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February 14, 2025

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Re: James Breedlove v. CoStar Realty Information, Inc.
California Labor Code § 2699 Penalties

Gentlepersons:

This office represents James Breedlove (“Plaintiff”) and a proposed group of current and former employees working for CoStar Realty Information, Inc. (“Defendant”) in the State of California. The purpose of this letter is to comply with the Private Attorneys General Act of 2004, pursuant to California Labor Code § 2698, *et. seq.* We herein set forth the facts and theories of California Labor Code violations which we allege Defendant engaged in with respect to Plaintiff and all of Defendant’s aggrieved employees.

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Plaintiff wishes to bring a representative action on behalf of himself and the State of California as well as on behalf of a group of aggrieved employees defined as: All persons who are employed or have been employed as a photographer, architectural photographer, or similar title, by CoStar Realty Information, Inc., in the State of California who worked one or more pay periods since one (1) year prior to the date of this letter and continuing to the present. (“aggrieved employees”).

Defendant committed wage and hour violations under California’s Labor Code against Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees due to the fact that Defendant classified Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees as exempt employees. As a result of the misclassification, Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees are not properly paid overtime pay or provided with meal and rest periods.

As a result of the misclassification of Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees as exempt employees, Defendant has violated Labor Code §§ 510, 1194, 1194.2 and 1199. These statutes require an employer to compensate its employees at the minimum wage rate for all hours worked and at a rate of no less than one and one-half times the regular rate of pay for any work in excess of eight hours in one workday and any work in excess of 40 hours in any one workweek.

Here, Defendant has had a consistent policy of failing to pay wages and/or overtime to Plaintiff and all aggrieved employees. Plaintiff and other aggrieved employees were not properly compensated for all hours worked over eight (8) hours in one day or forty (40) hours in one week. Wage Order 4-2001 creates exemptions from overtime, but Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees do not meet the requirements for any of those exemptions. Defendants did not pay Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees legally required overtime and minimum wage.

Additionally, Plaintiff and other aggrieved employees were also not properly compensated for all hours worked because, Defendant fails to pay Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees for each and every hour worked. Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees frequently worked overtime for which Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees were not compensated.

Labor Code §§ 226.7 and 512 require an employer to pay an additional hour of compensation for each meal period the employer fails to provide. Employees are entitled to a first meal period of at least thirty (30) minutes for shifts over five (5) hours, to be provided within the first five (5) hours of the shift, and a second meal period of at least thirty (30) minutes for shifts over ten (10) hours. Likewise, the Wage Orders (4-2001) state that: An employer may not employ an employee for a work period of more than ten (10) hours per day without providing the employee with a second 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. Pursuant to Labor Code § 226.7(c), if an employer fails to provide an employee with a lawful meal period, the employer must pay the employee one (1) hour of pay at the employee’s regular rate of compensation for each workday that a thirty (30) minute uninterrupted meal period was not provided, was not provided in full, or

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was not provided in a timely manner.

As a result of the misclassification of Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees as exempt employees, Defendant violated Labor Code §§ 226.7 and 512. Here, Defendant failed to apprise Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees of their rights associated with meal periods and failed to provide timely meal periods. Defendant failed to maintain a policy of informing Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees of these rights, since Defendant misclassified Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees as exempt employees. Defendant has had a consistent policy of: (1) failing to provide Plaintiff and all aggrieved employees uninterrupted meal periods; and (2) failing to pay such employees one (1) hour of pay at the employees' regular rate of compensation for each workday that the compliant meal period was not provided.

As a result of the misclassification of Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees as exempt employees, Defendant violated Labor Code §§ 226.7. Pursuant to Labor Code § 226.7 and Wage Order 4-2001, Defendant failed to provide Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees with rest breaks of not less than ten (10) minutes per four (4) hour work period, or major fraction thereof. Additionally, on a regular and consistent basis, Defendant failed to provide Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees with a second rest period despite regularly requiring Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees to work over six (6) hours. As Such, Defendant failed to provide Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees with compliant rest periods. Further, Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees were not compensated with one (1) hour of wages for each missed rest period as required by Labor Code § 226.7.

As a result of the claims alleged above, Defendant engaged in a practice of failing to provide accurate itemized wage statements in violation of Labor Code § 226(a) which requires that every employer shall, semimonthly or at the time of each payment of wages, furnish each of his or her employees, an accurate itemized statement in writing showing all applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay period, and the corresponding number of hours worked at each hourly rate by the employee.

Labor Code §226(a)(2) requires that every employer shall semimonthly or at the time of each payment of wages, furnish each of his or her employees, an accurate itemized statement in writing showing the total hours worked by the employee. Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees are issued wage statements that do not include the total hours worked by the employee. As such, Plaintiff is an aggrieved employee within the meaning PAGA and Defendants has violated Labor Code §226(a) with respect to Plaintiff and all aggrieved employees.

Also, Defendant issued to Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees itemized wage statements that did not include all applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay period and the corresponding number of hours worked at each hourly rate by the employee, in violation of Labor Code § 226(a)(9). The itemized wage statements provided to Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees did not include the hours worked at each hourly rate.

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Labor Code § 203 provides that if “an employer willfully fails to pay...any wages of an employee who is discharged or who quits, 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 therefor is commenced; but the wages shall not continue for more than 30 days.” Here, Plaintiff and all aggrieved employees were not paid all wages due upon their separation from Defendant’s employ. As such, Plaintiff is an aggrieved employee and Defendant failed to pay Plaintiff and all aggrieved employees all wages due at the time of termination or within seventy-two (72) hours of their resignation, and have failed to pay those sums for thirty (30) days thereafter in violation of Labor Code §203.

Further, under Labor Code § 2699.3(c)(2)(A), Defendant may cure the alleged violations within thirty-three (33) calendar days of the postmark date of this notice and within that period, give notice by certified mail if the alleged violation is cured, including a description of actions taken.

We are constrained to move forward with the filing of this complaint alleging causes of action pursuant to Labor Code §§ 201, 202, 203, 226(a), 226.7, 510, 512, 1194, 1194.2, 1199, with or without the PAGA claim. Thus, any action by the LWDA would not resolve the entirety of the case, and the interest of judicial economy will be served by allowing the case to proceed as a cohesive whole.

Very truly yours,

KINGSLEY SZAMET EMPLOYMENT
LAWYERS

By: 

Eric B. Kingsley

[EBK/tg]

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