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MODESTA AQUINO

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF VENTURA

MODESTA AQUINO, individually, as a
private attorney general, and on behalf of
others similarly situated;

Plaintiff,

vs.

TOTAL LABOR FORCE, INC., a California
corporation; and DOES 1 through 100,
inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No.:

CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT FOR DAMAGES

- (1) Violation of California Labor Code §§ 510 And 1198 (Unpaid Overtime)
- (2) Violation of California Labor Code §§ 226.7 And 512(A) (Unpaid Meal Period Premiums)
- (3) Violation of California Labor Code § 226.7 (Unpaid Rest Period Premiums)
- (4) Violation of California Labor Code §§ 1194, 1197 And 1197.1 (Unpaid Minimum Wages)
- (5) Violation of California Labor Code §§ 201, 202 And 203 (Final Wages Not Timely Paid)
- (6) Violation of California Labor Code § 204 (Wages Not Timely Paid During Employment)
- (7) Violation of California Labor Code § 226(A) (Non-Complaint Wage Statements)
- (8) Violation of California Labor Code § 1174 (D) (Failure to Keep Requisite Payroll Records)
- (9) Violation of California Labor Code § 226.8 (Misclassification)

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- (10) Violation of California Business
And Professions Code § 17200, Et
Seq.
- (11) Private Attorney General Act, Labor
Code § 2698, et seq.

DEMAND FOR TRIAL BY JURY

1 Plaintiff MODESTA AQUINO (“Plaintiff”) individually and on behalf of other similarly
2 situated current and former employees of Defendant TOTAL LABOR FORCE, INC.
3 (“Defendant”), based upon facts that either have evidentiary support or are likely to have
4 evidentiary support after a reasonable opportunity for further investigation and discovery, alleges
5 as follows:

6 **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

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

13 2. Plaintiff brings the Eleventh Cause of Action as a representative action under the
14 California Labor Code § 2698, *et seq.* (“PAGA”) to recover civil penalties that are owed to
15 Plaintiff, the State of California, and Class Members who worked during the relevant period
16 (hereinafter referred to as the “Aggrieved Employees”).

17 3. The monetary damages and restitution sought by Plaintiff exceeds the minimal
18 jurisdiction limits of the Superior Court and will be established according to proof at trial.

19 4. This Court has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to the California Constitution,
20 Article VI, Section 10, which grants the superior court "original jurisdiction in all other causes"
21 except those given by statute to other courts. The statutes under which this action is brought do
22 not specify any other basis for jurisdiction.

23 5. This Court has jurisdiction over Defendant because, upon information and belief,
24 Defendant is a citizen of California, has sufficient minimum contacts in California, or otherwise
25 intentionally avails itself of the California market so as to render the exercise of jurisdiction over
26 it by California courts consistent with traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice.

27 6. Venue is proper in this Court because, upon information and belief, Defendant
28 maintains offices, has agents, employ individuals, and/or transact business in the State of

California, County of Ventura. The majority of acts and omissions alleged herein relating to Plaintiff and the other class members took place in the State of California, including the County of Ventura.

PARTIES

7. Plaintiff BRENDA TORRES is an individual residing in the State of California.

8. Defendant TOTAL LABOR FORCE, INC., at all times therein mentioned, was and is, upon information and belief, a California corporation and, at all times herein mentioned, whose employees are engaged in work throughout the State of California, including the County of Ventura.

9. At all relevant times, Defendant TOTAL LABOR FORCE, INC., was the “employer” of Plaintiffs within the meaning of all applicable California laws and statutes.

10. At all times herein relevant, Defendant TOTAL LABOR FORCE, INC. and DOES 1 through 100, and each of them, were the agents, partners, joint venturers, joint employers, representatives, servants, employees, successors-in-interest, co-conspirators and/or assigns, each of the other, and at all times relevant hereto were acting within the course and scope of their authority as such agents, partners, joint venturers, joint employers, representatives, servants, employees, successors, co-conspirators and/or assigns, and all acts or omissions alleged herein were duly committed with the ratification, knowledge, permission, encouragement, authorization and/or consent of each defendant designated as a DOE herein.

11. The true names and capacities, whether corporate, associate, individual or otherwise, of defendants DOES 1 through 100, inclusive, are unknown to Plaintiff who sues said defendants by such fictitious names. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based on that information and belief alleges, that each of the defendants designated as a DOE is legally responsible for the events and happenings referred to in this Complaint, and unlawfully caused the injuries and damages to Plaintiff and the other class members as alleged in this Complaint. Plaintiff will seek leave of court to amend this Complaint to show the true names and capacities when the same have been ascertained.

12. Defendant TOTAL LABOR FORCE, INC. and DOES 1 through 100 will

hereinafter collectively be referred to as "Defendants."

13. Plaintiff further alleges that Defendants directly or indirectly controlled or affected the working conditions, wages, working hours, and conditions of employment of Plaintiff and the other class members so as to make each of said Defendant employers liable under the statutory provisions set forth herein.

CLASS ACTION ALLEGATIONS

14. Plaintiff brings this action on their own behalf and on behalf of all other members of the general public similarly situated, and, thus, seeks class certification under California Code of Civil Procedure section 382.

15. The proposed class is defined as follows:

All current and former hourly-paid and non-except employees who worked for any of the Defendants within the State of California at any time during the period from four years preceding the filing of Plaintiff's original Complaint to final judgment.

16. Plaintiff reserves the right to establish subclasses as appropriate.

17. The class is ascertainable and there is a well-defined community of interest in the litigation:

- a. Numerosity: The class members are so numerous that joinder of all class members is impracticable. The membership of the entire class is unknown to Plaintiff at this time; however, the class is estimated to be greater than fifty (50) individuals and the identity of such membership is readily ascertainable by inspection of Defendants' employment records.
- b. Typicality: Plaintiff's claims are typical of all other class members' as demonstrated herein. Plaintiff will fairly and adequately protect the interests of the other class members with whom she has a well-defined community of interest.
- c. Adequacy: Plaintiff will fairly and adequately protect the interests of each class member, with whom she has a well-defined community of interest and typicality of claims, as demonstrated herein. Plaintiff has no interest that is

antagonistic to the other class members. Plaintiff's attorneys, the proposed class counsel, are versed in the rules governing class action discovery, certification, and settlement. Plaintiff has incurred, and during the pendency of this action will continue to incur, costs and attorneys' fees, that have been, are, and will be necessarily expended for the prosecution of this action for the substantial benefit of each class member.

- d. Superiority: A class action is superior to other available methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of this litigation because individual joinder of all class members is impractical.
- e. Public Policy Considerations: Certification of this lawsuit as a class action will advance public policy objectives. Employers of this great state violate employment and labor laws every day. Current employees are often afraid to assert their rights out of fear of direct or indirect retaliation. However, class actions provide the class members who are not named in the complaint anonymity that allows for the vindication of their rights.

18. There are common questions of law and fact as to the class members that predominate over questions affecting only individual members. The following common questions of law or fact, among others, exist as to the members of the class:

- a. Whether Defendants' failure to pay wages, without abatement or reduction, in accordance with the California Labor Code, was willful;
- b. Whether Defendants had a corporate policy and practice of failing to pay their hourly-paid or non-exempt employees within the State of California for all hours worked and missed (short, late, interrupted, and/or missed altogether) meal periods and rest breaks in violation of California law;
- c. Whether Defendants required Plaintiff and the other class members to work over eight (8) hours per day and/or over forty (40) hours per week and failed to pay the legally required overtime compensation to Plaintiff and the other class members;

- d. Whether Defendants deprived Plaintiff and the other class members of meal and/or rest periods or required Plaintiff and the other class members to work during meal and/or rest periods without compensation;
- e. Whether Defendants failed to pay minimum wages to Plaintiff and the other class members for all hours worked;
- f. Whether Defendants failed to pay all wages due to Plaintiff and the other class members within the required time upon their discharge or resignation;
- g. Whether Defendants failed to timely pay all wages due to Plaintiff and the other class members during their employment;
- h. Whether Defendants complied with wage reporting as required by the California Labor Code; including, *inter alia*, section 226;
- i. Whether Defendants kept complete and accurate payroll records as required by the California Labor Code, including, *inter alia*, section 1174(d);
- j. Whether Defendants' conduct was willful or reckless;
- k. Whether Defendants engaged in unfair business practices in violation of California Business & Professions Code section 17200, et seq.;
- l. The appropriate amount of damages, restitution, and/or monetary penalties resulting from Defendants' violation of California law; and
- m. Whether Plaintiff and the other class members are entitled to compensatory damages pursuant to the California Labor Code.

GENERAL ALLEGATIONS

19. At all relevant times set forth herein, Defendants employed Plaintiffs and other persons as hourly-paid or non-exempt employees within the State of California, including the County of Los Angeles.

20. Defendants, jointly and severally, employed Plaintiff as a general laborer in the State of California, County of Ventura.

21. Defendants hired Plaintiff and classified Plaintiff as an independent contractor. Defendant paid Plaintiff, and upon information and belief, pays its Class Members based on a box-completion

1 basis rather than an hourly rate.

2 22. Defendant willfully misclassified Plaintiff as an Independent Contractor rather than non-
3 exempt hourly employee. Defendant controlled Plaintiff's work, manner of performance, and daily
4 performance. For instance, Defendant managed the farm, hours of work, and methods of work.

5 23. Defendants had the authority to hire and terminate Plaintiff and the other class members,
6 to set work rules and conditions governing Plaintiff's and the other class members' employment,
7 and to supervise their daily employment activities.

8 24. Defendants exercised sufficient authority over the terms and conditions of Plaintiff's and
9 other class members' employment for them to be joint employers of Plaintiff and the other class
10 members.

11 25. Defendants directly hired and paid wages and benefits to Plaintiff and the other class
12 members.

13 26. Defendants continue to employ hourly-paid or non-exempt employees within the State of
14 California.

15 27. Plaintiff and the other class members worked over eight (8) hours in a day, and/or forty
16 (40) hours in a week during their employment with Defendants.

17 28. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon allege, that Defendants engaged in a
18 pattern and practice of wage abuse against their hourly-paid or non-exempt employees within the
19 State of California. This pattern and practice involved, *inter alia*, failing to pay them for all regular
20 and/or overtime wages earned and for short, late, interrupted, and/or missed meal periods and rest
21 breaks in violation of California law.

22 29. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon allege, that Defendants knew or
23 should have known that Plaintiff and the other class members were entitled to receive certain
24 wages for overtime compensation and that they were not receiving accurate overtime
25 compensation for all overtime hours worked.

26 30. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon allege, that Defendants failed to
27 provide Plaintiff and the other class members all required rest and meal periods during the relevant
28 time period as required under the Industrial Welfare Commission Wage Orders and thus they are

entitled to any and all applicable penalties.

31. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon allege, that Defendants knew or should have known that Plaintiff and the other class members were entitled to receive all meal periods or payment of one additional hour of pay at Plaintiff's and the other class member's regular rate of pay when a meal period was missed, and they did not receive all meal periods or payment of one additional hour of pay at Plaintiff's and the other class member's regular rate of pay when a meal period was missed.

32. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon allege, that Defendants know or should have known that Plaintiff and the other class members were entitled to receive all rest periods or payment of one additional hour of pay at Plaintiffs' and the other class member's regular rate of pay when a rest period was missed, and they did not receive all rest periods or payment of one additional hour of pay at Plaintiff's and the other class members' regular rate of pay when a rest period was missed.

33. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon allege, that Defendants knew or should have known that Plaintiff and the other class members were entitled to receive at least minimum wages for compensation and that they were not receiving at least minimum wages for all hours worked.

34. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon allege, that Defendants knew or should have known that Plaintiff and the other class members were entitled to receive all wages owed upon discharge or resignation, including overtime and minimum wages and meal and rest premiums, and they did not, in fact, receive all wages owed to them at the time their discharge or resignation.

35. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon allege, that Defendants knew or should have known that Plaintiff and the other class members were entitled to receive all wages owed to them during their employment. Plaintiff and the other class members did not receive payment of all wages, including earned, but unpaid, overtime and minimum wages and meal and rest period premiums, within any time permissible under California Labor Code section 204.

36. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon allege, that Defendants knew or

1 should have known that Plaintiff and the other class members were entitled to receive complete
2 and accurate wage statements in accordance with California law, but, in fact, they did not receive
3 complete and accurate wage statements from Defendants. The deficiencies included, *inter alia*, the
4 failure to include the accurate total number of hours worked by Plaintiff and the other class
5 members.

6 37. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon allege, that Defendants knew or
7 should have known that Defendants had to keep complete and accurate payroll records for Plaintiff
8 and the other class members in accordance with California law, but, in fact, did not keep complete
9 and accurate payroll records.

10 38. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon allege, that Defendants knew or
11 should have known that they had a duty to compensate Plaintiff and the other class members
12 pursuant to California law, and that Defendants had the financial ability to pay such compensation,
13 but willfully, knowingly, and intentionally failed to do so, and falsely represented to Plaintiff and
14 the other class members that they were properly denied wages, all in order to increase Defendants'
15 profits.

16 39. During the relevant time period, Defendants failed to pay overtime wages to Plaintiff and
17 the other class members for all overtime hours worked. Plaintiff and the other class members were
18 required to work more than eight (8) hours per day and/or forty (40) hours per week without
19 overtime compensation for all overtime hours worked.

20 40. During the relevant time period, Defendants failed to provide all requisite uninterrupted,
21 off-duty meal and rest periods to Plaintiff and the other class members.

22 41. During the relevant time period, Defendants failed to pay Plaintiff and the other class
23 members at least minimum wages for all hours worked.

24 42. During the relevant time period, Defendants failed to pay Plaintiff and the other class
25 members all wages owed to them upon discharge or resignation.

26 43. During the relevant time period, Defendants failed to pay Plaintiff and the other class
27 members all wages within any time permissible under California law, including, *inter alia*,
28 California Labor Code section 204.

1 44. During the relevant time period, Defendants failed to provide complete or accurate wage
2 statements to Plaintiff and the other class members.

3 45. During the relevant time period, Defendants failed to keep complete or accurate payroll
4 records for Plaintiff and the other class members.

5 46. During the relevant time period, Defendants failed to properly compensate Plaintiff and the
6 other class members pursuant to California law in order to increase Defendants' profits.

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

10 48. On or about October 26, 2021, Plaintiff notified Defendants via certified mail and filed an
11 online PAGA claim notice with the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency
12 ("LWDA") identifying Defendants' violations of the California Labor Code identified in this
13 Complaint and Plaintiff's intent to bring a claim for civil penalties under California Labor Code
14 section 2698 et seq.

15 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

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

17 **(Against All Defendants)**

18 49. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the allegations contained above, and each and every part
19 thereof with the same force and effect as though fully set forth herein.

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

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

52. The applicable IWC Wage Order further provides that Defendants are and were required to pay Plaintiff and the other class members 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.

53. 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 to 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.

54. During the relevant time period, Plaintiff and the other class members worked in excess of eight (8) hours in a day, and/or in excess of forty (40) hours in a week.

55. During the relevant time period, Defendants intentionally and willfully failed to pay overtime wages owed to Plaintiff and the other class members and failed to pay class members overtime in the amount of one-and-one half time their correct regular rate of pay.

56. Defendants' failure to pay Plaintiff and the other class members the unpaid balance of overtime compensation, as required by California laws, violates the provisions of California Labor Code sections 510 and 1198, and is therefore unlawful.

57. Pursuant to California Labor Code section 1194, Plaintiff and the other class members are entitled to recover unpaid overtime compensation, as well as interest, costs, and attorneys' fees.

SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION

(Violation of California Labor Code §§ 226.7 and 512(a))

(Against All Defendants)

58. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the allegations contained above, and each and every part thereof with the same force and effect as though fully set forth herein.

59. At all relevant times, the IWC Order and California Labor Code sections 226.7 and 512(a) were applicable to Plaintiffs' and the other class members' employment by Defendants.

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

61. At all relevant times, the applicable IWC Wage Order and California Labor Code section 512(a) provide that an employer may not require, cause or permit an employee to work for a work period of more than five (5) hours per day without providing the employee with a meal period of not less than thirty (30) minutes, except that if the total work period per day of the employee is no more than six (6) hours, the meal period may be waived by mutual consent of both the employer and employee.

62. At all relevant times, the applicable IWC Wage Order and California Labor Code section 512(a) further provide that an employer may not require, cause or permit an employee to work for a work period of more than ten (10) hours per day without providing the employee with a second uninterrupted meal period of not less than thirty (30) minutes, except that if the total hours worked is no more than twelve (12) hours, the second meal period may be waived by mutual consent of the employer and the employee only if the first meal period was not waived.

63. During the relevant time period, Plaintiff and the other class members who were scheduled to work for a period of time no longer than six (6) hours, and who did not waive their legally-mandated meal periods by mutual consent, were required to work for periods longer than five (5) hours without an uninterrupted meal period of not less than thirty (30) minutes and/or rest period.

64. During the relevant time period, Plaintiff and the other class members who were scheduled to work for a period of time in excess of six (6) hours were required to work for periods longer than five (5) hours without an uninterrupted meal period of not less than thirty (30) minutes and/or rest period.

65. During the relevant time period, Defendants intentionally and willfully required Plaintiff and the other class members to work during meal periods and failed to compensate Plaintiff and the other class members the full meal period premium for work performed during meal periods.

66. During the relevant time period, Defendants failed to pay Plaintiff and the other class members the full meal period premium due pursuant to California Labor Code section 226.7.

67. Defendants' conduct violates applicable IWC Wage Order and California Labor Code sections 226.7 and 512(a).

68. Pursuant to applicable IWC Wage Order and California Labor Code section 226.7(b),

1 Plaintiff and the other class members are entitled to recover from Defendants one additional hour
2 of pay at the employee's regular rate of compensation for each work day that the meal or rest period
3 is not provided.

4 **THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION**

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

6 **(Against All Defendants)**

7 69. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the allegations contained above, and each and every part
8 thereof with the same force and effect as though fully set forth herein.

9 70. At all times herein set forth, the applicable IWC Wage Order and California Labor Code
10 section 226.7 were applicable to Plaintiff's and the other class members' employment by
11 Defendants.

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

15 72. At all relevant times, the applicable IWC Wage Order provides that "[e]very employer shall
16 authorize and permit all employees to take rest periods, which insofar as practicable shall be in the
17 middle of each work period" and that the "rest period time shall be based on the total hours worked
18 daily at the rate of ten (10) minutes net rest time per four (4) hours or major fraction thereof' unless
19 the total daily work time is less than three and one-half (3 ½) hours.

20 73. During the relevant time period, Defendants required Plaintiff and other class members to
21 work four (4) or more hours without authorizing or permitting a ten (10) minute rest period per
22 each four (4) hour period worked.

23 74. During the relevant time period, Defendants willfully required Plaintiff and the other class
24 members to work during rest periods and failed to pay Plaintiff and the other class members the
25 full rest period premium for work performed during rest periods.

26 75. During the relevant time period, Defendants failed to pay Plaintiff and the other class
27 members the full rest period premium due pursuant to California Labor Code section 226.7

28 76. Defendants' conduct violates applicable IWC Wage Orders and California Labor Code

section 226.7.

77. 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.

FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION

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

(Against All Defendants)

78. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the allegations contained above, and each and every part thereof with the same force and effect as though fully set forth herein.

79. 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.

80. 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.

81. 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 attorney's fees, and liquidated damages in an amount equal to the wages unlawfully unpaid and interest thereon.

82. Pursuant to California Labor Code section 1197.1, Plaintiff and the other class members are entitled to recover a penalty of \$100.00 for the initial failure to timely pay each employee minimum wages, and \$250.00 for each subsequent failure to pay each employee minimum wages.

83. 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.

FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION

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

(Against All Defendants)

84. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the allegations contained above, and each and every part thereof with the same force and effect as though fully set forth herein.

85. 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 than 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.

86. During the relevant time period, Defendants intentionally and willfully failed to pay Plaintiff and the other class members who are no longer employed by Defendants their wages, earned and unpaid, within seventy-two (72) hours of their leaving Defendants' employ.

87. Defendants' failure to pay Plaintiff and the other class members who are no longer employed by Defendants' their wages, earned and unpaid, within seventy-two (72) hours of their leaving Defendants' employ, is in violation of California Labor Code sections 201 and 202.

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

89. Plaintiff and the other class members are entitled to recover from Defendants the statutory penalty wages for each day they were not paid, up to a thirty (30) day maximum pursuant to California Labor Code section 203.

SIXTH CAUSE OF ACTION

(Violation of California Labor Code § 204)

(Against All Defendants)

90. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the allegations above and each and every part thereof with the same force and effect as though fully set forth herein.

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

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

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

12 94. During the relevant time period, Defendants intentionally and willfully failed to pay
13 Plaintiff and the other class members all wages due to them, within any time period permissible
14 under California Labor Code section 204.

15 95. Plaintiff and the other class members are entitled to recover all remedies available for
16 violations California Labor Code section 204.

17 **SEVENTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

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

19 **(Against All Defendants)**

20 96. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the allegations contained above, and each and every part
21 thereof with the same force and effect as though fully set forth herein.

22 97. At all material times set forth herein, California Labor Code section 226(a) provides that
23 every employer shall furnish each of his or her employees an accurate itemized statement in writing
24 showing (1) gross wages earned, (2) total hours worked by the employee, (3) the number of piece-
25 rate units earned and any applicable piece rate if the employee is paid on a piece-rate basis, (4) all
26 deductions, provided that all deductions made on written orders of the employee may be
27 aggregated and shown as one item, (5) net wages earned, (6) the inclusive dates of the period for
28 which the employee is paid, (7) the name of the employee and his or her social security number,

(8) the name and address of the legal entity that is the employer, and (9) all applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay period and the corresponding number of hours worked at each hourly rate by the employee. The deductions made from payments of wages shall be recorded in ink or other indelible form, properly dated, showing the month, day, and year, and a copy of the statement or a record of the deductions shall be kept on file by the employer for at least three years at the place of employment or at a central location within the State of California.

98. Defendants have intentionally and willfully failed to provide Plaintiff and the other class members with complete and accurate wage statements. The deficiencies include, but are not limited to: the failure to include the accurate total number of hours worked by Plaintiff and the other class members.

99. As a result of Defendants' violation of California Labor Code section 226(a), Plaintiff and the other class members have suffered injury and damage to their statutorily-protected rights.

100. More specifically, Plaintiff and the other class members 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).

101. Plaintiff and the other class members 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.

102. Plaintiff and the other class members are also entitled to injunctive relief to ensure compliance with this section, pursuant to California Labor Code section 226(h).

EIGHTH CAUSE OF ACTION

(Violation of California Labor Code§ 1174(d))

(Against All Defendants)

103. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the allegations contained above, and each and every part thereof with the same force and effect as though fully set forth herein.

104. Pursuant to California Labor Code section 1174(d), an employer shall keep, at a central location in the state or at the plants or establishments at which employees are employed,

1 payroll records showing the hours worked daily by and the wages paid to, and the number of piece-
2 rat units earned by any applicable piece rate to, employees employed at the respective plants or
3 establishments. These records shall be kept in accordance with rules established for this purpose
4 by the commission, but in any case shall be kept on file for not less than two years.

5 105. Defendants have intentionally and willfully failed to keep accurate and complete
6 payroll records showing the hours worked daily and the wages paid, to Plaintiff and the other class
7 members.

8 106. As a result of Defendants' violation of California Labor section 1174(d), Plaintiff
9 and the other class members have suffered injury and damage to their statutorily-protected rights.

10 107. More specifically, Plaintiff and the other class members have been injured by
11 Defendants' intentional and willful violation of California Labor Code section 1174(d) because
12 they were denied both their legal right and protected interest, in having available, accurate and
13 complete payroll records pursuant to California Labor Code section 1174(d).

14 **NINTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

15 **(Violation of Labor Code §226.8 – Misclassification)**

16 **(Against All Defendants)**

17 108. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates herein by reference each and every allegation
18 of the preceding paragraphs.

19 109. Labor Code §226.8(a) states, "It is unlawful for any person or employer to engage
20 in any of the following activities: (1) Willful misclassification of an individual as an independent
21 contractor. (2) Charging an individual who has been willfully misclassified as an independent
22 contractor a fee, or making any deductions from compensation, for any purpose, including for
23 goods, materials, space rental, services, government licenses, repairs, equipment maintenance, or
24 fines arising from the individual's employment where any of the acts described in this paragraph
25 would have violated the law if the individual had not been misclassified."

26 110. As set forth herein, Defendants, as a matter of established company policy and
27 procedure, misclassified Plaintiff and the other class members as "independent contractors" to
28 avoid the payment of wages and other benefits, in violation of Labor Code §226.8(a)(1).

1 111. Labor Code §226.8 provides that an employer shall be charged not more than
2 twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000.00) for each violation, in addition to any other penalties or
3 fines.

4 112. Defendants' illegal employment classification as described herein is unlawful and
5 creates an entitlement to recovery by Plaintiff and the other class members of penalties pursuant
6 to Labor Code §226.8(b), (c), and/or (e)-(f), according to proof, for Defendants' violations of
7 Labor Code §226.8(a).

8 **TENTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

9 **(Violation of California Business & Professions Code §§ 17200, et seq.)**

10 **(Against All Defendants)**

11 113. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the allegations contained above and each and
12 every part thereof with the same force and effect as though fully set forth herein.

13 114. Defendants' conduct, as alleged herein, has been, and continues to be, unfair,
14 unlawful and harmful to Plaintiffs, other class members, to the general public, and Defendants'
15 competitors. Accordingly, Plaintiffs seek to enforce important rights affecting the public interest
16 within the meaning of Code of Civil Procedure section 1021.5.

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

20 116. A violation of California Business & Professions Code section 17200, et seq. may
21 be predicated on the violation of any state or federal law. In this instant case, Defendants' policies
22 and practices of requiring employees, including Plaintiffs and the other class members, to work
23 overtime without paying them proper compensation violate California Labor Code sections 510
24 and 1198. Additionally, Defendants' policies and practices of requiring employees, including
25 Plaintiffs and the other class members, to work through their meal and rest periods without paying
26 them proper compensation violate California Labor Code sections 226.7 and 512(a). Defendants'
27 policies and practices of failing to pay minimum wages violate California Labor Code sections
28 1194, 1197, and 1197.1. Moreover, Defendants' policies and practices of failing to timely pay

1 wages to Plaintiff and the other class members violate California Labor Code sections 201,202 and
2 204. Defendants also violated California Labor Code sections 226(a), 1174(d), 2800 and 2802.

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

5 118. Plaintiff and the other class members have been personally injured by Defendants'
6 unlawful business acts and practices as alleged herein, including but not necessarily limited to the
7 loss of money and/or property.

8 119. Pursuant to California Business & Professions Code sections 17200, et seq.,
9 Plaintiff and the other class members are entitled to restitution of the wages withheld and retained
10 by Defendants during a period that commences four (4) years preceding the filing of Plaintiff's
11 complaint up until the time that notice of the class action is provided to the class; an award of
12 attorneys' fees pursuant to California Code of Civil procedure section 1021.5 and other applicable
13 laws; and an award of costs.

14 **ELEVENTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

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

16 **(Against All Defendants)**

17 120. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the allegations contained above and each and
18 every part thereof with the same force and effect as though fully set forth herein.

19 121. Plaintiff brings this claim as an individual employee and in her capacity as a private
20 attorney general pursuant to the Private Attorneys General Act of 2004, California Labor Code
21 section 2698, et seq. ("PAGA").

22 122. On or about October 26, 2021, Plaintiff notified Defendants via certified mail and
23 filed an online PAGA claim notice with the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency
24 ("LWDA") identifying Defendants' violations of the California Labor Code identified in this
25 Complaint and Plaintiff's intent to bring a claim for civil penalties under California Labor Code
26 section 2698 et seq. The LWDA assigned Plaintiff's case number LWDA-CM-849967-21.
27 Plaintiff also submitted a filing fee of seventy-five (\$75.00) to the LWDA in accordance with
28 Labor Code section 2699.3(a)(1)(B). Sixty-five days have passed from the date of Plaintiff's

notice to the LWDA, and thus Plaintiff has exhausted her administrative remedies, thereby allowing Plaintiff to commence a civil action against Defendants pursuant to Labor Code section 2699.

123. During all relevant times for this action, Defendants regularly required Plaintiff and Aggrieved Employees to work more than eight (8) hours per day and forty (40) hours per week. However, Plaintiff and Aggrieved Employees were not paid wages, including minimum wages and/or overtime wages, for such time worked. Instead, Plaintiff and Aggrieved Employees were paid for the amount of boxes they completed on any given day.

124. During all relevant times for this action, Defendants failed to provide uninterrupted meal periods to Plaintiff and Aggrieved Employees when they worked more than five (5) hours per day and ten (10) hours per day because Defendants required Plaintiff and Aggrieved Employees to stay on duty and never provided an uninterrupted first or second meal break.

125. In addition, Defendants failed to permit Plaintiff and Aggrieved Employees to take uninterrupted rest breaks for any shift exceeding four (4) hours of work or a major fraction thereof.

126. Although Defendants failed to provide uninterrupted meal and rest breaks as required by California law, Defendants failed to pay Plaintiff and Aggrieved Employees premium pay for those days in which they were not permitted to take a meal and/or rest break which was duty free.

127. In addition, Defendants failed to provide Plaintiff and Aggrieved Employees with properly itemized wage statements including because Defendants failed to include the actual hours worked, the correct rate of pay and the meal and rest period premiums owed.

128. Further, during Plaintiff and Aggrieved Employees' employment, Defendants were required to pay all wages earned for labor in excess of the normal work period not later than the payday for the next regular payroll period. However, Defendants failed to pay Plaintiff and Aggrieved Employees all wages due to them within the time period specified by California Labor Code section 204, including premiums owed.

129. Plaintiff, as an "Aggrieved Employee" within the meaning of Labor Code § 2698 *et seq.*, acting on behalf of herself and other similarly Aggrieved Employees, brings this

representative action against Defendants to recover the civil penalties due to Plaintiff, other similarly Aggrieved Employees, and the State of California according to proof pursuant to Labor Code § 2699 (a) and (f) including, but not limited to \$100.00 for each initial violation and \$200.00 for each subsequent violation per employee per pay period for the following Labor Code violations:

130. Failing to pay Plaintiff and other similarly Aggrieved Employees all earned minimum wage compensation in violation of Labor Code §§ 1194 and 1198 *et seq.*;

131. Failing to pay Plaintiff and other similarly Aggrieved Employees all earned overtime compensation in violation of Labor Code §§ 204, 510, 1194, and 1198 *et seq.*;

132. Failing to pay Plaintiff and other similarly Aggrieved Employees an additional hour of premium pay for meal period violations in violation of Labor Code §§ 226.7 and 512;

133. Failing to pay Plaintiff and other similarly Aggrieved Employees an additional hour of premium pay for rest period violations in violation of Labor Code §§ 226.7 and 512;

134. Failing to timely pay Plaintiff and other similarly Aggrieved Employees all wages at end of employment in violation of Labor Code § 203;

135. Failing to timely pay Plaintiff and other similarly Aggrieved Employees all wages owed during employment;

136. Failing to furnish Plaintiff and other similarly Aggrieved Employees with complete, accurate, itemized wage statements in violation of Labor Code § 226; and

137. Failing to maintain accurate records relating to Plaintiff and other similarly Aggrieved Employees work periods, meal periods, total daily hours, hours per pay period, and applicable pay rates; and for

138. Plaintiff was compelled to retain the services of counsel to file this court action to protect her interests and other similarly aggrieved employees, and to assess and collect the civil penalties owed by Defendants. Plaintiff has thereby incurred attorneys' fees and costs, which they are entitled to recover under California Labor Code § 2699.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

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

Class Certification

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

As to the First Cause of Action

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

As to the Second Cause of Action

10. That the Court declare, adjudge and decree that Defendants violated California Labor Code sections 226.7 and 512 and applicable IWC Wage Orders by willfully failing to provide all meal periods (including second meal periods) to Plaintiff and the other class members;
11. That the Court make an award to Plaintiff and the other class members of one (1) hour of pay at each employee's regular rate of compensation for each workday that a meal period was not provided;

- 1 12. For all actual, consequential, and incidental losses and damages, according to proof;
2 13. For premium wages pursuant to California Labor Code section 226.7(b);
3 14. For pre-judgment interest on any unpaid wages from the date such amounts were due;
4 15. For reasonable attorneys' fees and costs of suit incurred herein; and
5 16. For such other and further relief as the Court may deem just and proper.

6 **As to the Third Cause of Action**

7 17. That the Court declare, adjudge and decree that Defendants violated California Labor Code
8 section 226.7 and applicable IWC Wage Orders by willfully failing to provide all rest periods to
9 Plaintiff and the other class members;

10 18. That the Court make an award to Plaintiff and the other class members of one (1) hour of
11 pay at each employee's regular rate of compensation for each workday that a rest period was not
12 provided;

- 13 19. For all actual, consequential, and incidental losses and damages, according to proof;
14 20. For premium wages pursuant to California Labor Code section 226.7(b);
15 21. For pre-judgment interest on any unpaid wages from the date such amounts were due; and
16 22. For such other and further relief as the Court may deem just and proper.

17 **As to the Fourth Cause of Action**

18 23. That the Court declare, adjudge and decree that Defendants violated California Labor Code
19 sections 1194, 1197, and 1197.1 by willfully failing to pay minimum wages to Plaintiff and the
20 other class members;

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

22 25. For statutory wage penalties pursuant to California Labor Code section 1197.1 for Plaintiff
23 and the other class members in the amount as may be established according to proof at trial;

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

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

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

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

As to the Fifth Cause of Action

30. 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 the other class members no longer employed by Defendants;

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

32. For statutory wage penalties pursuant to California Labor Code section 203 for Plaintiff and the other class members who have left Defendants' employ;

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

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

As to the Sixth Cause of Action

35. That the Court declare, adjudge and decree that Defendants violated California Labor Code section 204 by willfully failing to pay all compensation owed at the time required by California Labor Code section 204 to Plaintiff and the other class members;

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

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

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

As to the Seventh Cause of Action

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

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

41. For statutory penalties pursuant to California Labor Code section 226(e);

42. For injunctive relief to ensure compliance with this section, pursuant to California Labor

Code section 226(h); and

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

As to the Eighth Cause of Action

44. That the Court declare, adjudge and decree that Defendants violated the record keeping provisions of California Labor Code section 1174(d) by willfully failing to keep accurate and complete payroll records for Plaintiff and the other class members as required by California Labor Code section 1174(d);

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

46. For statutory penalties pursuant to California Labor Code section 1174.5; and

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

As to the Ninth Cause of Action

48. That the Court declare, adjudge and decree that Defendants violated the record keeping provisions of California Labor Code section 226(a) and applicable IWC Wage Orders as to Plaintiff and the other class members, and willfully misclassified Plaintiff and other class members;

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

50. For statutory penalties pursuant to California Labor Code section 226(e);

51. For injunctive relief to ensure compliance with this section, pursuant to California Labor Code section 226(h); and

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

As to the Tenth Cause of Action

53. That the Court decree adjudge and decree that Defendants violated California Business and Professions Code sections 17200 et seq. by failing to provide Plaintiff and the other class members all overtime compensation due to them failing to provide all meal and rest periods to Plaintiff and the other class members, failing to pay at least minimum wages to Plaintiff and the other class members failing to pay Plaintiff and the 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.

54. For restitution of unpaid wages to Plaintiff and all the other class members and all pre-judgment interest from the day such amounts were due and payable.

55. 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 section 17200, et seq.;

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

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

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

As to the Eleventh Cause of Action

59. For statutory attorneys' fees and costs pursuant to Labor Code section 2668 et seq., and as allowed by law and according to proof;

60. For statutory civil penalties pursuant to Labor Code section 2668 et seq., and as allowed by law and according to proof;

61. For costs of suit incurred herein;

62. For pre- and post-judgment interest at the maximum legal rate on all amounts claimed; and

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

Dated: February 24, 2022

PAYNE NGUYEN, LLP

By:



CODY PAYNE
KIM NGUYEN
Attorneys for Plaintiff
MODESTA AQUINO

PLAINTIFF'S DEMAND FOR A JURY TRIAL

Plaintiff MODESTA AQUINO hereby demands a trial by jury.

DATED: February 24, 2022

PAYNE NGUYEN, LLP

By: _____


Cody Payne
Kim Nguyen
Attorneys for Plaintiff
MODESTA AQUINO