

COPY

HEATHER DAVIS, SBN 239372
heather@protectionlawgroup.com
AMIR NAYEBDADASH, SBN 232204
amir@protectionlawgroup.com
PROTECTION LAW GROUP, LLP
237 California Street
El Segundo, California 90245
Telephone: (424) 290-3095
Facsimile: (866) 264-7880

Attorneys for Plaintiff
GELEN CRUZ PALACIOS

**CONFORMED COPY
ORIGINAL FILED**
Superior Court of California
County of Los Angeles

SEP 08 2021

Sheri R. Carter, Executive Officer/Clerk of Court

**SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES**

GELEN CRUZ PALACIOS, individually
and on behalf of others similarly situated,
and as an aggrieved employee and Private
Attorney General,

Plaintiff,

vs.

BUILD IT STRONG ENTERPRISE, LLC, a
Delaware limited liability company; and
DOES 1 through 50, inclusive; and
TABLESIDE PARTNERS, INC., a
California corporation; and DOES 1 through
50, inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No.:

21ST CV33004

**CLASS ACTION AND REPRESENTATIVE
ACTION COMPLAINT**

DEMAND FOR TRIAL BY JURY

- (1) Violation of Cal. Labor Code §§ 510 and 1198 (Unpaid Overtime)
- (2) Violation of Cal. Labor Code § 226.7 (Unpaid Rest Period Premiums)
- (3) Violation of Cal. Labor Code §§ 1194, 1197 and 1197.1 (Unpaid Minimum Wages)
- (4) Violation of Cal. Labor Code §§ 201, 202 and 203 (Final Wages Not Timely Paid)
- (5) Violation of Labor Code §§ 204 and 210 (Wages Not Timely Paid During Employment)
- (6) Violation of Cal. Labor Code § 226(a) (Failure to Provide Accurate Wage Statements)
- (7) Violation of Cal. Labor Code §§ 2800 and 2802 (Failure to Reimburse Necessary Business Expenses)
- (8) Violation of Cal. Business & Professions Code § 17200, et seq.
- (9) Violation of Cal. Labor Code § 2699, (Private Attorneys General Act)

1 Plaintiff GELEN CRUZ PALACIOS (“Plaintiff”), individually and on behalf of other
2 members of the general public similarly situated, and as a private attorney general, based upon
3 facts that either have evidentiary support or are likely to have evidentiary support after a
4 reasonable opportunity for further investigation and discovery, alleges as follows:

5 **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

6 1. Plaintiff brings this action against Defendants BUILD IT STRONG
7 ENTERPRISE, LLC and DOES 1 THROUGH 50, and TABLESIDE PARTNERS, INC. AND
8 DOES 1 THROUGH 50 (hereinafter also collectively referred to as “Defendants”) for California
9 Labor Code violations, unfair business practices, and civil penalties stemming from Defendants’
10 failure to pay overtime compensation, failure to authorize and permit rest periods, failure to pay
11 minimum wage, failure to timely pay wages, failure to provide accurate wage statements, failure
12 to maintain accurate time and payroll records, and failure to reimburse necessary business-related
13 expenses.

14 2. Plaintiff’s First through Eighth Causes of Action are brought as a class action on
15 behalf of herself and similarly situated current and former employees of Defendants (hereinafter
16 collectively referred to as the “Class” or “Class Members,” as defined more fully in paragraph
17 15, below) pursuant to California Code of Civil Procedure section 382. The monetary damages
18 and restitution sought by Plaintiff exceeds the minimal jurisdiction limits of the Superior Court
19 and will be established according to proof at trial.

20 3. Plaintiff’s Ninth Cause of Action is brought as a representative action on behalf of
21 herself and certain other current and former employees of Defendants against whom one or more
22 of the alleged violations was committed (hereinafter collectively referred to as the “Aggrieved
23 Employees”) pursuant to California Labor Code sections 2698, *et seq.* Plaintiff is an aggrieved
24 employee against whom one or more of the alleged violations occurred. The civil penalties sought
25 by Plaintiff exceed the minimal jurisdiction limits of the Superior Court and will be established
26 according to proof at trial.

27 4. The Court has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to the California Constitution,
28

Article VI, Section 10, which grants the superior court “original jurisdiction in all other causes” except those given by statute to other courts. The statutes under which this action is brought do not specify any other basis for jurisdiction.

5. This Court has jurisdiction over Defendants because, upon information and belief, Defendants are citizens of California, have sufficient minimum contacts in California, or otherwise intentionally avail themselves of the California market so as to render the exercise of jurisdiction over them by the California courts consistent with traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice.

6. Venue is proper in this Court because, upon information and belief, Defendants maintain offices, have agents, and/or transact business in the State of California, County of Los Angeles.

PARTIES

7. Plaintiff GELEN CRUZ PALACIOS is an individual residing in the County of Los Angeles, State of California.

8. Defendant BUILD IT STRONG ENTERPRISE, LLC, is and at all times herein mentioned was, a limited liability company organized and existing under the laws of the state of Delaware, and registered to do business in the state of California.

9. Defendant TABLESIDE PARTNERS, INC., is and at all times herein mentioned was, a corporation organized and existing under the laws of the state of California, and registered to do business in the state of California.

10. Plaintiff is ignorant of the identities of defendants Does 1 through 50, inclusive, and therefore sues these defendants by such fictitious names. The Doe defendants may be individuals, partnerships, or corporations. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges, that, at all times mentioned herein, each of the Doe defendants was the parent, subsidiary, agent, servant, employee, co-venturer, and/or co-conspirator of each of the other defendants, and was at all times mentioned acting within the scope, purpose, consent, knowledge, ratification and authorization of such agency, employment, joint venture and conspiracy. Plaintiff will amend this

1 Complaint to allege their true names and capacities when ascertained. Plaintiff is informed and
2 believes and thereon alleges that each of the fictitiously named Doe defendants is responsible in
3 some manner for the occurrences herein alleged, and that Plaintiff's damages as herein alleged
4 were proximately caused by its conduct. BUILD IT STRONG ENTERPRISE, LLC,
5 TABLESIDE PARTNERS INC., and Doe Defendants 1 through 50 are collectively referred to
6 herein as "Defendants."

7 11. Defendants are and at all times herein mentioned were, (a) conducting business in
8 the County of Los Angeles, State of California, and (b) the employer of Plaintiff consistent with
9 the California Labor Code and Industrial Welfare Commission Wage Orders ("Wage Orders").

10 12. Plaintiff further alleges that Defendants, directly or indirectly controlled or
11 affected the working conditions, wages, working hours, and conditions of employment of
12 Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees so as to make each of said Defendants
13 employers and employers jointly liable under the statutory provisions set forth herein.

14 **CLASS ACTION ALLEGATIONS**

15 13. Plaintiff brings the First through Eighth Causes of Action as a class action on her
16 own behalf and on behalf of all other members of the general public similarly situated, and, thus,
17 seeks class certification under Code of Civil Procedure section 382.

18 14. The proposed class is defined as follows: All current and former non-exempt
19 employees of any of the Defendants within the State of California at any time commencing four
20 (4) years preceding the filing of Plaintiff's complaint up until the time that notice of the certified
21 class action is provided to the class (hereinafter referred to as the "Class" or "Class Members.").

22 15. Plaintiff reserves the right to establish other subclasses as appropriate.

23 16. The Class is ascertainable and there is a well-defined community of interest in the
24 litigation:

- 25 a. Numerosity: The Class Members are so numerous that joinder of all Class
26 Members is impracticable. The membership of the entire Class is unknown to
27 Plaintiff at this time; however, the Class is estimated to be over fifty (50)
28

1 individuals and the identity of such membership is readily ascertainable by
2 inspection of Defendants' employment records.

3 b. Typicality: Plaintiff's claims are typical of all other Class Members demonstrated
4 herein. Plaintiff will fairly and adequately protect the interests of the other Class
5 Members with whom she has a well-defined community of interest.

6 c. Adequacy: Plaintiff will fairly and adequately protect the interests of each Class
7 Member, with whom she has a well-defined community of interest and typicality
8 of claims, as demonstrated herein. Plaintiff has no interest that is antagonistic to
9 the other Class Members. Plaintiff's attorneys, the proposed class counsel, are
10 versed in the rules governing class action discovery, certification, and settlement.
11 Plaintiff has incurred, and during the pendency of this action will continue to
12 incur, costs and attorneys' fees, that have been, are, and will be necessarily
13 expended for the prosecution of this action for the substantial benefit of each Class
14 Member.

15 d. Superiority: A class action is superior to other available methods for the fair and
16 efficient adjudication of this litigation because individual joinder of all Class
17 Members is impractical.

18 e. Public Policy Considerations: Certification of this lawsuit as a class action will
19 advance public policy objectives. Employers of this great state violate
20 employment and labor laws every day. Current employees are often afraid to
21 assert their rights out of fear of direct or indirect retaliation. However, class
22 actions provide the Class Members who are not named in the complaint
23 anonymity that allows for the vindication of their rights.

24 17. There are common questions of law and fact as to the Class that predominate over
25 questions affecting only individual members. The following common questions of law or fact,
26 among others, exist as to the members of the Class:

27 a. Whether Defendants' failure to pay wages, without abatement, or reduction, in
28

1 accordance with the California Labor Code was willful;

2 b. Whether Defendants had a corporate policy and practice of failing to pay Plaintiff
3 and the other Class Members for all hours worked, and missed, short, late or
4 interrupted rest breaks in violation of California law;

5 c. Whether Defendants required Plaintiff and the other Class Members to work more
6 than eight (8) hours per day and/or more than forty (40) hours per week and failed
7 to pay the legally required overtime compensation to Plaintiff and the other Class
8 Members;

9 d. Whether Defendants deprived Plaintiff and the other Class Members of rest
10 periods or required Plaintiff and the other Class Members to work during rest
11 periods without compensation;

12 e. Whether Defendants failed to pay rest period premium wages to Class Members
13 when they were not authorized and permitted to take legally compliant rest
14 periods;

15 f. Whether Defendants failed to pay minimum wages to Plaintiff and the other Class
16 Members for all hours worked;

17 g. Whether Defendants failed to pay Plaintiff and the other Class Members the
18 required minimum wage pursuant to California law;

19 h. Whether Defendants failed to pay Plaintiff and the other Class Members proper
20 overtime compensation pursuant to California law;

21 i. Whether Defendants failed to pay all wages due to Plaintiff and the other Class
22 Members within the time required upon their discharge or resignation from
23 employment;

24 j. Whether Defendants failed to reimburse Plaintiff and the other Class Members
25 for all necessary business-related expenses and costs in violation of California
26 Labor Code section 2802;

27 k. Whether Defendants failed to timely pay all wages due to Plaintiff and the other
28

Class Members during their employment;

- l. Whether Defendants complied with wage reporting as required by the California Labor Code, including section 226;
- m. Whether Defendants' conduct was with malice, fraud or oppression;
- n. Whether Defendants' conduct was willful or reckless;
- o. Whether Defendants engaged in unfair business practices in violation of California Business & Professions Code section 17200, *et seq.* based on their improper withholding of compensation and deduction of wages;
- p. The appropriate amount of damages, restitution, and/or monetary penalties resulting from Defendants' violation of California law; and
- q. Whether Plaintiff and the other Class Members are entitled to compensatory damages pursuant to the California Labor Code.

GENERAL ALLEGATIONS

18. Defendants operate a group of restaurants.

19. Defendants have employed Plaintiff to work as a dishwasher since approximately July 2018.

20. At all relevant times set forth herein, Defendants employed Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees as hourly-paid or non-exempt employees.

21. Throughout the time period involved in this case, Defendants had the authority to hire and terminate Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees; to directly or indirectly control work rules, working conditions, wages, working hours, and conditions of employment of Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees; and to hire and terminate the employment of Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees.

22. At all times herein mentioned, Defendants were subject to the Labor Code of the State of California and the applicable Industrial Welfare Commission Orders.

23. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges that Defendants engaged in an ongoing and systematic scheme of wage abuse against their hourly-paid or non-exempt

employees. As set forth in more detail below, this scheme involved, *inter alia*, regularly requiring Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees to work off the clock without compensation, thereby failing to pay them for all hours worked, including minimum and overtime wages. In addition, Defendants routinely failed to permit Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees to take timely and duty free meal periods rest periods in violation of California law. Defendants also failed to reimburse Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees for all necessary business-related expenses.

24. Throughout the time period involved in this case, Defendants have implemented policies and practices which failed to provide Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees with timely and duty-free meal periods. Defendants routinely failed to relieve Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees of all duties during their meal periods, regularly failed to relinquish control over Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees during their meal periods, regularly failed to permit Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees a reasonable opportunity to take their meal periods, and regularly impeded or discouraged Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees from taking thirty (30) minute uninterrupted meal breaks no later than the end of their fifth hour of work and/or from taking a second thirty (30) minute uninterrupted meal break no later than their tenth hour of work for shifts lasting more than ten (10) hours. Defendants also failed to maintain accurate records of meal periods taken by Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees

25. Throughout the time period involved in this case, Defendants did not adequately inform Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees of their right to take meal periods under California law. Moreover, Defendants systematically disregarded their own written policies regarding the provision and timing of meal periods for Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees. Instead, Defendants' actual policy and practice was to schedule Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees in a way that prohibited them from taking timely and duty-free meal periods, and to require Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees to work through their meal periods, for which they were not compensated.

1 26. Throughout the time period involved in this case, Defendants failed to pay
2 Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees premium wages for meal periods that were
3 missed, late, interrupted, or shortened in violation of California law. Defendants knew or should
4 have known that Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees were entitled to receive all
5 meal periods or payment of one additional hour of pay at their regular rate of pay when a meal
6 period was missed, short, late, and/or interrupted. Notwithstanding this knowledge, Defendants
7 routinely failed to provide legally compliant meal periods to Plaintiff, the Class, and the
8 Aggrieved Employees, and routinely failed to pay one additional hour of pay to Plaintiff, the
9 Class, and the Aggrieved Employees at their regular rate of pay when a meal period was missed,
10 short, late, and/or interrupted.

11 27. Throughout the time period involved in this case, Defendants have implemented
12 policies and practices which prohibited Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees from
13 taking timely and duty-free rest periods. Defendants regularly failed to provide, authorize, and
14 permit Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees to take full, uninterrupted, off-duty rest
15 periods for every shift lasting three and one-half (3.5) to six (6) hours and/or two full,
16 uninterrupted, off-duty rest periods for every shift lasting six (6) to ten (10) hours, and failed to
17 make a good faith effort to authorize, permit, and provide such rest breaks in the middle of each
18 work period.

19 28. Throughout the time period involved in this case, Defendants did not adequately
20 inform Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees of their right to take rest periods under
21 California law. Moreover, Defendants systematically disregarded their own written policies
22 regarding the provision and timing of rest periods for Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved
23 Employees. Instead, Defendants' actual policy and practice was to schedule Plaintiff, the Class,
24 and the Aggrieved Employees in a way that regularly prohibited them from taking timely and
25 duty-free rest periods, and to regularly require Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees
26 to work through their rest periods.

27 29. Throughout the time period involved in this case, Defendants failed to pay
28

1 Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees premium wages for rest periods that were
2 missed, late, interrupted, or shortened in violation of California law. Defendants knew or should
3 have known that Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees were entitled to receive all
4 rest periods or payment of one additional hour of pay at their regular rate of pay when a rest period
5 was missed, short, late, and/or interrupted. Notwithstanding this knowledge, Defendants routinely
6 failed to authorize and permit Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees to take duty-free
7 rest periods, and failed to pay one additional hour of pay to Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved
8 Employees at their regular rate of pay when a rest period was missed, short, late and/or
9 interrupted.

10 30. Throughout the time period involved in this case, Defendants required Plaintiff, the
11 Class, and the Aggrieved Employees to perform work off the clock. Although Defendants
12 prohibited overtime, Defendants still regularly required that Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved
13 Employees complete all of their assigned duties. To do so, Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved
14 Employees were required to perform work off the clock for which they were not compensated.

15 31. Throughout the time period involved in this case, Defendants implemented policies
16 that prohibited Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees from accurately recording the
17 actual time worked, resulting in a failure to pay Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees
18 all wages owed.

19 32. Throughout the time period involved in this case, Plaintiff, the Class, and the
20 Aggrieved Employees worked more than eight (8) hours in a day, and/or forty (40) hours in a
21 week.

22 33. Throughout the time period involved in this case, Defendants failed to pay all
23 overtime compensation owed to Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees when they
24 worked in excess of eight (8) hours in a single work day and/or forty (40) hours in a single work
25 week, or in excess of twelve (12) hours in a single work day and/or eighty (80) hours in a single
26 work week. Defendants knew or should have known that Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved
27 Employees were entitled to receive certain wages for overtime compensation and that they were
28

1 not receiving wages for overtime compensation.

2 34. Throughout the time period involved in this case, Defendants failed to pay
3 overtime to Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees for all overtime hours worked
4 based on regular rates of pay correctly calculated to include all applicable remuneration.

5 35. Throughout the time period involved in this case, Defendants regularly failed to
6 pay Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees at least minimum wages for all hours
7 worked. Defendants knew or should have known that Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved
8 Employees were entitled to receive at least minimum wages for all hours worked and that they
9 were not receiving at least minimum wages for all hours worked. Defendants' failure to pay
10 minimum wages included, *inter alia*, failing to pay Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved
11 Employees at the required minimum wage pursuant to California law, requiring Plaintiff, the
12 Class, and the Aggrieved Employees to perform work off the clock.

13 36. Throughout the time period involved in this case, Defendants regularly failed to
14 pay Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees all wages owed to them upon discharge or
15 resignation. Defendants knew or should have known that Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved
16 Employees were entitled to receive all wages owed to them upon termination within the time
17 permissible under California Labor Code section 202. Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved
18 Employees did not receive payment of all final wages owed to them upon discharge or resignation,
19 including overtime compensation and minimum wages within any time permissible under
20 California Labor Code section 202.

21 37. Throughout the time period involved in this case, Defendants regularly failed to
22 pay Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees all wages within any time permissible
23 under California law, including, *inter alia*, California Labor Code section 204. Defendants knew
24 or should have known that Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees were entitled to
25 receive all wages owed to them during their employment. Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved
26 Employees did not receive payment of all wages, including overtime compensation, minimum
27 wages, and meal and rest period premiums.
28

1 38. Throughout the time period involved in this case, Defendants regularly failed to
2 provide complete or accurate wage statements to Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved
3 Employees. Defendants knew or should have known that Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved
4 Employees were entitled to receive complete and accurate wage statements in accordance with
5 California law, but, in fact, they did not receive complete and accurate wage statements from
6 Defendants. The deficiencies included, *inter alia*, the failure to include the total number of hours
7 worked, the actual gross wages earned, and the correct rates of pay.

8 39. Throughout the time period involved in this case, Defendants regularly failed to
9 keep complete or accurate payroll records for Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees.
10 Defendants knew or should have known that Defendants were required to keep complete and
11 accurate payroll records for Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees in accordance with
12 California law, but, in fact, did not keep complete and accurate payroll records.

13 40. Throughout the time period involved in this case, Defendants regularly failed to
14 maintain accurate records relating to Plaintiff's, the Class's, and the Aggrieved Employees' work
15 periods, total daily hours, hours per pay period, and applicable pay rates.

16 41. Throughout the time period involved in this case, Defendants failed to reimburse
17 Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees for all necessary business-related expenses,
18 including but not limited to the purchase of non-slip shoes and other tools and supplies.
19 Defendants knew or should have known that Defendants were required to reimburse Plaintiff, the
20 Class, and the Aggrieved Employees for all necessary business-related expenses and costs, but,
21 in fact, failed to do so in violation of California law.

22 42. Throughout the time period involved in this case, Defendants knew or should have
23 known that they had a duty to compensate Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees
24 pursuant to California law. Defendants had the financial ability to pay such compensation, but
25 willfully, knowingly, and intentionally failed to do so, and falsely represented to Plaintiff, the
26 Class, and the Aggrieved Employees that they paid all wages owed to them, all in order to increase
27 Defendants' profits.
28

43. California Labor Code section 218 states that nothing in Article 1 of the Labor Code shall limit the right of any wage claimant to “sue directly ... for any wages or penalty due to him [or her] under this article.”

FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION

(Violation of California Labor Code §§ 510 and 1198)

(Against All Defendants)

44. Plaintiff incorporates by reference and re-alleges as if fully stated herein each and every allegation set forth above.

45. California Labor Code section 1198 and the applicable Industrial Welfare Commission (“IWC”) Wage Order provide that it is unlawful to employ persons without compensating them at a rate of pay either time-and-one-half or two-times that person’s regular rate of pay, depending on the number of hours worked by the person on a daily or weekly basis.

46. Specifically, the applicable IWC Wage Order provides that Defendants are and were required to pay Plaintiff and the other Class Members employed by Defendants, and working more than eight (8) hours in a day or more than forty (40) hours in a workweek, at the rate of time-and-one-half for all hours worked in excess of eight (8) hours in a day or more than forty (40) hours in a workweek.

47. The applicable IWC Wage Order further provides that Defendants are and were required to pay Plaintiff and the Class overtime compensation at a rate of two times their regular rate of pay for all hours worked in excess of twelve (12) hours in a day and for all hours worked in excess of eight (8) hours on the seventh day of work in a workweek.

48. California Labor Code section 510 codifies the right to overtime compensation at one-and-one-half times the regular hourly rate for hours worked in excess of eight (8) hours in a day or forty (40) hours in a week or for the first eight (8) hours worked on the seventh day of work, and no overtime compensation at twice the regular hourly rate for hours worked in excess of twelve (12) hours in a day or in excess of eight (8) hours in a day on the seventh day of work.

49. During the relevant time period, Plaintiff and the other Class Members worked in

1 excess of eight (8) hours in a day, and/or in excess of forty (40) hours in a week.

2 50. During the relevant time period, Defendants intentionally and willfully failed to
3 pay overtime wages owed to Plaintiff and the other Class Members.

4 51. Defendants' failure to pay Plaintiff and the other Class Members the unpaid
5 balance of overtime compensation, as required by California laws, violates the provisions of
6 California Labor Code sections 510 and 1198, and is therefore unlawful.

7 52. Pursuant to California Labor Code section 1194, Plaintiff and the other Class
8 Members are entitled to recover unpaid overtime compensation, as well as interest, costs, and
9 attorneys' fees.

10 **SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION**

11 **(Violation of California Labor Code § 226.7)**

12 **(Against All Defendants)**

13 53. Plaintiff incorporates by reference and re-alleges as if fully stated herein each and
14 every allegation set forth above.

15 54. At all times herein set forth, the applicable IWC Wage Order and California Labor
16 Code section 226.7 were applicable to Plaintiff and the other Class Members' employment by
17 Defendants.

18 55. At all relevant times, California Labor Code section 226.7 provides that no
19 employer shall require an employee to work during any rest period mandated by an applicable
20 order of the California IWC.

21 56. At all relevant times, the applicable IWC Wage Order provides that "[e]very
22 employer shall authorize and permit all employees to take rest periods, which insofar as
23 practicable shall be in the middle of each work period" and that the "rest period time shall be
24 based on the total hours worked daily at the rate of ten (10) minutes net rest time per four (4)
25 hours or major fraction thereof unless the total daily work time is less than three and one-half
26 (3.5) hours."

27 57. During the relevant time period, Defendants required Plaintiff and other Class
28

Members to work four (4) or more hours without authorizing or permitting a ten (10) minute rest period per each four (4) hour period worked.

58. During the relevant time period, Defendants willfully required Plaintiff and the other Class Members to work during rest periods, failed to allow Plaintiff and the other Class Member to take any rest period and/or failed to authorize and permit Plaintiff and the other Class Members to take uninterrupted, duty-free rest breaks.

59. During the relevant time period, Defendants failed to pay Plaintiff and the other Class Members the full rest period premium due pursuant to California Labor Code section 226.7 for work performed during rest periods, and/or for failure to authorize and permit Plaintiff and other Class Members from taking uninterrupted rest periods.

60. Defendants' conduct violates applicable IWC Wage Orders and California Labor Code section 226.7.

61. Pursuant to the applicable IWC Wage Orders and California Labor Code section 226.7(b), Plaintiff and the other Class Members are entitled to recover from Defendants one additional hour of pay at the employees' regular hourly rate of compensation for each work day that the rest period was not provided.

THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION

(Violation of California Labor Code §§ 1194, 1197, and 1197.1)

(Against All Defendants)

62. Plaintiff incorporates by reference and re-alleges as if fully stated herein each and every allegation set forth above.

63. At all relevant times, California Labor Code sections 1194, 1197, and 1197.1 provide that the minimum wage to be paid to employees and the payment of a lesser wage than the minimum so fixed is unlawful.

64. During the relevant time period, Defendants failed to pay minimum wage to Plaintiff and the other Class Members as required pursuant to California Labor Code sections 1194, 1197, and 1197.1.

65. Defendants' failure to pay Plaintiff and the other Class Members the minimum wage as required violates California Labor Code sections 1194, 1197, and 1197.1. Pursuant to those sections, Plaintiff and the other Class Members are entitled to recover the unpaid balance of their minimum wage compensation as well as interest, costs, and attorneys' fees, and liquidated damages in an amount equal to the wages unlawfully unpaid and interest thereon.

66. Pursuant to California Labor Code section 1194.2, Plaintiff and the other Class Members are entitled to recover liquidated damages in an amount equal to the wages unlawfully unpaid and interest thereon.

FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION

(Violation of California Labor Code §§ 201, 202, 203)

(Against All Defendants)

67. Plaintiff incorporates by reference and re-alleges as if fully stated herein each and every allegation set forth above.

68. At all relevant times herein set forth, California Labor Code sections 201 and 202 provide that if an employer discharges an employee, the wages earned and unpaid at the time of discharge are due and payable immediately, and if an employee quits his or her employment, his or her wages shall become due and payable not later seventy-two (72) hours thereafter, unless the employee has given seventy-two (72) hours' notice of his or her intention to quit, in which case the employee is entitled to his or her wages at the time of quitting.

69. During the relevant time period, the employment of Plaintiff and many other Class Members with Defendants ended, *i.e.* was terminated by quitting or discharge. Defendants intentionally and willfully failed to pay Plaintiff and other Class Members who are no longer employed by Defendants all of their wages, earned and unpaid, including but not limited to minimum wages, straight time wages, and overtime wages, within seventy-two (72) hours of their leaving Defendants' employ.

70. Defendants' failure to pay Plaintiff and other Class Members who are no longer employed by Defendants their wages, earned and unpaid, within seventy-two (72) hours of their

1 leaving Defendants' employ, is in violation of California Labor Code sections 201 and 202.

2 71. California Labor Code section 203 provides that if an employer willfully fails to
3 pay wages owed, in accordance with sections 201 and 202, then the wages of the employee shall
4 continue as a penalty from the due date thereof at the same rate until paid or until an action is
5 commenced; but the wages shall not continue for more than thirty (30) days.

6 72. Plaintiff and other Class Members who are no longer employed by Defendants are
7 entitled to recover from Defendants the statutory penalty wages for each day they were not paid,
8 up to a thirty (30) day maximum pursuant to California Labor Code section 203.

9 **FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

10 **(Violation of California Labor Code §§ 204 and 210)**

11 **(Against All Defendants)**

12 73. Plaintiff incorporates by reference and re-alleges as if fully stated herein each and
13 every allegation set forth above

14 74. At all times herein set forth, California Labor Code section 204 provides that all
15 wages earned by any person in any employment between the 1st and 15th days, inclusive, of any
16 calendar month, other than those wages due upon termination of an employee, are due and payable
17 between the 16th and 26th day of the month during which the labor was performed.

18 75. At all times herein set forth, California Labor Code section 204 provides that all
19 wages earned by any person in any employment between the 16th and the last day, inclusive, of
20 any calendar month, other than those wages due upon termination of an employee, are due and
21 payable between the 1st and the 10th day of the following month.

22 76. At all times herein set forth, California Labor Code section 204 provides that all
23 wages earned for labor in excess of the normal work period shall be paid no later than the payday
24 for the next regular payroll period.

25 77. During the relevant time period, Defendants intentionally and willfully failed to
26 pay Plaintiff and other Class Members all wages due to them, within any time period permissible
27 under California Labor Code section 204.

1 78. Plaintiff and other Class Members are entitled to recover all available remedies for
2 Defendant's violations of California Labor Code section 204, including statutory penalties
3 pursuant to Labor Code section 210(b).

4 **SIXTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

5 **(Violation of California Labor Code § 226(a))**

6 **(Against All Defendants)**

7 79. Plaintiff incorporates by reference and re-alleges as if fully stated herein each and
8 every allegation set forth above.

9 80. At all material times set forth herein, California Labor Code section 226(a)
10 provides that every employer shall furnish each of his or her employees an accurate itemized
11 statement in writing showing (1) gross wages earned, (2) total hours worked by the employee, (3)
12 the number of piece-rate units earned and any applicable piece rate if the employee is paid on a
13 piece-rate basis, (4) all deductions, provided that all deductions made on written orders of the
14 employee may be aggregated and shown as one item, (5) net wages earned, (6) the inclusive dates
15 of the period for which the employee is paid, (7) the name of the employee and his or her social
16 security number, (8) the name and address of the legal entity that is the employer, and (9) all
17 applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay period and the corresponding number of hours
18 worked at each hourly rate by the employee. The deductions made from payments of wages shall
19 be recorded in ink or other indelible form, properly dated, showing the month, day, and year, and
20 a copy of the statement or a record of the deductions shall be kept on file by the employer for at
21 least three years at the place of employment or at a central location within the State of California.

22 81. Defendants have intentionally and willfully failed to provide Plaintiff and the
23 Class with complete and accurate wage statements. The deficiencies include, but are not limited
24 to the failure list the total number of hours worked, the actual gross wages earned, the correct
25 rates of pay.

26 82. Because of Defendants' violation of California Labor Code section 226(a),
27 Plaintiff and the Class have suffered injury and damage to their statutorily-protected rights.
28

83. More specifically, Plaintiff and the Class have been injured by Defendants' intentional and willful violation of California Labor Code section 226(a) because they were denied both their legal right to receive, and their protected interest in receiving, accurate and itemized wage statements pursuant to California Labor Code section 226(a).

84. Plaintiff and the Class are entitled to recover from Defendants the greater of their actual damages caused by Defendants' failure to comply with California Labor Code section 226(a), or an aggregate penalty not exceeding four thousand dollars per employee.

85. Plaintiff and the Class are also entitled to injunctive relief to ensure compliance with this section, pursuant to California Labor Code section 226(g).

SEVENTH CAUSE OF ACTION

(Violation of California Labor Code §§ 2800 and 2802)

(Against All Defendants)

86. Plaintiff incorporates by reference and re-alleges as if fully stated herein each and every allegation set forth above.

87. Pursuant to California Labor Code sections 2800 and 2802, an employer must reimburse its employee for all necessary expenditures incurred by the employee in direct consequence of the discharge of his or her job duties or in direct consequence of his or her job duties or in direct consequence of his or her obedience to the directions of the employer.

88. Plaintiff and the Class incurred necessary business-related expenses and costs that were not fully reimbursed by Defendants. Defendants' failure to reimburse for all necessary business-related expenses and costs included their failure to reimburse Plaintiff and the Class for costs incurred as a result of, including but not limited to, simple negligence.

89. Defendants have intentionally and willfully failed to reimburse Plaintiff and the Class for all necessary business-related expenses and costs. Plaintiff and the Class are entitled to recover from Defendants their business-related expenses and costs incurred during the course and scope of their employment, plus interest accrued from the date on which the employee incurred the necessary expenditures at the same rate as judgments in civil actions in the State of California.

EIGHTH CAUSE OF ACTION

(Violation of Cal. Business & Professions Code §§ 17200, et seq.)

(Against All Defendants)

90. Plaintiff incorporates by reference and re-alleges as if fully stated herein each and every allegation set forth above.

91. Defendants' conduct, as alleged herein, has been, and continues to be, unfair, unlawful and harmful to Plaintiff and the Class, to the general public, and Defendants' competitors. Accordingly, Plaintiff seeks to enforce important rights affecting the public interest within the meaning of Code of Civil Procedure section 1021.5.

92. Defendants' activities as alleged herein are violations of California law, and constitute unlawful business acts and practices in violation of California Business & Professions Code section 17200, *et seq.*

93. A violation of California Business & Professions Code section 17200, *et seq.* may be predicated on the violation of any state or federal law. In this instant case, Defendants' policies and practices of requiring employees, including Plaintiff and the Class, to work overtime without paying them proper compensation violate California Labor Code sections 510 and 1198. Additionally, Defendants' policies and practices of requiring employees, including Plaintiff and the Class, to work through their rest periods without paying them proper compensation violate California Labor Code sections 226.7 and 512(a). Moreover, Defendants' policies and practices of failing to timely pay wages to Plaintiff and the Class violate California Labor Code sections 201, 202, 203 and 204.

94. Defendants also violated California Labor Code sections 221, 226(a), 1194, 1197, 1197.1, 510, 1174(d), 2800, and 2802.

95. As a result of the herein described violations of California law, Defendants unlawfully gained an unfair advantage over other businesses.

96. Plaintiff and the Class have been personally injured by Defendants' unlawful business acts and practices as alleged herein, including but not necessarily limited to the loss of

1 money and/or property.

2 97. Pursuant to California Business & Professions Code sections 17200, *et seq.*,
3 Plaintiff and the Class are entitled to restitution of the wages withheld and retained by Defendants
4 during a period that commences four years prior to the filing of this Complaint; an award of
5 attorneys' fees pursuant to California Code of Civil Procedure section 1021.5 and other applicable
6 laws; and an award of costs.

7
8 **NINTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

9 **(Violation of California Labor Code § 2699, Et Seq.)**

10 **(Against All Defendants)**

11 98. Plaintiff incorporates by reference and re-alleges as if fully stated herein each and
12 every allegation set forth above.

13 99. Plaintiff brings her ninth cause of action as a representative action on behalf of
14 herself and similarly Aggrieved Employees in the capacity as a private attorney general pursuant
15 to the Private Attorneys General Act of 2004, California Labor Code section 2698, *et seq.*
16 ("PAGA").

17 100. PAGA specifically provides for a private right of action to recover civil penalties
18 for violations of the Labor Code as follows: "Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any
19 provision of this code that provides for a civil penalty to be assessed and collected by the Labor
20 and Workforce Development Agency or any of its departments, divisions, commissions, boards,
21 agencies, or employees, for a violation of this code, may, as an alternative, be recovered through
22 a civil action brought by an aggrieved employee on behalf of himself or herself and other current
23 or former employees pursuant to the procedures specified in Section 2699.3." Cal. Lab. Code §
24 2699(a).

25 101. Plaintiff was employed by Defendants and the Labor Code violations alleged above
26 were committed against her during her time of employment. Plaintiff is therefore, an "aggrieved
27 employee" under PAGA.

1 102. As set forth in detail above, during all times relevant to this Action, Defendants
2 have routinely subjected Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees to violations of California Labor
3 Codes by:

- 4 a. Failing to pay Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees all earned minimum wage
5 compensation in violation of Labor Code §§ 1194 and 1198 *et seq.*
- 6 b. Failing to pay Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees all earned overtime
7 compensation in violation of Labor Code §§ 204, 510, 1194, and 1198 *et seq.*
- 8 c. Failing to provide legally required meal periods to Plaintiff and the Aggrieved
9 Employees, and failing to pay Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees an additional
10 hour of premium pay for meal period violations in violation of Labor Code §§
11 226.7 and 512.
- 12 d. Failing to provide authorize and permit Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees to
13 take duty-free rest periods, and failing to pay Plaintiff and the Aggrieved
14 Employees an additional hour of premium pay for rest period violations in
15 violation of Labor Code §§ 226.7 and 512.
- 16 e. Failing to timely pay Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees all wages at the end
17 of their employment in violation of Labor Code § 203.
- 18 f. Failing to timely pay Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees all wages owed
19 during employment in violation of Labor Code § 204.
- 20 g. Failing to furnish Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees with complete, accurate,
21 itemized wage statements in violation of Labor Code § 226.
- 22 h. Failing to maintain accurate records relating to Plaintiff and the Aggrieved
23 Employees' work periods, meal periods, total daily hours, hours per pay period,
24 total wages and compensation, and applicable pay rates in violation of Labor Code
25 § 1174(d) and the applicable IWC Wage Order.
- 26 i. Failing to reimburse Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees for necessary
27 business-related expenses in violation of Labor Code §§ 2800 and 2802.

103. Pursuant to California Labor Code sections 2699 and 2699.5, Plaintiff, individually and on behalf of the Aggrieved Employees and the State of California, requests and is entitled to recover penalties against Defendants for the Labor Code violations described above, including but not limited to penalties under California Code of Regulations Title 8 section 11050, penalties under California Labor Code sections 2699, 558, 210, 1197.1, 226, 226.3 and 1174.5, and 1197.1, and any and all additional penalties and sums as provided by the California Labor Code and/or other statutes. The exact amount of the applicable penalties, in all, is in an amount to be shown according to proof at trial.

104. Plaintiff has exhausted her administrative remedies pursuant to Labor Code § 2699.3. On July 2, 2021, Plaintiff, through her counsel of record, by online filing with the Labor and Workforce Development Agency (“LWDA”) and by certified mail to the Defendants, notified Defendants and the LWDA of the specific provisions of the Labor Code and IWC Wage Orders that Defendants have violated, including the facts and theories to support the violations, and of Plaintiff’s intent to bring a claim for civil penalties under PAGA. Plaintiff also paid the filing fee required under Labor Code § 2699.3. As of the filing of this Complaint, more than sixty-five (65) days have elapsed since the mailing of Plaintiff’s July 2, 2021 notice, and the Labor and Workforce Development Agency has not indicated that it intends to investigate the violations discussed in the notice. Accordingly, Plaintiff may commence a civil action to recover penalties for herself and other Aggrieved Employees pursuant to Labor Code § 2699.3.

105. Plaintiff was compelled to retain the services of counsel to file this court action to protect her interests and the Aggrieved Employees, and to assess and collect the civil penalties owed by Defendants. Plaintiff therefore seeks an award of reasonable attorneys' fees and costs pursuant to Labor Code § 2699(g)(1), and any other applicable statute.

106. Plaintiff may amend this complaint as a matter of right pursuant to California Labor Code § 2699.3 as this complaint has been filed within sixty days of the time periods specified in Labor Code §2699.3.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

1 WHEREFORE, Plaintiff, individually and on behalf of all other members of the general
2 public similarly situated, and as a private attorney general, prays for relief and judgment against
3 Defendants, jointly and severally, as follows:

4 **Class Certification**

- 5 1. That this action be certified as a class action;
- 6 2. That Plaintiff be appointed as the representative of the Class;
- 7 3. That counsel for Plaintiff be appointed as Class Counsel; and
- 8 4. That Defendants provide to Class Counsel immediately the names and most
9 current/last known contact information (address, e-mail and telephone numbers) of all class
10 members.

11 **As to the First Cause of Action**

- 12 5. That the Court declare, adjudge and decree that Defendants violated California
13 Labor Code sections 510 and 1198 and applicable IWC Wage Orders by willfully failing to pay
14 all overtime wages due to Plaintiff and other Class Members;
- 15 6. For general unpaid wages at overtime wage rates and such general and special
16 damages as may be appropriate;
- 17 7. For pre-judgment interest on any unpaid overtime compensation commencing
18 from the date such amounts were due;
- 19 8. For reasonable attorneys' fees and costs of suit incurred herein pursuant to
20 California Labor Code section 1194; and
- 21 9. For such other and further relief as the Court may deem just and proper.

22 **As to the Second Cause of Action**

- 23 10. That the Court declare, adjudge and decree that Defendants violated California
24 Labor Code section 226.7 and applicable IWC Wage Orders by willfully failing to provide all rest
25 periods to Plaintiff and the Class;
- 26 11. That the Court make an award to Plaintiff and the Class of one (1) hour of pay at
27 each employee's regular rate of compensation for each workday that a rest period was not
28

provided;

12. For all actual, consequential, and incidental losses and damages, according to proof;

13. For premium wages pursuant to California Labor Code section 226.7;

14. For pre-judgment interest on any unpaid wages from the date such amounts were due; and

15. For such other and further relief as the Court may deem just and proper.

As to the Third Cause of Action

16. That the Court declare, adjudge and decree that Defendants violated California Labor Code sections 1194, 1197, and 1197.1 by willfully failing to pay minimum wages to Plaintiff and the Class;

17. For general unpaid wages and such general and special damages as may be appropriate;

18. For statutory wage penalties pursuant to California Labor Code section 1197.1 for Plaintiff and the Class in the amount as may be established according to proof at trial;

19. For pre-judgment interest on any unpaid compensation from the date such amounts were due;

20. For reasonable attorneys' fees and costs of suit incurred herein pursuant to California Labor Code section 1194(a);

21. For liquidated damages pursuant to California Labor Code section 1194.2; and

22. For such other and further relief as the Court may deem just and proper.

As to the Fourth Cause of Action

23. That the Court declare, adjudge and decree that Defendants violated California Labor Code sections 201, 202, and 203 by willfully failing to pay all compensation owed at the time of termination of the employment of Plaintiff and other Class Members no longer employed by Defendants;

24. For all actual, consequential, and incidental losses and damages, according to

1 proof;

2 25. For statutory wage penalties pursuant to California Labor Code section 203 for
3 Plaintiff and other Class Members who have left Defendants' employ;

4 26. For pre-judgment interest on any unpaid compensation from the date such amounts
5 were due; and

6 27. For such other and further relief as the Court may deem just and proper.

7 **As to the Fifth Cause of Action**

8 28. That the Court declare, adjudge and decree that Defendants violated California
9 Labor Code section 204 by willfully failing to pay all compensation owed at the time required by
10 California Labor Code section 204 to Plaintiff and the Class;

11 29. For statutory penalties pursuant to California Labor Code section 210;

12 30. For such other and further relief as the Court deems just and proper.

13 **As to the Sixth Cause of Action**

14 31. That the Court declare, adjudge and decree that Defendants violated the record
15 keeping provisions of California Labor Code section 226(a) and applicable IWC Wage Orders as
16 to Plaintiff and the Class, and willfully failed to provide accurate itemized wage statements
17 thereto;

18 32. For actual, consequential and incidental losses and damages, according to proof;

19 33. For statutory penalties pursuant to California Labor Code section 226(e); and

20 34. For such other and further relief as the Court may deem just and proper.

21 **As to the Seventh Cause of Action**

22 35. That the Court declare, adjudge and decree that Defendants violated California
23 Labor Code sections 2800 and 2802 by willfully failing to reimburse Plaintiff and the Class for
24 all necessary business-related expenses as required by California Labor Code sections 2800 and
25 2802;

26 36. For actual, consequential and incidental losses and damages, according to proof;

27 37. For the imposition of civil penalties and/or statutory penalties;

38. For reasonable attorneys' fees and costs of suit incurred herein; and

39. For such other and further relief as the Court may deem just and proper.

As to the Eighth Cause of Action

40. That the Court declare, adjudge and decree that Defendants violated California Business and Professions Code sections 17200, *et seq.* by failing to provide Plaintiff and the Class all overtime compensation due to them, failing to provide all rest periods to Plaintiff and the Class, failing to pay at least minimum wages to Plaintiff and the Class, failing to pay Plaintiff's and other Class Members' wages timely as required by California Labor Code section 201, 202 and 204 and by violating California Labor Code sections 226(a), 1174(d), 2800, and 2802;

41. For restitution of unpaid wages to Plaintiff and the Class and all pre-judgment interest from the day such amounts were due and payable;

42. For the appointment of a receiver to receive, manage and distribute any and all funds disgorged from Defendants and determined to have been wrongfully acquired by Defendants as a result of violation of California Business and Professions Code sections 17200, *et seq.*;

43. For reasonable attorneys' fees and costs of suit incurred herein pursuant to California Code of Civil Procedure section 1021.5;

44. For injunctive relief to ensure compliance with this section, pursuant to California Business and Professions Code sections 17200, *et seq.*; and

45. For such other and further relief as the Court may deem just and proper.

As to the Ninth Cause of Action

46. For statutory attorneys' fees and costs pursuant to 2699(g)(1) of California Labor Code;

47. For the imposition of civil penalties pursuant to California Labor Code §§ 2699, 210, 558, 226, 226.3, 1174.5, 1197.1, and all other penalties allowed by the California Labor Code and/or other applicable statutes; and

48. For such other relief as the Court deems just and proper.

1
2
3 Dated: September 7, 2021

PROTECTION LAW GROUP, LLP

4
5 By:



6 Heather Davis
7 Amir Nayebdadash

8 Attorneys for Plaintiff
9 GELEN CRUZ PALACIOS
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28

DEMAND FOR TRIAL BY JURY

Plaintiff demands a trial by jury as to all causes of action triable by a jury.

Dated: September 7, 2021

PROTECTION LAW GROUP, LLP

By: _____

Heather Davis
Amir Nayebdadash

Attorneys for Plaintiff
GELEN CRUZ PALACIOS