

JAMES HAWKINS APLC
James R. Hawkins, Esq. (#192925)
Gregory Mauro, Esq. (#222239)
Michael Calvo, Esq. (#314986)
9880 Research Drive, Suite 200
Irvine, CA 92618
Tel.: (949) 387-7200
Fax: (949) 387-6676
Email: James@jameshawkinsaplc.com
Email: Greg@jameshawkinsaplc.com
Email: Michael@jameshawkinsaplc.com

Attorneys for Plaintiff MARK D. TAFT,
individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated

**SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FOR THE COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO**

MARK D. TAFT, individually and on behalf
of all others similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

v.

SALADINO'S INC., a California Corporation;
and DOES 1-50, inclusive,

Defendants.

CASE NO.: 34-2021-00304595
Hon. Jill H. Talley

**DECLARATION OF MARK D. TAFT IN
SUPPORT OF MOTION FOR
PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF CLASS
ACTION SETTLEMENT**

Date: August 18, 2023
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Dept.: 27

DECLARATION OF MARK D. TAFT

I, MARK D. TAFT hereby declare as follows:

1. I am over the age of eighteen and I submit this Declaration in support of the motion for preliminary approval of the class action settlement. The following is based upon my personal knowledge and if called as a witness, I could and would competently testify thereto.

2. I was employed by Defendant Saladino's Inc., ("Defendant") in approximately May 2019 as a Non-Exempt Employee working as a Warehouse Supervisor and worked during the liability period for Defendant until my separation from Defendant's employ in approximately November 2020. My duties included but were not limited to receiving all products that came into the warehouse, supervising maintenance and employees, and scheduling appointments.

3. As a non-exempt employee, I suffered the same damages as other employees. These included not being paid all my wages, not provided meal periods or permitted rest periods, not provided accurate wage statements, not reimbursed for business expenses incurred, and not timely paid wages upon my separation from Defendant's employ all in accordance with California law. As a result of these alleged violations, I sought consultation with my attorneys at James Hawkins, APLC.

4. Based upon my allegations, and after consultation and full disclosure from my attorneys about the potential risks I faced as a Plaintiff in a putative class action, I freely decided to pursue this lawsuit to try and vindicate my rights and the rights of others who also worked for Defendants and suffered similar harms due to Defendant's common practices and policies.

5. Prior to filing my action, my attorneys and I had multiple conferences about the factual bases for the claims that I wanted to pursue against Defendant. During those conferences, my attorneys provided me with an overview of how those claims would be litigated and generally educated me about the nature of complex/representative litigation and my role as the representative Plaintiff.

6. My attorneys provided me with a draft of the complaint for my review and approval. I closely reviewed the complaint to ensure accuracy and completeness. As a

1
2 result, I caused my attorneys to file the class action complaint alleging claims for the allegations
3 alleged therein. Thereafter, I have been fully involved in my case. Following the filing of the
4 complaint, I collaborated with my attorneys on the prosecution of my claims, and I regularly
5 contacted my attorneys to stay current on the status of the litigation, and to discuss my attorneys'
6 progress in prosecuting the claims.

7 7. Since I believe I was not reimbursed for businesses expenses I incurred, was not
8 issued payment through Labor Code compliant instruments, not accurately paid wages, not timely
9 paid wages, not provided meal breaks and not permitted my rest breaks, and therefore not provided
10 accurate itemized wage statements, I believe that I have been similarly injured as to all other class
11 members in the settlement who worked for Defendant during the class period. I believe the
12 claims asserted in the Complaint is also shared by the other Class Members. I worked with various
13 other non-exempt employees and I believe we were all treated the same and subject to the same
14 unlawful policies.

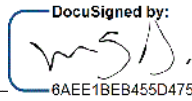
15 8. Since I agreed to become a Class Representative, I have worked every step
16 of the way with my attorneys. During the course of the litigation I have always kept the best
17 interest of the Class Members on equal footing as mine. I have been, and I am willing to continue
18 to pursue the Class Members' claims vigorously on our collective behalf if the Settlement is not
19 finally approved. As a result, I firmly believe that I do not have any interests adverse to the
20 interests of the Class Members. I have maintained the Class Members best interest from the
21 inception of the case.

22 9. As one of the Class Representatives, I have spent numerous hours consulting with
23 my attorneys, providing documentation, consulting with other Class Members, responding to
24 questions by my attorneys, providing documents to my attorneys, working with my attorneys to
25 review documents received, helping my attorneys in preparing for the mediation and attending
26 the mediation via telephone. I was consulted about the status of the case and provided constant
27 feedback about the case from my attorneys including the mediation, settlement negotiations and
28 eventual settlement. I estimate I have spent approximately 45 hours working on this case.

10. From the beginning of this case, I have freely chosen to accept the risks of

1
2 being one of the Class Representatives in this class action lawsuit. I chose to assume these risks
3 and pursue the claims on behalf of the Class Members as I wanted to vindicate their rights. I
4 believe we have achieved that result with the settlement and the individual payments to the Class
5 Members. I believe the settlement is fair reasonable and adequate based on the numerous defenses
6 asserted by Defendants. I believe the efforts and work I put forth helped to achieve the fair
7 settlement that will benefit the Class Members. As a result of my efforts, I also believe the General
8 Release Payment is reasonable, and I respectfully request the Court approve the amount of
9 \$10,000.00 as fair and reasonable.

10 I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the state of California that
11 the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on July 7, 2023, at Stockton, California

12
13 
14 **MARK D. TAFT**