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SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

FOR THE COUNTY OF ORANGE

JESUS VELASCO, individually, and on behalf of all others similarly situated, Plaintiff, vs. WARMEL MANAGEMENT COMPANY, a California corporation; and DOES 1 through 10, inclusive, Defendants	Case No.: 30-2022-01242308-CU-OE-CXC REPRESENTATIVE ACTION **DECLARATION OF KANE MOON IN SUPPORT OF MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF PAGA SETTLEMENT** [Filed with (1) Plaintiff's Notice of Motion and Motion for Approval of PAGA Settlement, (2) the Declaration of Plaintiff Velasco, (3) the Mullins Declaration re: Qualifications and Costs for Settlement Administration, (4) the Declaration of Brandon Brouillette, (5) the Declaration of Plaintiff Pereira, (6) [Proposed] PAGA Approval Order, and (7) [Proposed] Judgment] PAGA APPROVAL HEARING: Date: June 1, 2026 Time: 1:30 p.m. Dept.: CX103 Judge: David A. Hoffer **Reservation Number: 74790241** Action filed: January 25, 2022 Trial date: Not set

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DECLARATION OF KANE MOON

I, KANE MOON, declare as follows:

1. I am an attorney at law duly licensed to practice as such before all the Courts of the State of California and am one of the attorneys of record for Plaintiff Jesus Velasco ("Plaintiff Velasco"). I have personal knowledge of the facts set forth in this declaration and if called as a witness, I could and would testify competently to them under oath.

2. This declaration is submitted in support of Plaintiffs' Motion for Approval of PAGA Settlement. Plaintiff Velasco and Plaintiff Liliana Pereira (Plaintiff Pereira) (together with Plaintiff Velaso, ("Plaintiffs") seek approval of a PAGA Settlement Agreement (the "Settlement") entered into with Defendant Warmel Management Company ("Defendant") (collectively, Plaintiffs and Defendant are the "Parties"). A true and correct copy of the fully executed Settlement is attached hereto as **Exhibit 1**. Exhibit A to the Settlement contains the Parties' proposed *Court-Approved Notice of PAGA Settlement* to be mailed to Aggrieved Employees with Individual PAGA Payments following settlement approval and Defendant's full settlement funding.

3. The proposed Settlement seeks to resolve all alleged claims, or claims that reasonably could have been alleged, for civil penalties pursuant to the California Private Attorneys General Act, Labor Code sections 2698, *et seq.* ("PAGA"), based on the facts stated in this action and the PAGA notice letters submitted by Plaintiffs. Plaintiffs brought this PAGA action on behalf of themselves and all individuals who were employed by Defendant in the State of California and classified as non-exempt employees during the PAGA Period ("Aggrieved Employees"). For purposes of settlement, the "PAGA Period" is February 12, 2021, through October 18, 2024.[1] (Settlement, ¶ 1.22.)

CASE BACKGROUND AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY

4. Defendant owns and operates McDonald's restaurants throughout California. Plaintiff Velasco worked for Defendant from May 2020 until April 2021 as a maintenance employee responsible

[1] Following Administrator calculations, it was determined that the total number of Pay Periods exceeded the threshold for the Escalator Clause in the Settlement, and Defendant has elected to end the PAGA Period on October 18, 2024, the date when the maximum amount of Pay Periods under the Escalator Clause (183,591 Pay Periods) was reached. (Settlement, ¶¶ 1.22, 4.7.)

for maintaining and fixing machinery, cleaning, and washing dishes at multiple McDonald's restaurants in Orange County. Plaintiff Pereira worked for Defendant from 2001 to May 2022 as crewmember at a McDonald's restaurant located in Buena Park, California. Throughout their employment, Plaintiffs were classified as non-exempt and paid on an hourly basis. Plaintiffs contend they and their former coworkers were subjected to the same or similar unlawful labor practices during their employment by Defendant, including failure to pay all wages.

5. Plaintiffs' claims for unpaid wages stems from allegations of Defendant's failure to compensate employees for off-the-clock work, such as for timekeeping and COVID checks. Plaintiffs and other employees were frequently required to perform off-the-clock work before and after their shifts, during their breaks, completing mandatory on-site COVID screening, and completing orientation and training without compensation. Plaintiff's meal and rest period claims are based on allegations that due to the nature of their work and Defendant's employment practices, employees regularly experienced missed, untimely, or interrupted breaks, and that Defendant failed to provide any premiums for non-compliant rest breaks or all premiums for non-compliant meals. Plaintiffs also allege that Defendant failed to reimburse employees for all reasonable and necessary business expenses incurred, including expenses incurred for the use of employees' personal cellphone for work purposes and costs associated with uniform maintenance. Plaintiffs further allege they and other employees did not receive all wages owed at the time of termination nor accurate itemized wage statements due to Defendant's failure to pay all wages and premiums. Accordingly, Plaintiffs allege Defendant is liable for civil penalties under PAGA.

6. Because of the foregoing alleged violations of the Labor Code, Plaintiff Velasco filed a Class Action Complaint on January 25, 2022, alleging Defendant systematically: (1) failed to pay minimum wages, (2) failed to pay overtime compensation, (3) failed to provide meal periods, (4) failed to authorize and permit rest breaks, (5) failure to indemnify necessary business expenses, (6) failed to timely pay final wages at termination, (7) failed to provide accurate itemized wage statements, and (8) engaged in unfair business practices.

7. Pursuant to PAGA, on January 20, 2022, Plaintiff Velasco submitted notice of the alleged Labor Code violations to the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency (the "LWDA"), with certified mail service on Defendant, and paid the required filing fee. A true and correct copy of Plaintiff Velasco's

PAGA Notice is attached hereto as **Exhibit 2**. On February 21, 2023, Plaintiff Pereira also submitted her PAGA Notice of the alleged Labor Code violations to the LWDA, with certified mail service on Defendant, and paid the required filing fee. The administrative exhaustion periods under PAGA expired without the LWDA indicating any intent to investigate the allegations. On April 18, 2022, Plaintiff Velasco filed a First Amended Class and Representative Action Complaint to allege a ninth cause of action for civil penalties under PAGA (the "Operative Complaint"). On April 28, 2023, Plaintiff Pereira filed a representative PAGA complaint (the "*Pereira* Action"). Accordingly, Plaintiffs are duly authorized to act as private attorneys general with respect to the PAGA claims involved in this action.

8. In compliance with Labor Code section 2699(s)(1), Plaintiffs subsequently submitted to the LWDA a file-stamped copy of their respective complaints containing the Court-assigned case numbers. To date, the LWDA has not sought to intervene in this action.

9. After this action was filed, Defendant produced an arbitration agreement between Defendant and Plaintiff Velasco containing a class action waiver. Thereafter, Defendant filed a Petition to Compel Arbitration, Dismiss Class Claims, and Stay the Action on March 8, 2022, which the Court later granted following briefing and a hearing. On or around June 11, 2025, the Parties stipulated to consolidate the instant action with the *Pereira* Action, and the Court entered an order consolidating the actions on or around June 12, 2025.

10. Defendant ardently opposes the merits of this case and denies Plaintiffs' factual allegations. Defendant argues all employees were properly paid for all hours worked and that it did not require or permit employees to work off-the-clock. Defendant maintains all employees were provided with the opportunity to take all their code-compliant meal and rest breaks and that missed breaks, if any, were solely the result of employees' voluntary choice. As for the unreimbursed business expenses, Defendant maintains it did not require employees to incur any business-related expenses. To the extent employees received wage statements that were allegedly inaccurate, Defendant argues penalties are not warranted because employees suffered no actual damage or harm as a result. (*See, e.g.*, *Angeles v. U.S. Airways, Inc.* (N.D. Cal. Feb. 19, 2013) No. C 12–05860 CRB, 2013 WL 622032, at *10 ["A plaintiff must adequately plead an injury arising from an employer's failure to provide full and accurate wage statements, and the omission of the required information alone is not sufficient."].) Additionally, Defendant alleges its good-faith belief that it paid all wages precludes

the imposition of waiting time penalties because Plaintiffs would be unable to show Defendant's alleged conduct was done willfully or knowingly. (*See, e.g.*, *Pedroza v. PetSmart, Inc.* (C.D. Cal. June 14, 2012) No. ED CV 11–298 GHK (DTBx), 2012 WL 9506073, *5.) For these reasons, Defendant claims it did not engage in any unfair business practices and denies liability under PAGA. Defendant also maintains the claims are not susceptible to proof on a representative basis because of the individualized and varying nature of each employee's experience, making this matter unmanageable.

DISCOVERY AND INVESTIGATION

11. Before initiating arbitration regarding Plaintiffs' individual wage claims, the Parties agreed to an early mediation of the representative PAGA claims. The Parties engaged in informal discovery exchange prior to mediation. Defendant provided information and documents, which enabled PAGA Counsel to meaningfully investigate Plaintiff's allegations and assess the value of the PAGA claims. Specifically, Defendant produced information regarding number of Aggrieved employees and pay periods, documents regarding Defendant's written policies and practices in effect during the relevant period, and time and corresponding payroll records for a representative portion of all Aggrieved Employees.

12. Prior to mediation, PAGA Counsel reviewed and analyzed all the information that Defendant produced, including the time/pay records and Defendant's written policies, in conjunction with information provided by Plaintiffs. PAGA Counsel retained an expert to analyze the time/pay records of approximately 10% of the total Aggrieved Employees and prepare a damage analysis prior to mediation. Further, PAGA Counsel investigated the applicable law regarding the claims and defenses asserted in this action. Accordingly, PAGA Counsel were able to evaluate the probability of success on the merits and Defendant's monetary exposure. In sum, Plaintiffs and their Counsel's familiarity with the facts of the case and the legal issues involved allowed them to act intelligently in negotiating the Settlement.

SETTLEMENT NEGOTIATIONS AND NOTICE TO THE LWDA

13. On February 6, 2025, the Parties participated in a full day of private mediation facilitated by Marc Feder, Esq., an experienced PAGA action mediator. The negotiations were at arm's length and although conducted in a professional matter, were adversarial. All sides went into the mediation willing to explore the potential for a settlement of the dispute, but they were also prepared to litigate their position through trial and appeal if a settlement had not been reached. Negotiations were protracted, with extended

discussions and instances in which it appeared the Parties would not reach a resolution. Following a full discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the claims and defenses, the Parties ultimately reached a resolution, the material terms of which are encompassed within the Settlement at issue.

14. In reaching a resolution, the Parties recognized that the issues presented in this action are likely only to be resolved with extensive and costly pretrial and trial proceedings, and that further litigation will lead to inconvenience, distraction, disruption, delay, and expense disproportionate to the potential benefits of litigation. Plaintiffs and their Counsel also considered the risk and uncertainty of the outcome inherent in any litigation when determining whether this Settlement was the correct option. Furthermore, Plaintiffs and their counsel considered the risk of confusing and overlapping outcomes when considering the Settlement's coverage of both this case and the Pereira Action. In sum, Plaintiffs and their Counsel believe the proposed Settlement is in the best interests of Aggrieved Employees and the LWDA.

15. In compliance with Labor Code section 2699(s)(2), notice of settlement and a copy of the proposed Settlement has been submitted to the LWDA along with a copy of Plaintiff's motion and the hearing date. A true and correct copy of the LWDA's email confirming receipt thereof is attached hereto as **Exhibit 3**. To date, the LWDA has not indicated any objection to the Settlement.

KEY TERMS OF SETTLEMENT

16. Gross Settlement Amount, Funding, Disbursement, and Uncashed Checks. The Gross Settlement Amount ("GSA") is $1,880,000.00, and is non-reversionary. (Settlement, ¶ 3.1.) Defendant will fully fund the Gross Settlement Amount by transmitting the GSA, along with Defendant's share of the payroll taxes, to the Administrator no later than sixty (60) days after the Effective Date. (*Id.* at ¶ 4.3.) The Effective Date, as defined in the Settlement, means the date by when both of the following have occurred: (a) the Court enters a Judgment on the order granting final approval of the Settlement; and (b) the Judgment is final. (*Id.* at ¶¶ 1.9–1.10.) Disbursement will occur within thirty (30) days after Defendant fully funds the GSA. (*Id.* at ¶ 4.5.) Any funds remaining uncashed after 180 days from issuance will be transmitted to the California State Controller's Office, to be held pursuant to the Unclaimed Property Law in the name of each individual who failed to cash his or her check prior to the void date. (*Id.* at ¶¶ 4.8, 4.9.1.)

17. Escalator Clause. The GSA was negotiated based on an estimate that as of the date of the Parties' mediation, there are 166,901 aggregate PAGA Pay Periods. (*Id.* at ¶ 4.7.) The Settlement includes an Escalator Clause whereby should the actual number of PAGA Pay Periods exceed 10% of the estimated count (i.e. 183,591 Pay Periods), Defendant agrees to either (1) make a proportional increase to the GSA by the percentage increase for each additional PAGA Pay Period above 183,591, or (2) modify the end of the PAGA Period such that no more than 183,591 PAGA Pay Periods are included in the Settlement. (*Id.*) Following Administrator calculations, it was determined that the total number of Pay Periods exceeded the threshold for the Escalator Clause in the Settlement, and Defendant has elected to end the PAGA Period on October 18, 2024, the date when the maximum amount of Pay Periods under the Escalator Clause (183,591 Pay Periods) was reached. (Settlement, ¶¶ 1.22, 4.7.)

18. Individual Settlements. The Settlement includes payments made by Defendant of $10,000.00 each to Plaintiffs, separate and apart from the GSA, in addition to any amount they will receive as Individual PAGA Payments. (*Id.* at ¶ 3.4.) $1,000.00 will be paid to Plaintiff Pereira for alleged lost wages; $9,000.00 will be paid to Plaintiff Pereira for non-wage damages; and $10,000.00 will be paid to Plaintiff Velasco for non-wage damages. (*Id.*) These payments are contingent on approval of the Settlement. (*Id.*) These payments are separate from the GSA and will not affect the PAGA Penalties set forth in the Settlement to be collected by the LWDA or the Aggrieved Employees. (*Id.*)

19. Attorneys' Fees and Costs. The Settlement includes attorneys' fees in an amount up to one-third of the GSA (i.e., $626,666.67) ("PAGA Counsel Fees Payment"), plus reimbursement for out-of-pocket litigation costs not to exceed $40,000.00, payable to PAGA Counsel from the GSA ("PAGA Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment"). (*Id.* at ¶¶ 1.19–1.20.) In the event actual costs are less and/or the amount of fees and costs approved by the Court are less than the amounts requested, the difference will be allocated to the PAGA Penalties. (*Id.*) To date, my firm has incurred $21,004.98 in actual litigation costs. A true and correct copy of a report showing these costs is attached hereto as **Exhibit 4**. Pursuant to the Joint Prosecution Agreement ("JPA"), and as consented to by Plaintiffs in a signed writing, between Moon Law Group, PC (counsel for Plaintiff Velasco) and Crosner Legal, PC (counsel for Plaintiff Peirera), the PAGA Counsel Fees Payment shall be divided with 75% to Moon Law Group, PC and 25% to Crosner Legal, PC. (*Id.* at ¶ 1.19.)

20. Administration Expenses Payment. The Settlement provides an Administration Expenses Payment to the Administrator, payable from the GSA, in an amount up to $19,950.00, for its fees and expenses in administering this Settlement. (*Id.* at ¶ 1.3.) In the event the amount of actual administration costs is less and/or the amount approved by the Court is less than requested, the difference will be allocated to the PAGA Penalties. (*Id.*) Following a competitive bidding process, the Parties jointly selected ILYM Group, Inc. as the neutral entity to administer this Settlement.[2] (*Id.* at ¶ 1.2.) A true and correct copy of ILYM Group's bid for $19,950.00 is attached hereto as **Exhibit 5**.

21. PAGA Penalties. After deducting the PAGA Counsel Fees Payment, the PAGA Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment, and the Administration Expenses Payment from the GSA, in the amounts specifically approved by the Court, any difference in the amounts requested and the amounts awarded will be allocated to the PAGA Penalties. (*Id.* at ¶ 1.19.) Accordingly, the PAGA Penalties are estimated to be no less than **$1,204,010.94**,[3] which will be distributed 75% (i.e., no less than 75% * $1,204,010.94 = **$903,008.21**) to the LWDA and 25% (i.e., no less than 25% * $1,204,010.94 = **$301,002.74**) to Aggrieved Employees pursuant to PAGA law governing Plaintiffs' claims.[4]

22. Individual PAGA Payments. Each Aggrieved Employee will be entitled to his or her pro rata amount from the 25% share of PAGA Penalties that is directly proportional to the number of pay periods worked in the PAGA Period without having to submit any claim form. (*Id.* at ¶¶ 1.13, 4.6.) This results in an average Individual PAGA Payment of roughly **$42.39** for each of the estimated 7,100 Aggrieved Employees ($301,002.74 / 7,100), and a PAGA Pay Period value of **$1.64** for each of the confirmed 183,591

[2] Counsel for Plaintiffs obtained bids from CPT Group, Inc. (bid of $28,500.00), Apex Class Action Administration (bid of $26,990.00), and ILYM Group, Inc. (bid of $19,950.00). The Parties selected ILYM Group, Inc. as it provided the lowest bid.

[3] The estimated PAGA Penalties were calculated by deducting the following amounts from the GSA ($1,880,000.00): $29,372.39 for the PAGA Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment, $626,666.67 for the PAGA Counsel Fees Payment, and $19,950.00 for the Administration Expenses Payment. (*See* Settlement, ¶ 1.26.)

[4] On July 1, 2024, new legislation was enacted to amend PAGA in several respects, including as to the recovery split for civil penalties. (Stats. 2024, ch. 44 (Assem. Bill No. 2288), § 1, eff. Jul. 1, 2024).) As amended, PAGA now provides for a 65%-LWDA/45%-aggrieved employee split. (Lab. Code § 2699(m).) However, this provision does not apply retroactively prior to June 19, 2024. (*Id.* at § 2699(v)(1).) In other words, because Plaintiff's PAGA Notice was submitted prior to June 19, 2024, any civil penalties recovered in this action will be split according to prior PAGA law (i.e., 75% to the LWDA and 25% to Aggrieved Employees).

PAGA Pay Periods ($301,002.74 / 183,591). Individual PAGA Payments will be allocated to 100% penalties for tax purposes. (*See id.* at ¶ 4.6.) Assuming an Aggrieved Employee worked one Pay Period, **the lowest PAGA payment to an Aggrieved Employee is estimated to be $1.64 (1 Pay Period x $1.64 average Pay Period value).** Assuming an Aggrieved Employee worked 192 Pay Periods (maximum number of weeks in the PAGA Period), **the highest PAGA payment is estimated to be $314.88 (192 Pay Periods x $1.64 average Pay Period value)**. Aggrieved Employees will receive an explanatory letter with their Individual PAGA Payments from the Administrator no later than fourteen (14) days after the Administrator receives the Aggrieved Employee Data from Defendant, which shall occur no later than twenty-one (21) days after the Effective Date. (*Id.* at ¶¶ 4.4, 7.2.2.) Thereafter, all Aggrieved Employees will have forty-five (45) days to challenge the number of PAGA Pay Periods allocated to them, with an additional 14 days if their Notice is re-mailed. (*Id.* at ¶¶ 4.8, 7.3.)

23. Releases of Claims. The Released PAGA Claims will be effective upon entry of the Court's Approval Order and Defendant's full funding of the Gross Settlement Amount. (*Id.* at ¶ 5.) The Released PAGA Claims are limited to PAGA claims alleged, or that reasonably could have been alleged, based on the facts stated in the Actions and the PAGA notice letters submitted by Plaintiffs, which occurred during the PAGA Period. (*Id.* at ¶ 5.2.) The "Released Parties" are "Defendant and its past, present, and/or future, direct and/or indirect, officers, directors, members, managers, employees, agents, representatives, attorneys, insurers, partners, investors, shareholders, administrators, parent companies, subsidiaries, affiliates, divisions, predecessors, successors, assigns, managing agents, related companies and joint venturers." (*Id.* at ¶ 1.31.)

24. No Related Cases. To the best of my knowledge, there is no other pending litigation involving similar claims against Defendant that may be impacted by approval of the Settlement at issue, nor has Defendant pointed to any.[5]

THE PROPOSED SETTLEMENT IS FAIR AND REASONABLE

25. There can be no doubt that this Settlement is the result of vigorous, adversarial, non-collusive,

[5] Plaintiff Velasco's separate FEHA action against Defendant has also been settled and dismissed and will have no effect on this Settlement or these proceedings. (Settlement at ¶ 2.2). The settlement was for Velasco's individual claims for $35,000, including for individual wage and hour and FEHA/wrongful termination claims. (*Id.*)

and arm's-length negotiations between the Parties. Based on PAGA Counsel's analysis of the arguments and information provided by Defendant, on an analysis of the time and pay records, and on information from Plaintiffs, PAGA Counsel evaluated Defendant's both maximum (*optimistic*) and risk-adjusted (*realistic*) potential exposure in preparation for mediation. Although the analysis revealed that the time and pay records supported several violations by Defendant, those identifiable violations were primarily limited to the meal period claims. The records themselves did not provide strong support for the off-the-clock work, rest period, and expense reimbursement claims, and derivative penalties for those claims. Despite some support for these claims based on Defendant's policy documents provided, these claims are predominantly testimony based. In other words, Plaintiff's analysis revealed that certain claims were not as strong as originally believed.

26. Because Defendant did not require employees to record rest periods, there are no records to establish the rest period claim on the merits. Additionally, there are no records to establish the off-the-clock work claim or the reimbursement claim on the merits. Rather, proof of these claims would need to be supported by declarations from Aggrieved Employees regarding missed rest periods, off-the-clock work, and reimbursements as the records themselves cannot demonstrate what breaks were missed, when, and why, what purchases Aggrieved Employees made for work, if any, and they cannot demonstrate the time, if any, Aggrieved Employees spent working off the clock.

27. Indeed, the exposure figures that were calculated for mediation were based on assumed high violation rates that would not likely be demonstrated at trial, as they assume either the participation of all Aggrieved Employees (which would be difficult given the particularly large size of this group), or alternatively, the use of surveys or statistical data as a surrogate (which would still require the participation of a majority of Aggrieved Employees to establish a sound representation of all non-exempt employees). The reality is that many, if not all, employees would be unwilling to participate due to fear of retaliation. However, even assuming those employees would be willing to participate, obtaining such declarations would potentially reveal that each Aggrieved Employee had a different experience. The individualized nature of their employment experience and the numerosity of employees affected present significant risk with manageability and proof on the merits.

28. Even as to the meal period claims, our analysis found that Defendant's exposure is less than initially believed. A review of the time/pay records showed a violation rate of 26.3%. However, Defendant

produced meal period waiver agreements signed by Plaintiffs, and a review of the records shows that after accounting for meal waivers, the violation rate dropped to approximately 22.4%. Additionally, the records showed that Defendant paid meal premium payments for 10.8% of the violations. After accounting for the meal premium payments, the violation rate was reduced to 11.6%. Moreover, Defendant argued that the fact that it paid meal premium payments and had its employees sign waivers demonstrates that it did not intentionally fail to provide compliant meal periods.

29. The likelihood that Defendant could assert viable legal defenses would likely further reduce its overall exposure. For example, the individualized and testimony-intensive nature of the claims could bar manageability of this representative action or otherwise significantly reduce Defendant's overall liability.

30. Further, a claim-by-claim penalty calculation is overly optimistic as it presumes Plaintiffs would be able to stack the penalties, although penalty stacking is not expressly permitted by PAGA. Rather, without either (i) a prior finding by the LWDA or a court within the past five years that the employer violated PAGA or (ii) evidence that the employer's conduct was malicious, fraudulent, or oppressive, PAGA only provides for a maximum $100 penalty for each pay period. (Lab. Code § 2699(f)(2)(A)–(B).) Moreover, PAGA Counsel believe it would be unrealistic to expect the Court would award the full (penalty-stacked) exposure given the discretionary nature of awarding penalties and given Defendant's defenses, including that any failure to pay premiums or for off-the-clock work was not knowingly or willfully done, and additionally, to the extent employees received wage statements that were allegedly inaccurate, employees suffered no actual resulting damage or harm. Moreover, awarding the full penalties amount would likely raise Due Process concerns.

31. For the foregoing reasons, the *realistic* exposure is thus far below the *optimistic* claim by claim estimate.

32. Based on the foregoing, PAGA Counsel believe it is more reasonable to assess penalties on a $100 civil penalty per pay period basis pursuant to Labor Code § 2699(f)(2)(A) for each of the estimated 166,901 pay periods at issue, as opposed to a claim-by-claim approach. Accordingly, PAGA Counsel estimated Defendant's maximum PAGA exposure to be **$16,690,100.00** ($100 x 166,901). However, based on the discovery, Defendant's arguments at mediation and continued settlement discussions, an understanding that the claims are heavily dependent on the unlikely participation by Aggrieved Employees

and their varying employment experience, and other important considerations discussed above, it is reasonable to assume a violation occurred only in at most 20% of all pay periods, which results in a realistic (*risk-adjusted*) exposure of **$3,338,020.00** ($16,690,100 * 20%). As a result, the GSA of $1,880,000.00 represents roughly **56%** of the realistic exposure ($1,880,000.00 / $3,338,020.00).

33. The proposed Settlement therefore represents a substantial recovery when compared to the reasonably forecasted recovery. When considering the risks of litigation, the uncertainties involved in continued litigation, the burdens of proof necessary to establish liability, and the probability of appeal, it is clear the GSA of $1,880,000.00 is within the "ballpark" of reasonableness, and that settlement approval is appropriate. (*Kullar v. Foot Locker Retail, Inc*. (2008) 168 Cal.App.4th 116, 133; *see Munoz v. BCI Coca-Cola Bottling Co. of L.A.* (2010) 186 Cal.App.4th 399, 408–09 [holding that *Kullar* does not require "an explicit statement of the maximum amount the plaintiff class could recover if it prevailed on all its claims," but instead, only an "understanding of the amount that is in controversy and the realistic range of outcomes of the litigation"].)

34. The $1,880,000.00 GSA amounts to genuine and meaningful relief. This is an excellent result, particularly because, under the Settlement, Aggrieved Employees and the LWDA will receive timely, guaranteed relief and will avoid the risk of not being able to recover anything at all.

35. The Settlement is a fair and reasonable resolution that satisfies PAGA's dual statutory purposes of deterrence and punishment, on the one hand, and providing Aggrieved Employees with genuine and meaningful relief, on the other. (Lab. Code §§ 2698, *et seq.*) As a result of this litigation, Defendant has had to hire legal counsel, engage in employee-wide discovery, and participate in mediation. Assuming approval is granted, Defendant will also have to pay civil penalties pursuant to PAGA. Not including its own attorneys' fees and costs and individual settlements, Defendant will pay $1,880,000.00 to resolve this matter—of which approximately $**1,204,010.94** is allocated toward PAGA Penalties and will be distributed as 75% to the LWDA and 25% to Aggrieved Employees, in compliance with PAGA law governing the claims in this Action. (*See* Settlement, ¶ 3.3.) This amount represents roughly **36%** of the realistic exposure for the claims ($1,204,010.94 / $3,338,020.00), as discussed above. Additionally, the release obtained under the Settlement does not preclude Aggrieved Employees from pursuing any individual (non-PAGA) claims they may have against Defendant or the other Released Parties. (*Id.* at ¶

5.1.)

36. PAGA Counsel have conducted a thorough investigation into the facts of the allegations. Based on discovery and on their own independent investigation and evaluation, PAGA Counsel are of the opinion that the proposed Settlement is fair, reasonable, and adequate. Furthermore, considering all known facts and circumstances, the risk of significant delay, trial risk, appellate risk, the defenses that could be asserted by Defendant on the merits, PAGA Counsel respectfully submit that the Settlement is in the best interests of the Aggrieved Employees and the State of California.

37. Although PAGA Counsel believe there is merit to Plaintiff's allegations, they also acknowledge a legitimate controversy exists as to each allegation. PAGA Counsel also recognize that proving the amounts of penalties owed to each Aggrieved Employee would be an expensive, time-consuming, and uncertain proposition.

38. Moreover, PAGA Counsel are also of the opinion that because the issues here are fairly contested, there is a possibility of the Court not awarding PAGA penalties even if Plaintiffs prevailed on the merits due to the largely discretionary nature of awarding PAGA penalties. In other words, were this matter to go to trial, any award granted would be at the discretion of the Court and subject to a substantial reduction.

39. While PAGA Counsel believe there would be no persuasive grounds to reduce penalties, they recognize that the Court could determine otherwise and significantly reduce any award of penalties. This wide range of potential recovery and additional delays and risks of trial provide justification to settle for a reasonable amount of recovery at this point in the litigation. In all, based on the investigation and analysis of the claims in preparation for mediation, the maximum exposure did not comport with the realistic exposure that Defendant faced, as discussed above.

40. PAGA Counsel took into account the risk of not being able to proceed on a representative basis at all due to the potential manageability issues, the risk of not prevailing at trial, and the risk that even if Plaintiffs prevailed at trial, the penalties would be limited due to the largely discretionary nature of awarding PAGA penalties. The provisions of the Labor Code triggering PAGA penalties in this case include Labor Code sections 203, 210, 226, 1197.1, and 2802. However, PAGA penalties are not mandatory, but rather, permissive. (Lab. Code § 2699(e)(2).) Accordingly, it is entirely possible that even if Plaintiffs would be successful at trial, assuming they are first able to win on the merits regarding their

individual claims at arbitration and then defeat the manageability issues presented at litigation by the large number of Aggrieved Employees in this action, Plaintiffs may still be awarded substantially less than what was obtained through the Settlement.

41. The Settlement avoids the significant risks, burdens, and the accompanying expense of further litigation. Though the Parties have engaged in a significant amount of investigation, informal discovery, and employee data analysis, they have not participated in formal discovery procedures, including depositions and expert discovery. Moreover, Plaintiffs would have to proceed with arbitration of their individual claims and win on the merits before proceeding with litigation of the representative PAGA claims. Preparation for trial and the prospect of appeals in the wake of any summary judgment ruling would remain for the Parties. As a result, the Parties would incur considerably more attorneys' fees and costs through trial, a lengthy and uncertain process that could result in recovering less than was settled for.

MY EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

42. I received a B.A. in History in 1998 from UCLA, and my J.D. from Loyola Marymount Law School in 2006. I became an Active Member of the State Bar of California in June 2007 and have been an Active Member in good standing continuously since then. I have been selected to Super Lawyers each year from 2019 to 2023.

43. I co-founded Moon & Yang, APC—now Moon Law Group, PC—in March 2010. My practice is focused exclusively on advocating for the rights of employees in wage-and-hour litigation, almost entirely in class and/or PAGA representative actions.

44. For the past decade, I have built my practice to have an emphasis on employment and related civil litigation cases and have both prosecuted and defended employment-related litigation cases. I have been heavily, successfully, and continuously involved in active litigation and trial work, and have conducted bench and jury trials on behalf of both employees and employers in wage-and-hour cases.

45. My current billing rate is $950.00 per hour, which is my usual rate in wage-and-hour litigations. This billing rate is reasonable considering my years of experience practicing in the highly specialized area of employment and labor law and my Laffey Matrix rate. (The Laffey Matrix, http://www.laffeymatrix.com/see.html [last visited January 21, 2026].) The Laffey Matrix is a "well-established objective source for rates that vary by experience" used by the District of Columbia. (*In re HPL*

Tech., Inc. Sec. Litig. (N.D. Cal. 2005) 366 F. Supp 2d 912, 921.) A true and correct copy of the Laffey Matrix is attached hereto as **Exhibit 6**. California Courts have adjusted the Laffey Matrix rate upwards based on "locality pay differentials" and the location of counsel's office in California to determine whether counsel's rates are reasonable. (*See, e.g.*, *id.* [applying a 9% upward adjustment to the Laffey Matrix rate based on an approximate difference of 9% between the locality pay differential of the District of Columbia and San Francisco, California, where counsel's office was located].) To determine the locality pay differential, the Court in *In re HPL Technologies, Inc.* utilized the locality pay differentials within the federal courts. (*Id.* at pp. 921–22.) Using the same method here and based on my firm's location in Los Angeles, California, the locality pay differential of the Los Angeles-Long Beach area is 36.47% and of the Washington-Baltimore-Arlington area is 33.94%, which results in a difference of approximately 2.53%. (*Compare* Judiciary Salary Plan of Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA, eff. January 12, 2026, *with* Judiciary Salary Plan of Washington-Baltimore-Arlington, eff. January 12, 2026.) True and correct copies of the Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA and Washington-Baltimore-Arlington salary plans are attached hereto as **Exhibit 7** and **Exhibit 8**, respectively. Based on my 19+ years of experience out of law school, my Laffey Matrix rate with a 2.53% adjustment is $971.98 per hour ($948 Laffey Matrix rate + (2.53% x $948)). (*See* Exh. 6.) Accordingly, my billing rate of $950 per hour is reasonable.

46. I am experienced in prosecuting and defending employment matters, particularly class and PAGA actions. My firm has focused a substantial percentage of its practice on wage, hour, and working conditions violations. In addition to the present case, I am also class counsel for other wage-and-hour class action lawsuits pending in various counties throughout California, including in state and federal courts. The following is a list of some of our recent class action settlements that have received preliminary and final approval: *Aparicio v. Lineage Logistics, LLC* (LASC No. BC722764) (class size approx. 155; lead counsel); *Black v. Mission Healthcare Servs., Inc*. (LASC No. 19STCV04602) (class size approx. 1,000; lead counsel); *Campa v. Bloomingdeals, Inc*. (LASC No. BC700366) (class size approx. 1,500; lead counsel); *Garcia v. Comfy U.S.A. Apparel, Inc.* (LASC No. BC709630) (class size approx. 210; lead counsel); *Gomez v. H Mart Cos., Inc.* (LASC No. BC671525) (class size approx. 2,500; co-counsel); *Jones v. Citiguard, Inc.* (LASC No. BC664890) (class size approx. 587; lead counsel); *Jones v. Fitness Alliance, LLC* (Riverside No. PSC1404079) (class size approx. 1,000; lead counsel); *Lagos v. ThyssenKrupp Elevator Corp.* (LASC No.

BC682972) ($750,000 for 79 class members; lead counsel); *Mark Brulee et al. v. DAL Global Servs., LLC* (C.D. Cal. Dec. 20, 2018) No. CV 17-6433 JVS(JCGx), 2018 WL 6616659, at *10 (class size approx. 2,650; lead counsel) (in approving my $650 hourly rate in that case, the Court found: "Class Counsel's declarations show that the attorneys are experienced and successful litigators. Other courts have approved the attorneys' current rates for the Moon & Yang, APC attorneys"); *Martinez v. Bail Hotline Bail Bonds, Inc.* (LASC No. BC700131) (class size approx. 173; lead counsel); *Montoya v. Golden 1 Credit Union* (Sacramento No. 34-2018-00228252) (class size approx. 1,900; lead counsel); *Onofre v. Caitac Garment Processing, Inc*. (LASC No. BC702283) (class size approx. 750; lead counsel); *Rodriguez v. Rossmoyne, Inc.* (LASC No. BC699137) (class size approx. 220; lead counsel); *Sison v. Cha Hollywood Med. Ctr., L.P.* (LASC No. BC6441 29) (class size approx. 2,100; co-counsel); *Slaughter v. ACA Sec. Stems, LP* (LASC No. BC699137) (class size approx. 300; lead counsel); *Taylor v. Sherman's Delicatessen & Bakery, LLC* (LASC No. BC722765) (class size approx. 515; lead counsel); *Vargas v. AMS Paving, Inc*. (LASC No. BC722767) (case size approx. 260; lead counsel); *Vertti v. Bagcraft Papercon III, LLC* (LASC No. 19STCV12729) (class size approx. 260; lead counsel); and *Wallick v. Campbell Soup Supply Co., LLC* (San Joaquin No. STK-CV-UOE-2021-0000865) (class size 435; lead counsel).

ALLEN FEGHALI'S EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

47. Allen Feghali is a partner at Moon Law Group, PC. He received his B.A. in Global and International Studies in 2011 from UC Santa Barbara, and his J.D. from University of La Verne College of Law in 2014. Mr. Feghali became an Active Member of the State Bar of California in December 2014 and has been an Active Member in good standing continuously since then. He was selected by Super Lawyers as a "Southern California Rising Star" in 2020–2023.

48. Mr. Feghali began working at Moon Law Group, PC in May 2015, and his practice has focused on advocating for the rights of employees at the trial-court and appellate level. Prior to roughly June 2018, with the exception of a handful of cases, his practice focused on individual FEHA and wrongful termination claims, as well as individual wage-and-hour claims. Since June 2018, Mr. Feghali's practice has shifted to almost exclusively representing employees in wage-and-hour class and PAGA representative actions.

49. Mr. Feghali's current billing rate is $900.00 per hour, which is his usual rate in wage-and-hour litigations. Based on Mr. Feghali's 11 years of experience out of law school, his Laffey Matrix rate with a

2.53% adjustment is $971.98 per hour ($948 Laffey Matrix rate + (2.53% x $948)). (*See* Exh. 6.) As compared to the Laffey Matrix rate and when considering his significant wage-and-hour class action experience, Mr. Feghali's billing rate of $900 per hour is reasonable.

50. During Mr. Feghali's tenure with Moon Law Group, PC, he has played a critical role in obtaining outstanding results for employees who have been wronged by their employers. Mr. Feghali's litigation experience includes, but is not limited to:

(a) In March 2021, Mr. Feghali prepared the briefing in the matter of *Rivera, et al. v. Clearpath Federal Credit Union* (LASC No. 19STCV33504), which resulted in a certification order on all causes of action following contested briefing in a wage-and-hour class action.

(b) Mr. Feghali prepared the briefing in a contested class certification motion in the matter of *Dawson, et al. v. GoHealth, LLC, et al.* (No. CGC-19-577790), which was argued and taken under submission by the Court on February 3, 2022.

(c) Mr. Feghali prepared the briefing in a contested class certification motion in the matter of *Brown v. NTI-CA, Inc., et al.* (No. 21STCV04397), which is not currently scheduled for hearing.

(d) Mr. Feghali was part of a team that prepared the briefing in a contested class certification motion in the matter of *Thong, et al. v. Outlook Resources, Inc., et al*. (No. 19STCV44400), which was granted, in part, and denied, in part, in October 2022.

(e) Mr. Feghali prepared the briefing which resulted in a remand order in the matter of *Andrade v. Rehrig Pacific Corp.* (C.D. Cal. April 22, 2020) No. CV 20-1448 FMP (RAOx), 2020 WL 1934954, where Defendant removed a wage-and-hour class alleging that Plaintiff's claims were pre-empted by the Labor Management Relations Act.

(f) Mr. Feghali briefed, argued, and won the matter of *Lee, et al. v. The Christian Herald, U.S.A., Inc.* (Cal. Ct. App. Dec. 12, 2017) No. B266853, 2017 WL 6333905, at *1. There, the Court of Appeal reversed a dismissal of an individual defendant following the trial court's granting of a demurrer without leave to amend relating to alter ego allegations.

(g) Mr. Feghali prepared the briefing which resulted in a remand order in the matter of *Sotelo v. Belfor USA Group, Inc.* (C.D. Cal. Mar. 13, 2018) No. 2:17–cv–09056–RSWL–MRWx, 2018 WL 1352910. Defendants there sought to remove the case based on the inclusion of a "sham defendant," but the court agreed with Mr. Feghali's briefing which argued that the individual defendant, who was alleged to have harassed the plaintiff under FEHA, was a proper defendant.

(h) Mr. Feghali has been the lead counsel, or co-lead counsel, in individual cases that settled for $850,000.00, $375,000.00, and $250,000.00. In addition to the foregoing, Mr. Feghali has resolved or assisted in the resolution of approximately 100 cases which has resulted in millions of dollars of unpaid wages being returned to low-wage employees.

(i) Mr. Feghali was part of a team that prepared the briefing in a contested class certification motion in the matter of Hernandez v. CR Laurence, Inc., et al. (No. 20STCV32372), which was granted, in part, and denied, in part, in February 2024.

51. Since June 2018, Mr. Feghali's practice has shifted to almost exclusively representing employees in wage-and-hour class and PAGA representative actions. His fee has been approved by Courts throughout the state. He has participated as lead, or co-lead counsel, in the litigation and resolution of over 100 wage-and-hour class actions, including obtaining preliminary and final approval of settlements. A selection of settled cases wherein Mr. Feghali served as lead or co-lead class counsel includes the following: *Barahona v. Methodist Hosp. of Cal*. (No. 20STCV09876) ($5,000,000); *Vazquez v. St. Mar 2.0 Inc.* (No. 37-2021-00042702-CU-OE-CTL) ($2,250,000); *Duncan v. Infineon Technologies Americas Corp*. (No. 21STCV16872) ($2,500,000); *Aquino v. Coast King Packing, LLC* (No. 21CV002448) ($2,300,000); *Martinez, et al. v. Curative LLC* (No. 21STCV20778) ($1,500,000); *Calderon v. Installed Building Products* (No. 37-2021-00035844-CU-OE-CTL) ($1,500,000); *Majdoub v. Argent Hotel Mgmt.* (No. CGC-20-582921) ($1,800,000); *Fuentes v. Covid Clinic, Inc*. (No. CIVSB2106806) ($1,526,317.57); *Rahman, et al. v. Gate Gourmet, Inc*. (No. 3:20-cv-03047) ($3,850,000); *Pagoulatos v. Coast Hills Credit Union* (No. 20CV02801) ($1,100,000); *Hammers v. Redwood Oil Co., Inc*. (No. SCV-269625) ($1,180,000); *Cuadras v. R.C. Wendt Painting, Inc*. (No. BC705964) ($1,400,000); *Zaragoza v. The Roman Catholic Bishop of Fresno* (No. 22CV-00282) ($1,500,000); *Garcia v. San Jose Water Co.* (22CV396328) ($1,200,000); *Garcia v. Tri-Valley Plastering, Inc*. (No. 22CECG00591) ($1,250,000); *Garcia v. Tapia Enter., Inc*. ($2,137,651 for 507 class members); *Cha v. Center Point, Inc*. (No. CIV2102081) ($1,000,000); *Sison v. Cha Hollywood Med.*

Ctr., L.P. (No. BC644129) (2,137 class members); *Lagos v. ThyssenKrupp Elevator Corp.* (No. BC682972) ($750,000 for 79 class members); and *Montoya v. Golden 1 Credit Union* (No. 34-2018-00228252) ($1,250,000).

DANIEL PARK'S EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

52. Daniel J. Park is a Senior Associate at Moon Law Group, PC. He received his undergraduate degree from New York University Stern School of Business and earned a Juris Doctorate from Boston College Law School. He was admitted to practice in California in 2010. He is admitted to practice in the Courts of the State of California. The focus of his practice is class action wage and hour law. He has worked on multiple class action cases that have been granted final approval, including *McKinnon, et al. v. Renovate America, Inc., et al.*, San Diego Case No. 37-2015-00038150-CU-OE-CTL, *Hollinger, et al. v. Safety Management Systems, LLC, et al.,* Kern County Superior Court Case No. S-1500-CV-284499, *Novak v. Midlands Management Corporation et al.,* Los Angeles County Superior Court Case No. BC567052, *Van Goey v. Pro's Choice Beauty Care, Inc.*, Los Angeles County Superior Court Case No. BC545400, *Zaydenberg v. Crocs Retail, Inc.*, Los Angeles County Superior Court Case No. BC554213, *Aceves et al. v. Cambro Manufacturing Company*, Orange County Superior Court Case No. 30-2015-00810013-CU-OE-CXC, *Hynick v. AmeriFirst Financial, Inc.*, Los Angeles County Superior Court Case No. BC573246, *Murillo v. W. A. Thompson, Inc.*, Kern County Superior Court Case No. BCV-16-1019974, *Windham v. T.F. Louderback, Inc. dba Bay Area Beverage Company*, Contra Costa Superior County Case No. MSC16-00861, *Hernandez v. NuCO2 Management*, LLC, Kern County Superior Court Case No. BCV-17-102571, *Rafferty v. Academy Mortgage Corporation*, Sacramento County Superior Court Case No. 34-2016-00191285-CU-OE-GDS, *Torrez v. Freedom Mortgage Company*, San Bernardino County Superior Court Case No. CIVDS 1709351, *Madrigal v. Couch Distributing Company*, Santa Cruz County Superior Court Case No. 15-CV-00439, *Hayes v. Advanced Drainage Systems, Inc.*, Kern County Superior Court Case No. BCV-17-101019-SDS, *McCollumn v. Delta Tech Service, Inc.*, Solano County Superior Court Case No. FCS049504, *Carr et al. v. American Security Products Company*, San Bernardino County Superior Court Case No. CIVDS1606769, *Carr v. So-Cal Structural Steel Fabrication, Inc.* San Bernardino County Superior Court Case No. CIVDS1605828, *John et al. v. Rival Well Services Incorporated* Kern County Superior Court Case No. BCV-15-100504, *Marking et al. v.*

Randy's Trucking, Inc. Kern County Superior Court Case No. BCV-15-100180, *Navarro v. Trans-West Intermodal, Inc*. San Bernardino County Superior Court Case No. CIVDS1700850, *Ramirez v. Mashburn Transportation Services, Inc.,* Kern County Superior Court Case No. BCV-15-100591, *Vega et al. v. Advance Beverage Co, Inc.*, Kern County Superior Court Case No. BCV-16-100848, *Turner v. Alliance Residential, LLC*, Sacramento County Superior Court Case No. 34-2016-00199504-CU-OE-GDS, *Arman v. Circor Aerospace, Inc*., Riverside County Superior Court Case No. RIC1613578, *Bigby et al v. Eugene Burger Management Corporation* Sacramento County Superior Court Case No. 34-2015-00182515-CU-OE-GDS, *Garcia et al. v. Glide Rite* Los Angeles County Superior Court Case No. BC665485, *Lee v. Westside Habitats, LLC*, Los Angeles County Superior Court Case No. BC702296, *Morel et al. v. Aseptic Solutions USA Ventures, LLC*, Riverside County Superior Court Case No. RIC1711383, and *Orosco v. Visonary Home Builders of California*, Sacramento County Superior Court Case No. 34-2017-00210368-CU-OE-GDS. He was also certified as class counsel in *Hoffman v. Blattner Energy Inc.*, Central District of California Case No. EDCV 14-02195-DMG (DTBx), a case that was certified as a class action after a contested certification motion. Recently, Mr. Park was also certified as class counsel in the coordinated class action matter *In re: Arriaga and Associates Wage and Hour Cases* (Coordinated Case No. JCCP4980), a contested action that went to a jury trial resulting in a tentative judgment against the defendants of over $15 million.

53. Prior to joining Moon Law Group, PC. Mr. Park worked on both the plaintiff and defense side of employment litigation, at Justice Law Corporation, and Bradley Gmelich & Wellerstein LLP, respectively. At Justice Law Corporation, Mr. Park exclusively focused on the prosecution of consumer and employment class actions, involving wage-and-hour claims and unfair business practices. Mr. Park successfully handled more than one hundred California class and representative wage and hour actions. He worked on multiple consumer-side class action cases that have been granted final approval. At Bradley Gmelich & Wellerstein LLP, Mr. Park represented dozens of defendants in class action wage and hour cases and PAGA representative actions. Mr. Park's current billing rate is $850 per hour. Based on Mr. Park's 15 years of experience out of law school, his Laffey Matrix rate with a 2.53% adjustment is $971.98 per hour ($948 Laffey Matrix rate + (2.53% x $948)). (*See* Exh. 6.) As compared to the Laffey Matrix rate and when considering his significant wage-and-hour class action experience, Mr. Park's

billing rate of $850 per hour is reasonable.

ROY SUH'S EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

54. Roy Suh worked for Moon Law Group, PC as an associate attorney and his customary billing rate in wage and hour litigations was $675.00 per hour. Mr. Suh was admitted to the California bar in 2012 and performed all work in this matter on a contingent fee basis and, at times, in lieu of performing work on other matters. Based on Mr. Suh's 14 years of experience, his Laffey Matrix rate with a 2.53% adjustment is $971.98 per hour ($948 Laffey Matrix rate + (2.53% x $948)). (*See* Exh. 6.) As compared to the Laffey Matrix rate and when considering his experience, Mr. Suh's billing rate of $675.00 per hour is reasonable.

55. Mr. Suh graduated with a B.A. in English from the University of California, Berkeley in 2004 with Distinction in General Scholarship and as a United States Army, Reserve Officer Training Corps, Distinguished Military Graduate. After serving in active duty with the United States Army, including as a two-time company commander exercising non-judicial punishment authority under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, Mr. Suh graduated from the University of California Los Angeles School of Law in the Class of 2011.

56. Since becoming a member of the California bar and while working for my firm, Mr. Suh practiced exclusively in Plaintiff's employment and consumer cases. Mr. Suh is experienced in California employment class action litigation. From October 2019 to 2022, Mr. Suh was selected as a Super Lawyer – Rising Star. Mr. Suh has been intimately involved in litigating and ultimately settling California employment class action cases and, since 2015, Mr. Suh has settled employment class action cases with settlement values of $4,000,000.00, $3,775,000.00, $3,500,000.00, $3,000,000.00, $1,350.000.00, $1,000,000.00, and others in the six-figure range, while settling multiple individual cases in the six-figure range, including a single-claimant arbitration case valued at over $800,000.00. Since February 2022, as an attorney at Moon Law Group, PC, Mr. Suh has worked on class action cases exclusively, which have either been finally adjudged, have been preliminarily approved, or have resulted in written agreements memorializing our clients' agreements with their former employers to settle on class-wide bases valued at over $13.4M including cases valued at $1,671,690.00, $1,100,000.00, $1,000,000.00,

and more.

PAGA COUNSEL'S EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

57. As demonstrated by the foregoing, my office is qualified to handle this litigation because we are experienced in litigating Labor Code and Wage Order violations in individual, class, and representative actions. The attorneys at my office have been appointed as lead or co-lead counsel in numerous wage-and-hour class and/or PAGA actions in state and federal courts by way of motion for settlement approval. Including myself, Moon Law Group, PC is currently comprised of roughly 35 attorneys, all of whom are actively and continuously practicing employment litigation, representing almost entirely employee-plaintiffs, in both individual and class and/or PAGA actions, in this Superior Court and other Superior Courts throughout the State, in the Courts of Appeal, and in various federal courts. The attorneys at my firm have a high level of skill, knowledge, and experience in areas of wage-and-hour class and PAGA actions, and labor and employment law generally, the substantiative (state and federal) and procedural law of which is frequently.

58. Moon Law Group, PC has been engaged in the practice of employment and labor law for over a decade and presently focuses exclusively on plaintiffs' employment law. The firm and its lawyers have tried both bench and jury trials (representing both plaintiffs and defendants) in employment-related matters. As noted above, my firm has been appointed lead or co-lead class counsel in federal and state courts in California. Also, the firm and its lawyers have successfully settled hundreds of cases during that time, including wage-and-hour class and/or PAGA actions.

59. The foregoing experience of myself and other attorneys of Moon Law Group, PC is helpful in assessing the reasonableness of settlements, such as the one at issue here, and from this experience we concluded that this litigation could not have been settled on better terms than provided under the proposed Settlement.

60. I do not believe that I or any other attorneys of my firm have any conflicts of interest with Plaintiff Velasco, Plaintiff Pereira or her counsel Crosner Legal, PC, with Aggrieved Employees, or with the proposed Administrator. I am not related to Plaintiffs. I respectfully submit that Moon Law Group, PC is competent and well suited to act as PAGA Counsel in this action, and we have and will continue to vigorously represent the interests of the Aggrieved Employees.

REQUEST FOR ATTORNEYS' FEES AND COSTS

61. In line with the Settlement, PAGA Counsel requests an award of attorneys' fees in an amount of one-third of the GSA (i.e., no less than $626,666.67), plus reimbursement for actual litigation costs in the amount of $29,372.39 ($21,004.98 from Moon Law Group, PC; $8,367.41 from Crosner Legal, PC). (*See* Settlement, ¶ 1.19.) As discussed above, PAGA Counsel agree per the Joint Prosecution Agreement that the PAGA Counsel Fees Payment shall be divided 75% ($470,000.00) to Moon Law Group, PC and 25% ($156,666.67) to Crosner Legal, PC.

62. The requested PAGA Counsel Fees Payment can be justified under either the common fund or lodestar method. However, we base the requested award on the common fund method. Nonetheless, the lodestar method can be used to cross-check the reasonableness of the award calculated under the common fund method.

63. The total current lodestar for Moon Law Group, PC is *not less than* the following:

Attorney	**Rate**	**Hours**	**Lodestar**
Kane Moon	$950.00	32.9	$31,255.00
Allen Feghali	$900.00	19.7	$17,730.00
Daniel J. Park	$850.00	47.7	$40,545.00
Roy Suh	$675.00	45.1	$30,442.50
	Total:	**145.4**	**$119,972.50**

64. Attached hereto as **Exhibit 9** are true and correct copies of the billing entries for myself, Mr. Feghali, Mr. Park, and Mr. Suh. There are additional hours devoted to this litigation by the attorneys and legal assistants in my office that are not reflected in the foregoing lodestar, including additional attorney time that will be spent to obtain and monitor approval of the Settlement and requested awards, oversee the settlement administration process and distribution of funds, respond to inquiries, and communicate with Plaintiff Velasco regarding the case. I estimate that my office will commit *no less than* 10 hours, although likely more time, to these additional tasks, which are hours not included in the foregoing lodestar total. My office also

bears the risk of taking whatever actions are necessary if Defendant fails to pay. At my $950 hourly rate, these additional 10 hours results in a lodestar of **$9,500.00**.

65. "California case law permits fee awards in the absence of detailed time sheets." (*Wershba v. Apple Comp., Inc.* (2001) 91 Cal.App.4th 224, 255.) The Court "should defer to the winning lawyer's professional judgment as to how much time he was required to spend on the case." (*Moreno v. City of Sacramento* (9th Cir. 2008) 534 F.3d 1106, 1112.) We can provide complete, detailed billing records in the event the Court requests them but would request the opportunity to redact attorney-client privileged information and any other privileged information. As discussed below, application of a positive multiplier is warranted in this case.

66. The lodestar method requires the Court to determine a "touchstone" or lodestar figure based on a compilation of time spent and reasonable hourly compensation for each attorney. (*Graham v. DaimlerChrysler Corp.* (2004) 34 Cal.4th 553, 579.) Generally, hours are reasonable if they were "reasonably expended in pursuit of the ultimate result achieved in the same manner that an attorney traditionally is compensated by a fee-paying client." (*Hensley v. Eckerhart* (1983) 461 U.S. 424, 431.)

(a) <u>Number of Hours Expended by My Office is Reasonable</u>: As set forth in this declaration, my office expended a significant amount of time litigating the case to achieve an excellent result on behalf of the Aggrieved Employees. To date, my office has spent no less than **145.4 hours** litigating this case. In the event the Court grants settlement approval, my office will spend additional time related to this litigation, including to monitor administration of the settlement after approval, committing no less, although likely more, than **10** hours to those additional tasks. The number of hours that my office has and will devote to this case is reasonable. (*See, e.g.*, *Ketchum III v. Moses* (2001) 24 Cal.4th 1122, 1133 [fee award should be fully compensatory and, "absent circumstances rendering the award unjust, an attorney fee award should ordinarily include compensation for *all* the hours *reasonably spent*"] [emphasis in original]; *Serrano v. Unruh* (1982) 32 Cal. 3d 621, 624 [counsel are entitled to compensation for all hours reasonably expended]; *Hensley*, *supra*, 461 U.S. at pp. 435–36; *Caudle v. Bristow Optical Co.* (9th Cir. 2000) 224 F.3d 1014, 1028; *Cabrales v. Cty. of L.A.* (9th Cir. 1991) 935 F.2d 1050, 1052–53.) As discussed above, my office was required to expend considerable time and resources to investigate, litigate, and successfully settle these claims for the benefit of the Aggrieved Employees.

(b) The Attorneys' Hourly Rates are Reasonable: "[T]he established standard when determining a reasonable hourly rate is the 'rate prevailing in the community for similar work performed by attorneys of comparable skill, experience, and reputation.'" (*Camacho v. Bridgeport Fin., Inc.* (9th Cir. 2008) 523 F.3d 973, 979 [quoting *Barjon v. Dalton* (9th Cir. 1997) 132 F.3d 496, 502].) This rule applies even when, as here, the attorneys representing a named plaintiff perform the work on a contingent fee basis. (*See, e.g.*, *Robertson v. Fleetwood Travel Trailers of Cal., Inc.* (2006) 144 Cal.App.4th 785, 818; *Blanchard v. Bergeron* (1989) 489 U.S. 87, 96.) These hourly rates are reasonable in light of the significant experience, expertise, and skill my firm brought to this action. Rates are reasonable if they are "within the range of reasonable rates charged by and judicially awarded comparable attorneys for comparable work." (*Children's Hosp. & Med. Ctr. v. Bonta* (2002) 97 Cal.App.4th 740, 783.) The trial court may "find hourly rates reasonable based on evidence of other courts approving similar rates." (*Parkinson v. Hyundai Motor Am.* (C.D. Cal. 2010) 796 F.Supp.2d 1160, 1172.) The attorneys at Moon Law Group, PC are experienced litigators who specialize in employment law, with a substantial wage-and-hour class action practice. The hourly rates of each attorney are also reasonable as compared to their respective Laffey Matrix rates as explained *supra*. Moreover, these rates are not opposed or challenged, and have been approved by other courts, as explained *supra*.

(c) Application of a Multiplier Is Warranted: Once this lodestar figure has been determined, the Court may take into account other "enhancement" factors to adjust the lodestar award. As the California Supreme Court has held, contingency fees should be higher than fees for the same legal services paid concurrently with the provision of the services. (*Ketchum III*, *supra*, 24 Cal.4th at pp. 1132–33; *see also Fischel v. Equitable Life Assurance Soc'y of the U.S.* (9th Cir. 2002) 307 F.3d 997, 1008.) "A lawyer who both bears the risk of not being paid and provides legal services is not receiving the fair market value of his work if he is paid only for the second of these functions. If he is paid no more, competent counsel will be reluctant to accept fee award cases." (*Ketchum,* 24 Cal.4th at p. 1133.) Application of that rule is particularly appropriate where the case is brought to redress important rights of vulnerable persons. (*Id.*) A risk enhancement is "earned compensation; unlike a windfall, it is neither unexpected nor fortuitous. Rather, it is intended to approximate market-level compensation for such services, which typically includes a premium for the risk of nonpayment or delay in payment of attorney fees." (*Id.* at p. 1138.) **Multipliers normally range from two to four or higher.** (*Wershba*, *supra*, 91 Cal.App.4th at p. 255; *see also Vizcaino v. Microsoft Corp.* (9th Cir. 2002) 290 F.3d 1043, 1051, n.6 ["most" common fund cases apply a multiplier of 1.0–4.0]; *Been v. O.K. Indus., Inc.* (E.D. Okla. 2011, No. CIV–02–285–RAW) 2011 WL 4478766, *11 [citing a study "reporting [an] average multiplier of 3.89 in survey of 1,120 class action cases" and finding that a multiplier of 1.22 would be "per se reasonable"].) Factors considered in determining whether a lodestar multiplier is appropriate generally include: (1) the risks presented by the contingent nature of the case; (2) the novelty and difficulty of the questions involved and the skill requisite to perform the legal service properly; (3) the nature of the opposition; (4) the preclusion of other employment by the attorney due to acceptance of the case; and (5) the result obtained and the importance of the lawsuit to the public. (*Serrano v. Ivy Baker Priest* (1977) 20 Cal. 3d 25, 48–49 [hereinafter "*Serrano III*"].) All these factors favor approval of a multiplier along the lines of those approved in the cases above. To date, my office has incurred no less than **$119,972.50** in attorneys' lodestar fees, anticipates incurring at least another $9,500.00 in lodestar fees, and has advanced **$21,004.98** in actual litigation costs. Thus, after reimbursement of our out-of-pocket expenses, Moon Law Group, PC's portion of the fee request of $470,000.00 is a multiplier of **3.92** of the lodestar fees incurred to-date in prosecuting this case.

1) *Risks presented by the contingent nature of the case*: The major consideration in determining the necessity of a multiplier is the contingent nature of the award. (*Ketchum III*, *supra*, 24 Cal.4th at pp. 1132–33; *see also Fischel*, *supra*, 307 F.3d at p. 1008.) In determining what multiplier to award, the probability of success must be assessed *ex*

ante, that is, as viewed from the outset of the case. (*See, e.g.*, *Harman v. Lyphomed, Inc.* (7th Cir. 1991) 945 F.2d 969, 976.) Further, the possibility of no recovery is only one of the uncertainties involved in taking on such a case. Other uncertainties are the amount that will be recovered, uncertainty as to the cost, both in effort and expenses, and uncertainty about how much time will pass before the recovery is obtained. (*See, e.g.*, *Ketchum*, 24 Ca1.4th at pp. 1132–1133, 1138.) My office's outlay of time and money in this case has been significant. In all, my office has spent *no less than* **145.4** hours to date investigating, analyzing, researching, litigating, and negotiating a favorable resolution of this case, in addition to *a minimum of* **10** hours that will be spent following final settlement approval, including to monitor settlement administration and distribution of funds, and has incurred $**21,004.98** in necessary litigation costs. Unsettled legal issues also presented risks to the claims in this case. My office bore the substantial risk of an uncertain outcome in agreeing to prosecute this PAGA action on a contingency fee basis, as well as the difficulties and delay inherent in such litigation. There was the prospect of the enormous cost inherent in PAGA representative action litigation, as well as extensive negotiations with a corporate Defendant who vigorously opposed Plaintiff's claims and right to pursue her individual or class action claims in state court. My office risked significant time and expense to ensure a successful settlement. As detailed *supra*, the risks presented in this case were significant, and Defendant's defenses posed serious risks to the success of this PAGA matter on the merits, assuming we were first successful at proving the merits of Plaintiff's individual claims at arbitration. These risks illustrate the recognition by the California Supreme Court in *Ketchum III* that, if multipliers are not awarded to PAGA counsel in the cases that are successfully settled, counsel's fees are essentially being cut because the lodestar in and of itself would not account for contingent risk.

2) *Difficulty of the questions involved and the skill required*: My office is comprised of skilled attorneys who have had success in wage-and-hour class and PAGA actions. This case required experienced and competent lawyers, as well as expertise in the issues

presented herein. To obtain such an attorney on the free market, a client must pay the market rate. While most class/PAGA actions are complex and involve some risk, my office had to overcome several major obstacles in prosecuting this case, as explained *supra*. Defendant's contentions underscore the risk of prevailing at trial, and any of these obstacles could have prevented recovery completely.

3) *Vigorous opposition by Defendant*: Counsel who skillfully overcome difficult issues or uncompromising opposition in the litigation are entitled to a fee enhancement. (*Serrano III*, *supra*, 20 Cal.3d at 49.) Here, before eventually agreeing to a settlement, Defendant asserted a vigorous defense and challenged Plaintiff's ability to litigate his individual and class action claims, filing and litigating a motion to compel arbitration. The settlement effort was protracted, with extended discussions and instances in which it appeared the Parties would not reach a settlement. Further, proceeding to arbitration, and if successful, then trial would have added years to the resolution of this case because of the difficult legal and factual issues raised and the likelihood of appeals. Indeed, even if Plaintiffs prevailed on the representative PAGA claims at trial, assuming he was first successful at arbitration, Defendant would likely have mounted an appeal.

4) *The extent to which litigation precluded other employment would justify an enhancement*: There are only so many cases that my office can take at any one time. Consequently, there were other meritorious cases presented to my office that would have generated substantial fees, but were declined, during the pendency of this action in order to devote the attention necessary to achieve favorable results.

5) *The result obtained would justify an enhancement*: The results obtained in litigation can properly be used to enhance a lodestar calculation where an exceptional effort produced excellent results. (*Graham*, *supra*, 34 Cal.4th at p. 582.) Here, the final maximum settlement figure is **$1,880,000**, which represents roughly **56%** of the total realistic recovery. Considered against the size of the Aggrieved Employees, the risks posed by continued litigation, and the importance of the employment rights and a speedy

recovery, the relief provided under the Settlement represents a very strong result for the Aggrieved Employees and LWDA.

6) *The use of a multiplier is permitted in PAGA actions*: PAGA provides that "[a]ny employee who prevails in any action shall be entitled to an award of reasonable attorney's fees and costs." (Lab. Code § 2699(k)(1).) Although, PAGA does not provide a specific standard for evaluating attorneys' fees in connection with a settlement of PAGA claims, California Courts have employed a lodestar analysis and use of multipliers for this purpose. "Where a settlement produces a common fund for the benefit of the entire class, courts have discretion to employ either the lodestar method or the percentage-of-recovery method. . . . To guard against an unreasonable result, the Ninth Circuit encourages district courts to "cross-check[] their calculations against a second method. . . . Accordingly, the Court calculates attorneys' fees in the instant case using the percentage-of-recovery method and then cross-checks its calculations against the lodestar method." (*Hermosillo v. Davey Tree Surgery Co.* (N.D. Cal. July 7, 2021) No. 18-CV-00393-LHK, 2021 WL 2826697, at *1 [quoting *In re Bluetooth Headset Prods. Liab. Litig.* (9th Cir. 2011) 654 F.3d 935, 942, 944–45].)

67. I am informed and believe that the fees and costs provision under the Settlement is reasonable. My office invested significant time and resources into the case, with payment deferred to the end of the case, and then, of course, contingent on the outcome.

68. The risk to my office has been very significant, particularly if we would not be successful in pursuing this representative action. In that case, we would have been left with no compensation for all the time taken in litigating this case. Indeed, I have taken on a number of class and/or PAGA action cases that have resulted in thousands of attorney hours being expended and ultimately having the defendant company going bankrupt. The contingent risk in these types of cases is very real and occurs regularly. Furthermore, we were precluded from focusing on, or taking on, other cases which could have resulted in a larger, and less risky, monetary gain.

69. Because most individuals cannot afford to pay for legal representation on an hourly basis, Moon Law Group, PC represents virtually all its employment law clients on a contingency fee basis, including

Plaintiff Velasco in this action. Pursuant to this arrangement, we are not compensated for our time unless we prevail at trial or our clients' cases are successfully settled. Because Moon Law Group, PC is taking the risk that we will not be reimbursed for our time unless our client settles or wins his or her case, we cannot afford to represent an individual employee on a contingency basis if, at the end of our representation, all we are to receive is our regular hourly rate for services. It is essential that we recover more than our regular hourly rate when we win if we are to remain in practice so as to be able to continue representing other individuals in civil rights employment disputes.

70. My office invested significant time and resources into the case, with payment deferred to the end of the case, and then, of course, contingent on the outcome. My office's efforts have included, and will include following an approval order, without limitation, the following:

a. Numerous interviews with Plaintiff Velasco and review of documents provided by him;

b. Legal research and investigation regarding the Defendant's practices at numerous points in the litigation;

c. Preparation and submission of Plaintiff Velasco's PAGA Notice;

d. Preparation of multiple drafts of the original class action complaint and subsequent amended complaint, as well as finalization and filing of said complaints;

e. Extensive meet-and-confer discussions with Defendant's counsel regarding the arbitration agreement and the impact on Plaintiff Velasco's class action claims;

f. Drafting and litigation of opposition to Defendant's petition to compel arbitration;

g. Extensive meet-and-confer discussions with co-counsel Crosner Legal, PC regarding this case and the Pereira Action;

h. Preparation of multiple drafts of the JPA with co-counsel;

i. Informal discovery activity;

j. Extensive meet-and-confer discussions with Defendant's counsel regarding mediator selection and production of relevant documents and information in preparation for mediation through informal discovery;

k. Analysis of Defendant's informal discovery production;

l. Extensive meet-and-confer discussions with co-counsel regarding litigation strategy prior to mediation;

m. Contacting witnesses;

n. Research and preparation of Plaintiffs' mediation brief;

o. Attendance and active participation at a full day of mediation;

p. Drafting, negotiating, and reviewing multiple drafts of the Settlement and its attachment;

q. Preparation and submission of the instant motion for settlement approval and accompanying filings;

r. Anticipated preparation for and attendance at the hearing on the motion for approval, monitoring approval of the Settlement and requested awards, and overseeing the administration process and distribution of funds; and

s. Communications with Plaintiff Velasco throughout the case.

71. As of the drafting of this motion, my office has incurred **$21,004.98** in expenses litigating this action without any reimbursement. (Ex. 4.) These expenses were reasonably necessary to the litigation and were actually incurred by my office. These to-date expenses are summarized as follows:

(a) "LWDA Fee": a one-time cost for submitting Plaintiff's PAGA Notice to the LWDA;

(b) "Complaint": the initial case filing fee for initiating Plaintiff's action;

(c) "Berger Consulting Group": costs of expert review of discovery for mediation;

(d) "Mediator – Marc Feder": a one-time cost for mediation services;

(e) "ACE," "OC Court," and "Admin": costs for purchasing court documents, and for filing and serving various documents during this Action.

72. We anticipate incurring additional costs up to and after Settlement approval, including filing costs for the approval motion and any notice of entry of approval order and judgment. However, at this time, we are only requesting reimbursement of our to-date costs (**$21,004.98**). Moreover, because the combined costs of Plaintiffs' Counsel are below the maximum allocation ($40,000) under the Settlement, the difference ($40,000 - $29,372.39 = $10,627.61 will revert to PAGA Penalties. (Settlement, ¶ 1.20.) I respectfully submit that our reimbursement request is fair and reasonable.

73. Through the efforts of my office and Plaintiffs in this case, and the efforts of co-counsel Crosner Legal, PC, a fair and reasonable resolution has been reached that includes a non-reversionary payment by Defendant of $1,880,000 to compensate Aggrieved Employees for Defendant's alleged employment practices. I am informed and believe that, without the efforts of my office or Plaintiffs, and the efforts of co-counsel Crosner Legal, PC, the Labor Code and Wage Order violations alleged in this action would have gone completely unremedied.

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I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on March 3, 2026, at Los Angeles, California.

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Kane Moon