys for Plaintiff

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	SUMMARY OF MOTION.....	1
II.	FACTUAL BACKGROUND AND RELEVANT PROCEDURAL HISTORY	1
III.	SUMMARY OF THE SETTLEMENT TERMS	2
A.	Scope of the Settlement.....	2
B.	Funding and Distribution of the Total Settlement Amount.....	2
C.	Standards for Approval of PAGA Settlement.....	3
IV.	THE SETTLEMENT IS FAIR AND SHOULD BE APPROVED.....	5
A.	The Factors Giving Rise to a Presumption of Fairness Exist	5
B.	The Relative Strength of the PAGA Claim and the Range of Possible Outcomes in the Action Strongly Favor Approval of the Settlement	6
C.	The Settlement Avoids Risky, Complex, and Lengthy Further Litigation.....	6
D.	The Settlement Is Fair, Adequate, and Reasonable.....	7
E.	The Experience and Views of Plaintiff’s Counsel Favor Approval of the Settlement	8
V.	THE REQUESTED ATTORNEYS’ FEES AWARD SHOULD BE APPROVED ...	9
A.	A Fee Award of a Percentage of the Entire Fund Is Appropriate.....	9
B.	The Requested Fee Award is Reasonable Based on the Factors Considered in Determination of Fee Awards.....	11
1.	Time & Labor.....	12
2.	The Skill Required to Perform Legal Services Properly.....	13
3.	Whether the Fee Is Fixed or Contingent.....	13
4.	The Amount Involved and the Results Achieved.....	14
5.	The Reputation and Ability of the Attorneys.....	15
C.	The Lodestar Methodology Also Justifies Approval of the Requested Fees	15
VI.	REIMBURSEMENT OF PLAINTIFF'S COUNSEL LITIGATION COSTS AND EXPENSES SHOULD BE APPROVED	17
VII.	THE SETTLEMENT ADMINISTRATION COSTS SHOULD BE APPROVED .	17

1	VIII. PLAINTIFF’S SEPARATE INDIVIDUAL SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT.....	18
2	IX. CONCLUSION	18
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		
26		
27		
28		

TABLE OF AUTHORITIES

Cases

<i>Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 1756, Afl-Cio v. Superior Court</i> (2009), 46 Cal.4th 993....	4
<i>Arias v. Superior Court</i> (2009) 46 Cal.4th 969.....	4
<i>Boyd v. Bechtel Corp.</i> (N.D. Cal. 1979) 485 F.Supp. 610	6
<i>Casida v. Sears Holdings Corp.</i> (E.D. Cal. Jan. 26, 2012) 2012 WL 253217	4
<i>Chavez v. Netflix, Inc.</i> (2008) 162 Cal.App.4th 43	17
<i>City of Oakland v. Oakland Raiders</i> (1988) 203 Cal.App.3d 78	17
<i>Consumer Privacy Cases</i> (2009) 175 Cal. App. 4th 545	10
<i>Dunk v. Ford Motor Co.</i> (1996) 48 Cal. App. 4th 1794	10
<i>Iskanian v. CLS Transportation Los Angeles, LLC</i> (2014) 58 Cal.4th 348	4
<i>Kirkorian v. Borelli</i> (N.D. Cal. 1988) 695 F.Supp. 446.....	6
<i>Laffitte v. Robert Half Int’l, Inc.</i> (2016) 1 Cal.5th 480	9, 10, 15
<i>Ochoa-Hernandez v. CJADERS Foods, Inc.</i> (N.D. Cal. Apr. 2, 2010) 2010 WL 1340777	5
<i>Ochoa-Hernandez v. CJADERS Foods, Inc.</i> (N.D. Cal. Apr. 2, 2010), 2010 WL 1340777	4
<i>Pedroza v. PetSmart, Inc.</i> (C.D. Cal. Jan. 28, 2013) 2013 WL 1490667	4
<i>Robinson v. Southern Counties Oil Co.</i> (2020) 53 Cal.App.5th 476	4
<i>Satchell v. Fed. Express Corp.</i> (N.D. Cal. Apr. 13, 2007) 2007 WL 1114010	6
<i>Sutter Health Uninsured Pricing Cases</i> (2009) 171 Cal.App.4th 495.....	17
<i>Thomas v. Aetna Health of Cal., Inc.</i> (E.D. Cal. June 2, 2011) 2011 WL 2173715	4
<i>Vo v. Las Virgenes Municipal Water Dist.</i> (2000) 79 Cal.App.4th 440	15
<i>Wershba v. Apple Computer, Inc.</i> (2001) 91 Cal.App.4th 224	5
<i>Williams v. Superior Court</i> (2017) 3 Cal.5th 531	4, 8

Statutes

Cal. Lab. Code § 2698.....	1
Cal. Lab. Code § 2699(g)(1)(i)	8
Cal. Lab. Code § 2699(j).....	5
Cal. Lab. Code § 2699(l).....	4

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28

Cal. Lab. Code § 2699(l)(2)1, 4

Cal. Lab. Code § 2699.3.....4

Other Authorities

A. Conte, *Attorney Fee Awards* (2d ed. 1993).....10

California Practice Guide, *Civil Procedure Before Trial*, Chapter 14.....10

MEMORANDUM OF POINTS AND AUTHORITIES

I. SUMMARY OF MOTION

Plaintiff Chris Bronken (“Plaintiff”) seeks approval of the Private Attorneys General Act Settlement Agreement and Release (“Settlement,” “Agreement,” or “Settlement Agreement”) entered into between Plaintiff, individually and on behalf of the State of California and other aggrieved employees, and Defendant Millie & Severson, Inc. (“Defendant”), pursuant to California Labor Code section 2699(1)(2).¹ Plaintiff and Defendant (together, the “Parties”) have agreed to resolve the above-captioned action, brought pursuant to the Private Attorneys General Act of 2004, California Labor Code section 2698, *et seq.* (“PAGA”), for a Total Settlement Amount of \$337,500.00.²

The Settlement is fair, adequate, and reasonable, as it represents a reasoned compromise of a disputed claim that has been reached through arm’s-length negotiations, in light of the risks, complexity, and expense of further litigation, and the strengths of the PAGA claim. The Settlement meets the requirements for Court approval based upon the relevant fairness factors. The Court is respectfully requested to approve the Settlement, award the Attorneys’ Fees and Costs and Settlement Administration Costs and approve the LWDA Payment.

The Settlement Agreement and moving and supporting papers for this motion are being concurrently submitted to the LWDA and Plaintiff now moves for an order granting approval of the Settlement, in conformity with California Labor Code section 2699(1)(2).³ In order to efficiently present the Court with adequate information, Plaintiff also moves for an order permitting the filing of this memorandum, although it exceeds the page limit set forth in California Rules of Court, Rule 3.1113(d).

II. FACTUAL BACKGROUND AND RELEVANT PROCEDURAL HISTORY

For a discussion of relevant procedural history and facts regarding this case, please see

¹ The Private Attorneys General Act Settlement Agreement and Release (“Settlement Agreement”) is attached as “EXHIBIT 1” to the Declaration of Brittany Shaw.

² Settlement Agreement, § 3(a). The Total Settlement Amount is subject to possible increase pursuant to Section 3(b) of the Settlement Agreement.

³ The Court is referred to the concurrently-filed Proof of Service, which confirms submission of the papers to the LWDA.

the Declaration of Brittany Shaw at paragraphs 8 to 12.

III. SUMMARY OF THE SETTLEMENT TERMS

A. Scope of the Settlement

If the Court grants approval of the Settlement, Plaintiff and the State of California with respect to Aggrieved Employees⁴ will release the Released Parties⁵ from the Released PAGA Claims.⁶

B. Funding and Distribution of the Total Settlement Amount

Under the terms of the Settlement Agreement, Defendant will pay a Total Settlement Amount of \$337,500.00⁷, which is inclusive of the following: (1) Attorneys' Fees and Costs to be paid to Lawyers for Justice, PC ("Plaintiff's Counsel") and (2) Settlement Administration Costs to be paid to the PAGA Settlement Administrator, and (3) Net Settlement Amount to be paid to the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency ("LWDA") and Aggrieved Employees. The Net Settlement Amount will be the Total Settlement Amount less the Court-approved Attorneys' Fees and Costs, Plaintiff's individual settlement agreement, and Settlement Administration Costs; the Net Settlement Amount is currently estimated to be no less than \$191,005.61.⁸ The Net Settlement Amount will be distributed as follows: 75% of the Net Settlement Amount (or approximately \$143,254.21) will be distributed to the LWDA ("LWDA Payment") and 25% of the Net Settlement Amount (or approximately \$47,751.40) ("Employees' Portion") will be distributed to the Aggrieved Employees on a *pro rata* basis, based on their Compensable Pay Periods.⁹

Within 30 calendar days of the Court's order granting approval of the Settlement, Defendant will transmit the Total Settlement Amount to a qualified settlement account established by the PAGA Settlement Administrator for administration of the Settlement.¹⁰ No

⁴ Settlement Agreement, § 3(a)(1)-(5), and Declaration of Brittany Shaw ("Shaw Decl."), ¶ 14. "PAGA Period" is defined as the period of July 12, 2020 to the date of Court approval of the Settlement. *Id.*, § 3(a)(5).

⁵ The definition of the "Released Parties" is set forth in the Settlement Agreement, § 8(a).

⁶ The definition of the "Released Claims" is set forth in the Settlement Agreement, § 8(a).

⁷ Settlement Agreement, § 3(a), Shaw Decl., ¶ 15, and see footnote 2.

⁸ Settlement Agreement, § 3(a)(4).

⁹ Settlement Agreement, § 7(b).

¹⁰ Settlement Agreement, § 7(a).

1 later than 7 calendar days after the Court's order granting approval of the Settlement, Defendant
2 will provide the PAGA Settlement Administrator with the Aggrieved Employees List,
3 containing the contact information and other information required to calculate payment for each
4 Aggrieved Employee.¹¹

5 No later than 30 calendar days after the PAGA Settlement Administrator receives the
6 Aggrieved Employees List and Total Settlement Amount, the PAGA Settlement Administrator
7 will calculate payments and mail the agreed-upon Cover Letter¹² and Individual Settlement
8 Share¹³ checks (together, the "PAGA Settlement Package(s)") to all Aggrieved Employees by
9 first-class United States mail.¹⁴ For each PAGA Settlement Package that is returned as
10 undeliverable within 30 calendar days of the initial mailing, the PAGA Settlement Administrator
11 will promptly attempt to locate an alternate, updated address for the Aggrieved Employee at
12 issue, by using a skip-trace search and shall attempt one (1) re-mailing of the PAGA Settlement
13 Package.¹⁵

14 The Individual Settlement Share checks issued to Aggrieved Employees will remain
15 valid for 90 calendar days, and thereafter, will be canceled.¹⁶ Funds associated with canceled
16 checks will be transmitted to the State Controller's Office Unclaimed Property Division in the
17 name of the Aggrieved Employee(s) at issue and in the amount of his or her respective Individual
18 Settlement Share(s).¹⁷

19 **C. Standards for Approval of PAGA Settlement**

20 The PAGA allows an "aggrieved employee" to bring a civil action on behalf of the State
21

22 ¹¹ *Id.*, § 7(c)(1).

23 ¹² The Parties have prepared a simple Cover Letter for transmission to the Aggrieved Employees along with their
24 Individual Settlement Share checks, substantially in the form attached as "EXHIBIT A" to the [Proposed] Order
25 and Judgment and as "EXHIBIT A" to the Settlement Agreement. The Cover Letter informs the Aggrieved
26 Employees about the Action and the Settlement. Defendant contends notice is not needed to be given in any
27 language other than English.

28 ¹³ Each Aggrieved Employee's share of the Employees' Portion ("Individual Settlement Share"), will be calculated
by the PAGA Settlement Administrator based on their Compensable Pay Periods. *Id.*, § 7(b). The payments to
Aggrieved Employees for their Individual Settlement Share are considered 100% penalties to be reported on IRS
Form 1099, if required. *Id.*, §§ 3(c) & 7(b)(1).

¹⁴ *Id.*, § 7(c)(3).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Id.*, § 7(c)(4).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

of California to recover civil penalties that normally the LWDA can pursue on behalf of employees against an employer without employees' involvement or approval. Unnamed employees need not be given notice of the PAGA claim, nor do they have the ability to opt-out of the representative PAGA claim.¹⁸ Before bringing a civil action under PAGA, an employee must comply with California Labor Code section 2699.3. See Cal. Lab. Code § 2699(a). Plaintiff has complied.

The settlement of a PAGA action requires court approval. See Cal. Lab. Code § 2699(l)(2). However, a PAGA claim asserted on a non-class representative basis and is not a class action but a law enforcement action.¹⁹ A court's review of a PAGA settlement involves consideration of unique factors that render the approval process distinct from, and simpler than the two-step court approval process for a class action settlement. A court reviewing a PAGA settlement need only "ensur[e] that a negotiated resolution is fair to those affected." *Williams v. Superior Court* (2017) 3 Cal.5th 531, 549 (citing Cal. Lab. Code § 2699(l)(2)). Although California Labor Code section 2699(l) does not set forth the criteria on which a PAGA settlement is to be judged, courts have approved settlements of PAGA claims.²⁰

In a PAGA case, the court's focus is not the monetary amount which aggrieved employees or the State stand to receive, but instead, whether the total settlement amount achieves the PAGA's objectives. The purpose of the PAGA is "to incentivize private parties to

¹⁸ *Robinson v. Southern Counties Oil Co.* (2020) 53 Cal.App.5th 476 (aggrieved employee cannot opt out of a PAGA settlement); *Williams v. Superior Court* (2017) 3 Cal.5th 531, 546-548 ("[A] PAGA action is a statutory action for penalties brought as a proxy for the State," "whatever personal claims the absent employees might have for relief are not at stake[.]" as such, "there is no need to protect absent employees' due process rights" and they "will be bound by the outcome of any PAGA action[.]"); *Ochoa-Hernandez v. CJADERS Foods, Inc.* (N.D. Cal. Apr. 2, 2010), 2010 WL 1340777, at *5 (Unnamed employees need not be given notice); *Arias v. Superior Court* (2009) 46 Cal.4th 969, 984-86 (Same).

¹⁹ *Casida v. Sears Holdings Corp.* (E.D. Cal. Jan. 26, 2012) 2012 WL 253217, at *3; *Thomas v. Aetna Health of Cal., Inc.* (E.D. Cal. June 2, 2011) 2011 WL 2173715, at *11; *Arias, supra*, 46 Cal.4th at 980-88 (affirming lower court's holding that "plaintiff need not satisfy class action requirements" to assert a PAGA claim); *Pedroza v. PetSmart, Inc.* (C.D. Cal. Jan. 28, 2013) 2013 WL 1490667, at *15; *Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 1756, AFL-CIO v. Superior Court* (2009), 46 Cal.4th 993, 1003; see also *Iskanian v. CLS Transportation Los Angeles, LLC* (2014) 58 Cal.4th 348, 381.

²⁰ *Shaw Decl.*, ¶ 8. See, e.g., *Resendez v. Bridgestone Retail Operations, LLC*, Los Angeles Superior Court, Case No. BC596892 (June 2016), *DCH Auto Wage and Hour Cases*, Los Angeles Superior Court, Case No. JCCP4833 (May 2017); *Garcia v. Gordon Trucking* (E.D. Cal. Oct. 31, 2012) 2012 WL 5364575, at *3; *Schiller v. David's Bridal, Inc.* (E.D. Cal. June 11, 2012) 2012 WL 2117001, at *14; *Chu v. Wells Fargo Invs., LLC* (N.D. Cal. Feb. 16, 2011) 2011 WL 672645, at *1; *Franco v. Ruiz Food Prods.* (E.D. Cal. Nov. 27, 2012) 2012 WL 5941801, at *14; *Nordstrom Commissions Case* (2010) 186 Cal.App.4th 576, 589.

recover civil penalties for the government that otherwise may not have been assessed and collected by overburdened state enforcement agencies.” See *Ochoa-Hernandez, supra*, 2010 WL 1340777, at *4 (citing *Arias, supra*, 46 Cal.4th at 986). Penalties recovered under the PAGA are, in part, to “be distributed to the [LWDA] for enforcement of labor laws . . . and for education of employers and employees about their rights and responsibilities under this code, to be continuously appropriated to supplement and not supplant the funding to the agency for those purposes.” See Cal. Lab. Code § 2699(j).

IV. THE SETTLEMENT IS FAIR AND SHOULD BE APPROVED

The Settlement resulted from hard-fought negotiations, fulfills the objectives of the PAGA statute, is fair, adequate, and reasonable, and meets all of the criteria for approval for the reasons discussed below.

A. The Factors Giving Rise to a Presumption of Fairness Exist

The Parties reached the Settlement after conducting extensive, arm’s-length negotiations, after a mediation with an experienced and respected mediator, Honorable Daniel Buckley (Ret.).²¹ A settlement that is “the product of extensive and hard-fought adversarial negotiations between the parties” is entitled to a presumption of fairness. *Wershba v. Apple Computer, Inc.* (2001) 91 Cal.App.4th 224, 245.

As discussed in the Declaration of Brittany Shaw, the Settlement is presumptively fair because: (1) it is the product of adversarial non-collusive, and arm’s-length negotiations with the assistance of an independent mediator knowledgeable in complex labor and employment matters; (2) it was negotiated by counsel with significant experience in similar complex labor and employment matters; and (3) it occurred after counsel for the Parties engaged in significant investigation to evaluate the strength and potential value of the PAGA claim, and risks and expenses of litigating this claim through trial.²²

Based on all of the information available to the Parties, the Parties agree that this matter is well-suited for settlement given the strengths and weaknesses of the PAGA claim and the

²¹ Shaw Decl., ¶ 17.

²² *Id.*, ¶¶ 2-6, 16-31.

facts and circumstances of the case.²³ Plaintiff's Counsel has extensive experience handling representative and class action wage-and-hour litigation and used that experience to achieve a settlement recovery for Plaintiff, the State of California, and the Aggrieved Employees.²⁴ Therefore, the Court should give considerable weight to the competency, experience, and opinion of counsel and the involvement of a neutral mediator in assuring that the settlement is a product of arm's length bargaining.²⁵

B. The Relative Strength of the PAGA Claim and the Range of Possible Outcomes in the Action Strongly Favor Approval of the Settlement

For a discussion of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the PAGA claim and the range of possible outcomes in the litigation, see the Declaration of Brittany Shaw at paragraphs 21-31.

C. The Settlement Avoids Risky, Complex, and Lengthy Further Litigation

Courts favor the voluntary conciliation and settlement of complex litigation. *Class Plaintiffs v. City of Seattle* (9th Cir. 1992) 955 F.2d 1268, 1276. Generally, "unless the settlement is clearly inadequate, its acceptance and approval are preferable to lengthy and expensive litigation with uncertain results." *Nat'l Rural Telecomms. Coop. v. DIRECTV, Inc.* (C.D. Cal. Jan. 5, 2004) 221 F.R.D. 523, 526.

Prior to reaching the Settlement, the Parties investigate the veracity, strength, and scope of the PAGA claim and allegations and considered thousands of pages of information, documents, and data relevant to Plaintiff's claim and Defendant's defenses thereto.²⁶ The Parties thoroughly and sufficiently evaluated the PAGA claim and related allegations, including, and not limited to, calculating the potential monetary recovery under PAGA.²⁷ Plaintiff's Counsel

²³ Shaw Decl., ¶ 81.

²⁴ *Id.*, ¶¶ 2-6.

²⁵ See *Kirkorian v. Borelli* (N.D. Cal. 1988) 695 F.Supp. 446, 451 (opinion of experienced counsel is entitled to considerable weight); *Boyd v. Bechtel Corp.* (N.D. Cal. 1979) 485 F.Supp. 610, 616-17, 622 (recommendations of plaintiffs' counsel should be given a presumption of reasonableness); see also *Satchell v. Fed. Express Corp.* (N.D. Cal. Apr. 13, 2007) 2007 WL 1114010, at *4 (stating that the "assistance of an experienced mediator in the settlement process confirms that the settlement is non-collusive").

²⁶ Shaw Decl., ¶ 18.

²⁷ Shaw Decl., ¶ 18.

performed other work as well, which is discussed in the Declaration of Brittany Shaw.²⁸

Had the case not settled, the Parties would have conducted extensive additional formal discovery, including meeting and conferring on outstanding discovery requests, propounding additional written discovery requests as well as multiple depositions of party and percipient witnesses all over the State of California, to prepare the case for trial. From the inception of this litigation, Defendant indicated that it would aggressively litigate this case.²⁹ Even if Defendant failed on its defenses, litigating a complex PAGA action is inherently expensive, and the litigation could continue beyond entry of judgment if either party were to appeal adverse rulings.³⁰ Additionally, there is a real possibility that Plaintiff would recover nothing, either for himself or on behalf of the State of California or other Aggrieved Employees after years of costly and labor-intensive litigation. Avoiding these risks and the likelihood of future contentious litigation, which would involve significant costs, favors settlement.

D. The Settlement Is Fair, Adequate, and Reasonable

The Settlement provides significant benefits to the State of California and the Aggrieved Employees and falls well-within the range of acceptable settlements under the circumstances. “[T]he very essence of a settlement is compromise, ‘a yielding of absolutes and an abandoning of highest hopes.’” *Officers for Justice v. Civil Service Comm’n* (9th Cir. 1981) 688 F.2d 615, 624. “The proposed settlement is not to be judged against a hypothetical or speculative measure of what might have been achieved by the negotiators.” *Id.* at 625.

The Settlement is a compromise of highly disputed claims. Plaintiff and his counsel recognize the expense and length of continued proceedings necessary to pursue the matter through trial and any possible appeals.³¹ Plaintiff and his counsel have also taken into account the uncertainty and risk of the outcome of further litigation, and the difficulties and delays inherent in such litigation.³² Plaintiff and his counsel are also aware of the burdens of proof necessary to establish liability, both generally and in response to Defendant’s defenses thereto,

²⁸ *Id.*, ¶ 32-75.

²⁹ *Id.*, ¶ 22-26.

³⁰ *Id.*, ¶¶ 19, 30-31, & 80.

³¹ *Id.*, ¶¶ 19, 30-31, & 80.

³² Shaw Decl., ¶¶ 19, 30-31, & 80.

1 and the difficulties in establishing Defendant’s liability for, and the right to recover, penalties
2 on behalf of Plaintiff, the State of California, and other Aggrieved Employees.³³ Plaintiff and
3 his counsel have also taken into account Defendant’s agreement to enter into a settlement that
4 confers significant relief upon the Aggrieved Employees and the State of California.³⁴

5 Considering all of the facts in this case, Plaintiff and his counsel have determined that
6 the Settlement represents a fair, adequate, and reasonable resolution of the PAGA claim, and
7 that it is in the best interests of the Aggrieved Employees and the State of California.³⁵

8 The result achieved in this case, and the monetary recovery provided by this settlement,
9 are well-within the range of an acceptable settlement under the circumstances, especially when
10 compared to trial court penalties assessments in contested cases and the settlement of PAGA
11 claims in other cases. Here, the value obtained for settlement of the PAGA claim is significant,
12 and it will be distributed in accordance with and in fulfillment of the objectives of the PAGA
13 statute.

14 **E. The Experience and Views of Plaintiff’s Counsel Favor Approval of the**
15 **Settlement**

16 Plaintiff’s Counsel is highly experienced in complex representative and class action
17 wage-and-hour litigation.³⁶ In the view of Plaintiff’s Counsel, the benefits conferred by the
18 settlement are eminently fair and reasonable, and in the best interests of the State of California
19 and the Aggrieved Employees in light of the risk, delay, and uncertainty of continued litigation
20 and the substantial monetary benefits provided for by the Settlement.³⁷ Furthermore, courts
21 have acknowledged that “the interests of plaintiff, counsel and other potentially aggrieved
22 employees are largely aligned. All stand to gain from proving as convincingly as possible as
23 many Labor Code violations as the evidence will sustain[.]” *Williams, supra*, 548 (citing Cal.
24 Lab. Code § 2699(g)(1)(i)).

25
26 ³³ *Id.*, ¶¶ 21-31.

27 ³⁴ *Id.*, ¶ 15.

28 ³⁵ *Id.*, ¶ 81.

³⁶ *Id.*, ¶¶ 2-6.

³⁷ *Id.*, ¶¶ 19, 30-31, 80, & 81.

V. THE REQUESTED ATTORNEYS' FEES AWARD SHOULD BE APPROVED

A. A Fee Award of a Percentage of the Entire Fund Is Appropriate

The Settlement provides for attorneys' fees in an amount of up to 33% of the Total Settlement Amount, which is \$111,375.00 (assuming the Total Settlement Amount remains \$337,500.00)³⁸, subject to approval and award by the Court.³⁹ The requested attorneys' fees award is commensurate with: (1) the risk that Plaintiff's Counsel took in bringing and litigating the case, (2) the time, effort, and expense dedicated to the case, (3) the skill and determination that Plaintiff's Counsel has shown, (4) the results that Plaintiff's Counsel has achieved in the case, (5) the value that Plaintiff's Counsel has achieved in the case, and (6) the other cases that Plaintiff's Counsel has turned down in order to work on this matter.

Plaintiff's Counsel is entitled to recover reasonable attorneys' fees and costs as a matter of right under PAGA. See Cal. Lab. Code § 2699(g)(1) ("Any employee who prevails in any [PAGA] action shall be entitled to an award of reasonable attorney's fees and costs"). Plaintiff's Counsel is also entitled to fees and costs under California Code of Civil Procedure section 1021.5, as the instant PAGA action is by definition "for the benefit" of others and secures monetary recovery for a large number of Aggrieved Employees, as well as the State of California.⁴⁰ The settlement will also benefit the state labor agency in enforcing labor laws and educating "employers and employees about their rights and responsibilities under [the California Labor Code]." Cal. Lab. Code § 2699(i).

Courts may calculate and award attorneys' fees as a percentage of a monetary fund that has, by litigation, been preserved or recovered for the benefit of others. *Laffitte v. Robert Half Int'l, Inc.* (2016) 1 Cal.5th 480 at 486 & 506. Trial courts "retain the discretion to forgo a lodestar cross-check and [may] use other means to evaluate the reasonableness of a requested percentage fee." *Id.* (internal quotes omitted); see also *Wershba, supra*, 91 Cal.App. 4th at 253.

³⁸ See note 2.

³⁹ *Id.*, § 3(a)(1).

⁴⁰ See *Estrada v. FedEx Ground Package Sys. Inc.* (2007) 154 Cal.App.4th 1, 16-17 (recognizing that recovery obtained on behalf of 209 individuals satisfies the "significant benefit," "public interest," and "large class of persons" requirements of Code of Civil Procedure section 1021.5, regardless of plaintiff's personal motivation).

1 Courts award fees to serve as an economic incentive for lawyers to pursue litigation that
2 will enhance and facilitate access to the judicial system for meritorious claims, deter
3 wrongdoing, and address multiple similar alleged wrongs that would not be economically
4 feasible to pursue individually, such as here. See A. Conte, *Attorney Fee Awards* (2d ed. 1993)
5 104, at 6.

6 The percentage method is particularly appropriate where a monetary settlement has been
7 recovered and “the benefit [recovered can be] easily quantified.” *In re Bluetooth Headset Prods.*
8 *Liab. Litig.* (9th Cir. 2011) 654 F.3d 935, 942. Where the amount of a settlement is a “certain
9 easily calculable sum of money,” California courts may calculate attorneys’ fees as a reasonable
10 percentage of the settlement created. Weil and Brown, California Practice Guide, *Civil*
11 *Procedure Before Trial*, Chapter 14, section 14:145; *Dunk v. Ford Motor Co.*(1996) 48 Cal.
12 App. 4th 1794, 1808.

13 The percentage fee method is preferred in representative actions because “it better
14 approximates the workings of the marketplace than the lodestar approach.” *Lealao, supra*, 82
15 Cal.App.4th at 49. California law provides that the award for attorneys’ fees should be
16 equivalent to fees freely negotiated in the legal marketplace and paid in comparable litigation
17 based on the result achieved and risk incurred. See *Lealao, supra*, 82 Cal.App.4th at 47-50;
18 *Laffitte, supra*, 1 Cal.5th 480 at 503. In cases where the settlement agreement provides that the
19 defendant will pay the plaintiff’s attorneys a percentage of the fund created by the settlement,
20 use of that percentage method is appropriate. *Lealao, supra*, 82 Cal.App.4th at 32. Fee awards
21 that are too small will “chill the private enforcement essential to the vindication of many legal
22 rights and obstruct the representative actions that often relieve the courts of the need to
23 separately adjudicate numerous claims.” *Id.* at 53. Therefore, fees in representative actions
24 should approximate the probable terms of a contingent fee contract negotiated by a sophisticated
25 attorney and client in comparable litigation. *Id.* at 48. “The ultimate goal . . . is the award of a
26 ‘reasonable’ fee to compensate counsel for their efforts, irrespective of the method of
27 calculation.” *Consumer Privacy Cases* (2009) 175 Cal.App.4th 545, 557-58 (quoting *Apple*
28 *Computer, Inc. v. Superior Court, supra*, 126 Cal.App.4th at 1270).

Plaintiff's Counsel's application for attorneys' fees in light of the facts and circumstances surrounding the case is well-within the range of reasonableness. Courts have awarded fees as high as fifty percent (50%) of the settlement in complex actions, depending on the circumstances of the case.⁴¹

Plaintiff's Counsel has performed significant work in this matter, as discussed in the Declaration of Brittany Shaw with the very real possibility of an unsuccessful outcome and no fee recovery of any kind.⁴² In the present case, Plaintiff's Counsel has borne all of the risks and costs of litigation and will not receive any compensation until recovery is obtained.⁴³ Plaintiff's Counsel is experienced in complex wage-and-hour litigation and used that experience to obtain a great result for Plaintiff, the Aggrieved Employees and the State of California.⁴⁴ Considering the amount of fees requested, work performed, risks incurred, results obtained, and experience of Plaintiff's Counsel in handling similar matters, Plaintiff maintains that the requested attorneys' fees are reasonable and should be awarded.

B. The Requested Fee Award is Reasonable Based on the Factors Considered in Determination of Fee Awards

The factors which courts consider in determining whether fee awards are reasonable, all of which support the fee award requested by Plaintiff's Counsel, are: the time and labor required; the novelty and difficulty of the questions involved; the skill requisite to perform the legal services properly; the preclusion of other employment by the attorney due to the acceptance of the case; the customary fee; whether the fee is fixed or contingent; the time limitation imposed by the client or the circumstances; the amount involved and results obtained; the experience, reputation, and ability of the attorney; the undesirability of the case; the nature and length of the professional relationship with the client; and awards in similar cases. *Camden I Condominium*

⁴¹ See *In re Ampicillin Antitrust Litig.* (D.D.C. 1981) 526 F.Supp. 494 (awarding attorneys' fees in the amount of 45% of the \$7.3 million total settlement amount); *Beech Cinema, Inc. v. Twentieth-Century Fox Film Corp.* (S.D.N.Y. 1979) 480 F.Supp. 1195 (awarding approximately 53% of the settlement as attorneys' fees). California courts routinely approve attorneys' fees awards "average[ing] around one-third of the recovery." *Chavez v. Netflix, Inc.* (2008) 162 Cal.App.4th 43, 66 n.11 (lower court found the range of contingency fees in marketplace to be 20%-40% and determined such a percentage fee was appropriate).

⁴² Shaw Decl., ¶¶ 76-77.

⁴³ *Id.*, ¶ 80.

⁴⁴ *Id.*, ¶¶ 2-6.

1 *Association, Inc. v. Dunkel* (11th Cir. 1991) 946 F.2d 768, 772. Some of the most relevant
2 factors to this Court's fee determination will be addressed below.

3 It should be highlighted that the percentage award sought is commensurate with the time,
4 effort, and expense dedicated to the case, the contingent nature of Plaintiff's Counsel's
5 representation and the risks taken in commencing the Action, the skill and determination
6 required, the results that Plaintiff's Counsel has achieved, and the value of the settlement that
7 Plaintiff's Counsel has obtained on behalf of Plaintiff, the Aggrieved Employees, and the State
8 of California. For the reasons discussed herein, an award of attorneys' fees in the amount of
9 33% of the Total Settlement Amount is reasonable.

10 **1. Time & Labor**

11 Plaintiff's Counsel has used its experience and skills in litigating complex wage-and-
12 hour actions to bring this matter to a successful conclusion. Prior to commencing this lawsuit,
13 Plaintiff's Counsel conducted a significant amount of investigation into the factual and legal
14 issues, Defendant's business, and its operations and employment policies, practices, and
15 procedures.⁴⁵ During the litigation of the Action, Plaintiff's Counsel interviewed and obtained
16 information from Plaintiff, Defendant, and other sources, conducted legal research, reviewed
17 and analyzed thousands of pages of documents and data, prepared for and participated in
18 mediation and robust settlement discussions, evaluated the PAGA claim, and calculated the
19 potential monetary recovery under PAGA.⁴⁶ Plaintiff's Counsel also met and conferred with
20 Defendant's counsel regarding the pleadings, case management, discovery, arbitration,
21 mediation, and settlement negotiations, among other issues.⁴⁷ Plaintiff's Counsel performed
22 other work including, *inter alia*, case strategy and analysis; and engaging in extensive settlement
23 negotiations.⁴⁸

24 Plaintiff's Counsel dedicated the full extent of staffing and monetary resources necessary
25 to prosecute the case with maximum efficiency and has fully and actively participated in the
26

27 ⁴⁵ Shaw Decl., ¶¶ 9 & 18.

28 ⁴⁶ Shaw Decl., ¶ 18.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

litigation process. The Attorney Task and Time Chart, which is attached as “**EXHIBIT 3**” to the accompanying Declaration of Brittany Shaw, sets forth in detail the hours that Plaintiff’s Counsel has spent performing tasks in this matter. Attorneys at Lawyers *for* Justice, PC has spent **193.3 hours** to obtain a recovery on behalf of Plaintiff, the Aggrieved Employees, and the State of California. These hours were required to bring the case to its successful conclusion.

In light of the value of time expended and the carrying of costs involved in this litigation, the requested attorneys’ fees award is fair, adequate, and reasonable.

2. The Skill Required to Perform Legal Services Properly

The skill required to properly litigate this case is evident not only in the results achieved, but in the steps necessary to reach the same. Defendant retained highly-respected counsel to represent its defenses. Plaintiff’s Counsel’s effort and skill were used to, among other things, investigate the allegations and gather facts, research the legal issues, analyze data and information obtained from Defendant, Plaintiff, and through other sources, evaluate the PAGA claim, and negotiate the settlement. Despite all of the obstacles that had to be overcome, Plaintiff’s Counsel used its extensive experience and skill in the handling of complex wage-and-hour matters to advocate for and obtain a recovery now, with maximum efficiency, as opposed to the possibility of recovery in the future, after significant expense and time.⁴⁹

3. Whether the Fee Is Fixed or Contingent

Plaintiff’s Counsel has provided representation on a contingency basis, has borne all of the risks and costs of litigation, and will not receive any compensation until recovery is obtained.⁵⁰ Plaintiff’s Counsel has invested **193.3 hours** performing work in this matter. Plaintiff’s Counsel is also requesting reimbursement of litigation costs and expenses in the amount of \$12,619.39.⁵¹ The Case Cost Detail, which is attached as “**EXHIBIT 4**” to the accompanying Declaration of Brittany Shaw, sets forth in detail the costs that Plaintiff’s Counsel has incurred in this matter. If Plaintiff’s Counsel had not been successful, the time that they have devoted to litigating the case would have been for naught and would not have

⁴⁹ Shaw Decl., ¶¶ 16-31.

⁵⁰ *Id.*, ¶¶ 76 & 80.

⁵¹ *Id.*, ¶ 80 and Exh. 3.

1 produced any fee or any reimbursement of costs or expenses. Plaintiff's Counsel is well-
2 experienced in complex wage-and-hour litigation and used that experience to obtain a great
3 result in this matter.⁵² The skill and determination that Plaintiff's Counsel has shown throughout
4 the prosecution of the case justifies the requested attorneys' fees and costs. Considering the
5 amounts requested, work performed, and risks incurred, the requested fees and costs are
6 reasonable and should be awarded.

7 **4. The Amount Involved and the Results Achieved**

8 The Settlement represents an excellent resolution of this lawsuit, given the uncertainty
9 and risks of further litigation.⁵³ Had the case not settled, Defendant would have vigorously
10 defended the case, and would have challenged manageability and liability, and also sought a
11 reduction in the amount assessed as civil penalties. Defendant, however, faced risks too,
12 including and not limited to, the risk of trial and the risk of having the Court assess civil
13 penalties. Additionally, preparing for trial would have been extraordinarily expensive for the
14 Parties. At this stage, the settlement is preferred over continued litigation because such
15 resolution saves time and money that would otherwise go to litigation. The risks and expenses
16 of further litigation outweighed any benefit that might have been gained otherwise. The
17 Settlement provides an immediate recovery and avoids an uncertain result in the future and
18 additional risk, expense, and delay (e.g., prolonged expert discovery, trial preparation, and
19 appellate review of those proceedings).

20 The results achieved, in light of the difficulties inherent in similar cases and the specific
21 difficulties faced in this case, are considerable. Plaintiff's Counsel's obtained a settlement that
22 provides for a Total Settlement Amount of \$337,500.00, and it is currently estimated that the
23 Net Settlement Amount available for distribution to the Aggrieved Employees and the State of
24 California is at least \$191,005.61.⁵⁴

25 ///

26 ///

27 ⁵² See Shaw Decl., ¶¶ 2-6.

28 ⁵³ *Id.*, ¶¶ 15, 18, 19, 31 & 81.

⁵⁴ Settlement Agreement, § 3(a) and see footnote 2.

1 **5. The Reputation and Ability of the Attorneys**

2 Plaintiff's Counsel is a recognized class action and complex litigation law firm, and its
3 attorneys employed their knowledge, skill, and experience to bring the case to a successful
4 conclusion. Plaintiff's Counsel has years of wage-and-hour class action and complex litigation
5 experience, has recovered millions of dollars on behalf of thousands of individuals in California,
6 and has successfully handled numerous significant wage-and-hour class action and
7 representative action cases.⁵⁵

8 **C. The Lodestar Methodology Also Justifies Approval of the Requested Fees**

9 While the percentage-of-the-benefit approach is endorsed as the better approximation of
10 the workings of the marketplace than the lodestar approach, courts may also use the lodestar
11 method to "cross-check" the results of the other.⁵⁶ The lodestar is calculated based on reasonable
12 hours at reasonable prevailing hourly rates for the attorneys. *Ketchum v. Moses* (2001) 24
13 Cal.4th 1122, 1131-33.

14 The reasonableness of hours is assessed by "the entire course of the litigation, including
15 pretrial matters, settlement negotiations, discovery, litigation tactics, and the trial itself[.]" *Vo*
16 *v. Las Virgenes Municipal Water Dist.* (2000) 79 Cal.App.4th 440, 447. As set forth above in
17 Part V.B.1 *infra*, and also discussed in the Declaration of Brittany Shaw, Plaintiff's Counsel
18 performed significant work in this matter. The Attorney Task and Time Chart sets forth in detail
19 the numerous tasks that Plaintiff's Counsel performed in this case, and the time required for
20 completing those tasks.⁵⁷ The chart demonstrates that Lawyers for Justice, PC has spent a total
21 of **193.3 hours** on this matter, which is reasonable.

22 Both California and federal courts recognize that attorneys should be compensated for
23 providing representation on a contingency basis and for taking on the risks associated with said
24

25 ⁵⁵ Shaw Decl., ¶¶ 2-6.

26 ⁵⁶ *Laffitte, supra*, 1 Cal.5th at 505 (explaining that "[a] lodestar cross-check is simply a quantitative method for
27 bringing a measure of the time spent by counsel into the trial court's reasonableness determination" and "the
28 lodestar calculation . . . does not override the trial court's primary determination of the fee as a percentage" and
"does not impose an absolute maximum or minimum on the potential fee award."); *see also, e.g., Vizcaino*, 290
F.3d at 1050 ("[W]hile the primary basis of the fee award remains the percentage method, the lodestar may provide
a useful perspective on the reasonableness of a given percentage award.").

⁵⁷ Shaw Decl., Exh. 2.

1 representation, and be provided with financial incentives to enforce important rights and
2 protections like those at issue in this matter. *See Ketchum, supra*, 24 Cal.4th at 1132-33. In
3 awarding attorneys' fees, the aim is to mirror "the established practice in the private legal market
4 of rewarding attorneys for taking the risk of nonpayment by paying them a premium over their
5 normal hourly rates for winning contingency cases." *See id.*

6 Plaintiff's Counsel has been actively involved in the prosecution of this case and their
7 work on this matter has precluded other employment. Here, Plaintiff's Counsel bore the risk
8 that, despite all of their efforts and skills employed, there may be no recovery. Ultimately,
9 Plaintiff's Counsel was successful in reaching a settlement of \$337,500.00.

10 As set forth in the Declaration of Brittany Shaw, the professional backgrounds and
11 experience of Plaintiff's Counsel support a reasonable blended hourly rate of compensation of
12 at least \$850 per hour for services provided by Plaintiff's Counsel.⁵⁸ Lawyers for Justice, PC
13 has been awarded attorneys' fees, compensating the firm at the rate of at least \$850 for legal
14 services performed, by courts of this state.⁵⁹ While the circumstance of every case is unique,
15 the fact remains that the work performed and efforts undertaken by Plaintiff's Counsel in this
16 matter justify the requested attorneys' fees award.

17 Applying the rate of \$850 per hour to **193.3 hours** worked by Plaintiff's Counsel, would
18 place a base lodestar value of \$164,305.00 on the services provided by Plaintiff's Counsel.
19 However, Plaintiff's Counsel only seeks an attorneys' fee award of \$111,375.00 (equal to 33%
20 of the Total Settlement Amount based on the Settlement Agreement).

21 It also bears noting that a court may apply a multiplier in consideration for risk,
22 efficiency, and/or obtaining a substantial result, to enhance the lodestar for purpose of cross-
23 check. *See Ketchum*, 24 Cal.4th at 1133-34 (holding that a risk multiplier may be applied to
24 compensate contingency fee attorneys at a fair market rate). Such an enhancement "mirrors the
25 established practice in the private legal market of rewarding attorneys for taking the risk of
26 nonpayment by paying them a premium over their normal hourly rates for winning contingency
27

28 ⁵⁸ Shaw Decl., ¶ 79.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

cases.” *Vizcaino v. Microsoft Corp.*, (9th Cir. 2002) 290 F.3d 1043, 1051; *accord Ketchum, supra*, 24 Cal.4th 1122, 1132-34. A risk multiplier also serves to bring the financial incentives for enforcing important rights “into line with incentives [attorneys] have to undertake claims for which they are paid on a fee-for-services basis.” *Ketchum*, 24 Cal.4th at 1132.⁶⁰

The lodestar method as a cross-check to the percentage figure sought strongly supports the reasonableness of the requested attorneys’ fees. Accordingly, Plaintiff respectfully requests that the Court approve and grant an attorneys’ fees award in the amount of \$111,375.00 to Plaintiff’s Counsel, which is reasonable and justified on a percentage-basis, but also based on a lodestar cross-check.

VI. REIMBURSEMENT OF PLAINTIFF'S COUNSEL LITIGATION COSTS AND EXPENSES SHOULD BE APPROVED

The Settlement provides for reimbursement of litigation costs and expenses of up to \$30,000.00. As set forth in the Declaration of Brittany Shaw, Plaintiff’s Counsel seeks reimbursement of \$12,619.39 in litigation costs and expenses.⁶¹ These expenses were reasonable and necessary in the prosecution of this matter and to obtain the Settlement, and is less than the maximum amount allocated under the Settlement.⁶² The cost savings of \$17,380.61 will be part of the Net Settlement Amount.⁶³ Accordingly, Plaintiff’s Counsel requests that the Court award reimbursement of litigation costs and expenses to Plaintiff’s Counsel in the amount of \$12,619.39.

VII. THE SETTLEMENT ADMINISTRATION COSTS SHOULD BE APPROVED

As set forth in the Settlement Agreement, the Parties have agreed to retain, subject to approval by the Court, Atticus Administration LLC to handle the administration of the Settlement. The fees and expenses of the PAGA Settlement Administrator are currently

⁶⁰ Courts have approved fee awards with multipliers of 2 and even higher. See, e.g., *City of Oakland v. Oakland Raiders* (1988) 203 Cal.App.3d 78 (affirming a 2.34 multiplier without remand); *Wershba, supra*, 91 Cal.App.4th at 255 (“Multipliers can range from 2 to 4 or even higher.”); *Sutter Health Uninsured Pricing Cases* (2009) 171 Cal.App.4th 495, 512 (applying a 2.52 multiplier on a lodestar cross-check); *Chavez v. Netflix, Inc.* (2008) 162 Cal.App.4th 43, 66 (applying a 2.5 multiplier in a consumer class action).

⁶¹ Shaw Decl., ¶ 80, Exh. 4.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*

estimated to be \$3,400.00. These costs include, but are not limited to, expenses for preparing, printing, and mailing the Cover Letter and Individual Settlement Shares checks to the Aggrieved Employees (i.e., PAGA Settlement Package); performing skip-trace searches; re-mailing the returned PAGA Settlement Packages to any updated addresses located; and handling inquiries from Aggrieved Employees regarding the Settlement, among other things. Accordingly, the Court should grant approval of the Settlement Administration Costs in the amount of up to \$10,000.00 to Atticus, a necessary third-party for handling the settlement process.

VIII. PLAINTIFF'S SEPARATE INDIVIDUAL SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

Plaintiff will execute a separate individual settlement agreement in the amount of \$12,500.00 in exchange for Plaintiff's general release of claims.⁶⁴

IX. CONCLUSION

For the reasons discussed above and in the accompanying declarations, the Court is respectfully requested to approve the Settlement, including the plan of allocation and distribution of the Total Settlement Amount, and permit the filing of a memorandum that exceeds the page limit.

Dated: November 27, 2024

LAWYERS for JUSTICE, PC

By: _____



Brittany Shaw

Attorneys for Plaintiff

⁶⁴ *Id.* ¶ 15.