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Attorneys for Plaintiff CHERICE THOMAS,
 on behalf of herself and others similarly situated

**SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
 FOR THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES-CENTRAL DISTRICT**

CHERICE THOMAS, on behalf of herself and
 other aggrieved employees,

Plaintiff,

vs.

CHLB, LLC dba COLLEGE MEDICAL
 CENTER; and DOES 1 to 100, inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No.: **22STCV33026**

PAGA ACTION

**PLAINTIFF CHERICE THOMAS'
 COMPLAINT FOR:**

- 1. CIVIL PENALTIES PURSUANT
 TO THE PRIVATE ATTORNEYS'
 GENERAL ACT OF 2004
 ("PAGA"), LABOR CODE
 SECTIONS 2698, ET SEQ.**

COMES NOW Plaintiff CHERICE THOMAS ("Plaintiff"), who alleges and complains
 against Defendants CHLB, LLC dba COLLEGE MEDICAL CENTER; and DOES 1 to 100,
 inclusive (collectively "Defendants") as follows:

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This is a Private Attorneys' General Act of 2004, Lab. Code §§ 2698, *et seq.*
 ("PAGA") representative action brought by Plaintiff on behalf of the State of California, herself
 and other current and former aggrieved employees of Defendants who worked as hourly non-
 exempt employees in California during the relevant time period seeking civil penalties associated
 with Defendants' violation of the Labor Code based on Defendants' failure to pay wages for all
 hours worked at minimum wage and all overtime hours worked at the overtime rate of pay; failure

1 to authorize or permit all legally required and/or compliant meal periods or pay meal period
2 premium wages; statutory penalties for failure to timely pay earned wages during employment;
3 statutory penalties for failure to provide accurate wage statements. Plaintiff seeks on a
4 representative basis, following notice to the Labor and Workforce Development Agency, civil
5 penalties, reasonable attorneys' fees pursuant to Labor Code section 2699(g)(1) and costs brought
6 on behalf of Plaintiff, the State of California, and others aggrieved.

7 **II. JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

8 2. This Court has jurisdiction over the claims of Plaintiff and all other current and
9 former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees because Plaintiff's lawsuit seeks
10 civil penalties on behalf of herself, all other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly
11 non-exempt employees, and the State of California in excess of twenty-five thousand dollars
12 (\$25,000); Defendants employed Plaintiff and all other current and former aggrieved California-
13 based hourly non-exempt employees; and the injuries to Plaintiff and all other current and former
14 aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees occurred in locations throughout
15 California, including but not limited to Los Angeles County at 2776 Pacific Ave, Long Beach,
16 California 90806

17 3. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Judicial Council of California enacted
18 Emergency Rule 9 to the California Rules of Court, which provided that, notwithstanding any
19 other law, the statutes of limitations and repose for civil causes of action that exceed 180 days are
20 tolled from April 6, 2020, until October 1, 2020.

21 **III. PARTIES**

22 4. Plaintiff brings this action as a representative of the Labor and Workforce
23 Development Agency on behalf of herself and other current and former employees subject to
24 violations of the Labor Code. The named Plaintiff and the persons on whose behalf this action is
25 filed include current, former and/or future employees of Defendants who work, worked, or will
26 work for Defendants as direct employees as well as temporary employees employed through temp
27 agencies as hourly non-exempt employees in California. At all times mentioned herein, the
28 currently named Plaintiff is and was domiciled and a resident and citizen of California and was

1 employed by Defendants in an hourly position at Defendants' location in Los Angeles from
2 approximately from in or around March 18, 2022, through the present.

3 5. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that Defendant CHLB, LLC
4 dba COLLEGE MEDICAL CENTER is authorized to do business within the State of California
5 and is doing business in the State of California and/or that Defendants DOES 1-50 are, and at all
6 times relevant hereto were persons acting on behalf of Defendant CHLB, LLC dba COLLEGE
7 MEDICAL CENTER in the establishment of, or ratification of, the aforementioned illegal wage
8 and hour practices or policies. Defendant CHLB, LLC dba COLLEGE MEDICAL CENTER
9 operates in Los Angeles County and employed Plaintiff and putative class members in Los
10 Angeles County, including but not limited to, at 2776 Pacific Ave, Long Beach, California 90806.

11 6. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that Defendants DOES 1
12 through 50 are corporations or are other business entities or organizations of a nature unknown to
13 Plaintiff that employed Plaintiff and aggrieved California non-exempt employees, permitted
14 Plaintiff and aggrieved employees to work, and exercised control over the wages, hours and
15 working conditions of employment of Plaintiff and aggrieved employees.

16 7. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that Defendants DOES 51
17 through 100 are individuals unknown to Plaintiff. Each of the individual defendants is sued
18 individually and in his or her capacity as an agent, shareholder, owner, representative, manager,
19 supervisor, independent contractor and/or employee of each defendant who violated or caused to
20 be violated the minimum wage and overtime provisions of the Labor Code and/or any provision of
21 the Industrial Welfare Commission's wage orders regulating hours and days of work.

22 8. Plaintiff is unaware of the true names of Defendants DOES 1 through 100. Plaintiff
23 sues said defendants by said fictitious names and will amend this complaint when the true names
24 and capacities are ascertained or when such facts pertaining to liability are ascertained, or as
25 permitted by law or by the Court. Plaintiff is informed and believes that each of the fictitiously
26 named defendants is in some manner responsible for the events and allegations set forth in this
27 complaint.

28 9. Plaintiff makes the allegations in this complaint without any admission that, as to

any particular allegation, Plaintiff bears the burden of pleading, proving, or persuading and Plaintiff reserves all of Plaintiff's right to plead in the alternative.

FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION

CIVIL PENALTIES AND WAGES PURSUANT TO THE PRIVATE ATTORNEYS

GENERAL ACT OF 2004, LABOR CODE SECTIONS 2698, ET SEQ.

(Against all Defendants by Plaintiff)

10. Plaintiff incorporates all paragraphs above as though fully set forth herein.

11. During the period beginning one (1) year preceding Plaintiff sending the initial PAGA Claim Notice to the LWDA to the present, Defendants violated Labor Code sections 204, 226, 226.7, 510, 512, 1194, 1197, and Sections 14 and 15 of the applicable Wage Orders.

12. Specifically, Defendants have committed the following violations of California Labor Code:

13. **Failure to pay wages for all hours worked at the legal minimum wage:** Defendants employed many of their employees, including Plaintiff, as hourly non-exempt employees. In California, an employer is required to pay hourly employees for all "hours worked," which includes all time that an employee is under control of the employer and all time the employee is suffered and permitted to work. This includes the time an employee spends, either directly or indirectly, performing services which inure to the benefit of the employer.

14. Labor Code sections 1194 and 1197 require an employer to compensate employees for all "hours worked" at least at a minimum wage rate of pay as established by the IWC and the Wage Orders.

15. In this case, Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees worked more minutes per shift than Defendants credited them with having worked. Specifically, Defendants failed to pay Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees all wages at the applicable minimum wage for all hours worked due to Defendants' policies, practices, and/or procedures including, but not limited to:

(a) "Rounding down" or "shaving down" Plaintiff and other current and former

1 aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees punches, including punches for meal
2 breaks, to the nearest quarter of an hour to the benefit of Defendants without paying Plaintiff and
3 other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees for this time.

4 16. Therefore, Defendants suffered, permitted, and required Plaintiff and other current
5 and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees to be subject to Defendants'
6 control without paying wages for that time. This resulted in Plaintiff and other current and former
7 aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees working time for which they were not
8 compensated any wages, in violation of Labor Code sections 1194 and 1197 and the applicable
9 Wage Order.

10 17. **Failure to pay wages for overtime hours worked at the overtime rate of pay:**
11 Defendants employed many of their employees, including Plaintiff, as hourly non-exempt
12 employees. In California, an employer is required to pay hourly employees for all "hours worked,"
13 which includes all time that an employee is under control of the employer and all time the
14 employee is suffered and permitted to work. This includes the time an employee spends, either
15 directly or indirectly, performing services that inure to the benefit of the employer.'

16 18. Labor Code sections 510 and 1194 require an employer to compensate employees a
17 higher rate of pay for hours worked in excess of eight (8) hours in a workday, in excess of forty
18 (40) hours in a workweek, and on any seventh consecutive day of work in a workweek:

19 Any work in excess of eight (8) hours in one workday, any work in excess of forty (40)
20 hours in any one (1) workweek, and the first eight (8) hours worked on the seventh day of
21 work in any one (1) workweek, shall be compensated at the rate of no less than one-and-
22 one-half (1.5) times the regular rate of pay for an employee. Any work in excess of twelve
23 (12) hours in one (1) day shall be compensated at the rate of no less than twice the regular
24 rate of pay for an employee. In addition, any work in excess of eight (8) hours on any
25 seventh day of a workweek shall be compensated at the rate of no less than twice the
26 regular rate of pay of an employee.

27 Labor Code section 510.

28 19. In this case, Defendants failed to pay Plaintiff and other current and former
aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees overtime wages for all overtime hours
worked due to Defendants' policies, practices, and/or procedures including, but not limited to:

(a) "Rounding down" or "shaving down" Plaintiff and other current and former

1 aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees punches, including punches for meal
2 breaks, to the nearest quarter of an hour to the benefit of Defendants without paying Plaintiff and
3 other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees for this time.

4 20. The foregoing policies, practices, and/or procedures resulted in time during each
5 workday that Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt
6 employees were under the control of Defendants but were not compensated. To the extent that the
7 foregoing uncompensated time occurred when Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved
8 California-based hourly non-exempt employees worked more than eight (8) hours in a workday,
9 more than forty (40) hours in a workweek, and/or seven (7) days in a workweek, Defendants failed
10 to pay them at their overtime rate of pay for overtime hours worked, in violation of Labor Code
11 sections 510 and 1194 and the applicable Wage Order.

12 21. **Failure to pay wages to hourly non-exempt employees for workdays that**
13 **Defendants failed to provide legally required and compliant meal periods:** Plaintiff and other
14 current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees regularly worked
15 shifts of more than five (5) hours in length and shifts of more than ten (10) hours in length.

16 22. California law requires an employer to authorize or permit an employee an
17 uninterrupted meal period of no less than thirty (30) minutes in which the employee is relieved of
18 all duties and the employer relinquishes control over the employee's activities prior to the
19 employee's sixth hour of work. Labor Code sections 226.7, 512; Wage Order 5 at §11; *Brinker*
20 *Rest. Corp. v. Super Ct. (Hohnbaum)* (2012) 53 Cal.4th 1004. An employer may not employ an
21 employee for a work period of more than ten (10) hours per day without providing the employee
22 with a second such meal period of not less than thirty (30) minutes prior to the start of the eleventh
23 hour of work. *Id.* If the employee is not relieved of all duty during a meal period, the meal period
24 shall be considered an "on duty" meal period and counted as time worked. A paid "on duty" meal
25 period is only permitted when: (1) the nature of the work prevents an employee from being
26 relieved of all duty; and (2) the parties have a written agreement agreeing to on-duty meal periods.

27 23. If an employer fails to provide an employee a meal period in accordance with the
28 law, the employer must pay the employee one (1) hour of pay at the employee's regular rate of pay

1 for each workday that a legally required and compliant meal period was not provided. Labor Code
2 section 226.7; Wage Order 5 at §11.

3 24. In this case, Defendants failed to authorize or permit legally required and compliant
4 meal periods to Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-
5 exempt employees due to Defendants' policies, practices, and/or procedures, including but not
6 limited to:

7 (a) "Rounding down" or "shaving down" Plaintiff and other current and former
8 aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees punches, including punches for meal
9 breaks, to the nearest quarter of an hour to the benefit of Defendants resulting in short meal breaks
10 of less than 30 minutes.

11 25. Additionally, Plaintiff alleges that Defendants maintained a policy, practice, and/or
12 procedure of failing to compensate Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved California-
13 based hourly non-exempt employees one (1) hour of pay at their regular rate of pay for each
14 workday that Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt
15 employees did not receive legally required and compliant meal periods, in violation of Labor Code
16 section 226.7.

17 26. Defendants' foregoing policies, practices, and/or procedures resulted in Plaintiff
18 and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees not
19 receiving wages to compensate them for workdays during which Defendants did not provide them
20 with meal periods in compliance with California law.

21 27. **Failure to timely pay earned wages during employment:** In California, wages
22 must be paid at least twice during each calendar month on days designated in advance by the
23 employer as regular paydays, subject to some exceptions. Labor Code section 204(a). Wages
24 earned between the 1st and 15th days, inclusive, of any calendar month must be paid between the
25 16th and the 26th day of that month and wages earned between the 16th and the last day,
26 inclusive, of any calendar month must be paid between the 1st and 10th day of the following
27 month. *Id.* Other payroll periods such as those that are weekly, biweekly, or semimonthly, must be
28 paid within seven (7) calendar days following the close of the payroll period in which wages were

1 earned. Labor Code section 204(d).

2 28. As a derivative of Plaintiff's claims above, Plaintiff alleges that Defendants failed
3 to timely pay Plaintiff's and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-
4 exempt employees' earned wages (including minimum wages, overtime wages, and/or meal period
5 premium wages), in violation of Labor Code section 204. Defendants' aforementioned policies,
6 practices, and/or procedures resulted in their failure to pay Plaintiff's and other current and former
7 aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees' their earned wages within the
8 applicable time frames outlined in Labor Code section 204.

9 29. **Failure to provide complete and accurate wage statements:** Labor Code section
10 226, subdivision (a). Labor Code section 226(a) provides, *inter alia*, that, upon paying an
11 employee his or her wages, the employer must "furnish each of his or her employees ... an
12 itemized statement in writing showing (1) gross wages earned, (2) total hours worked by the
13 employee, except for any employee whose compensation is solely based on a salary and who is
14 exempt from payment of overtime under subdivision (a) of Section 515 or any applicable order of
15 the Industrial Welfare Commission, (3) the number of piece-rate units earned and any applicable
16 piece rate if the employee is paid on a piece-rate basis, (4) all deductions, provided, that all
17 deductions made on written orders of the employee may be aggregated and shown as one item, (5)
18 net wages earned, (6) the inclusive dates of the pay period for which the employee is paid, (7) the
19 name of the employee and his or her social security number, (8) the name and address of the legal
20 entity that is the employer, and (9) all applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay period and
21 the corresponding number of hours worked at each hourly rate by the employee."

22 30. As a derivative of Plaintiff's allegations above, Defendants' failure to pay Plaintiff
23 and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees all wages
24 earned (including minimum wages, overtime wages, and/or meal period premium wages) rendered
25 Plaintiff's and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees'
26 wage statements inaccurate, in violation of Labor Code section 226.

27 31. Defendants' violations of Wage Order 5 constituted violations of Labor Code
28 section 1198, which prohibits employment under conditions of labor that violate the Wage Orders.

1 32. Labor Code sections 2699, subdivisions (a) and (g) authorize an aggrieved
2 employee, on behalf of himself or herself and other current or former employees, to bring a civil
3 action to recover civil penalties against all Defendants pursuant to the procedures specified in
4 Labor Code section 2699.3.

5 33. Plaintiff has complied with the procedures for bringing suit specified in Labor
6 Code section 2699.3. On July 11, 2022, Plaintiff filed a PAGA Claim Notice with the LWDA and
7 provided notice to Defendants by certified mail which provided notice of the specific provisions of
8 the Labor Code alleged to have been violated, including the facts and theories to support the
9 violations alleged.

10 34. Pursuant to Labor Code section 2699.3, the LWDA must give written notice by
11 certified mail to the parties that it intends to investigate the alleged violations of the Labor Code
12 within 60 days of the date of the complainant's written notice. The LWDA failed to provide the
13 parties notice within 60 days of the date of Plaintiff's PAGA Claim Notice that the LWDA intends
14 to investigate Plaintiff's claims.

15 35. Pursuant to Labor Code sections 2699(a) and (f), Plaintiff is entitled to recover civil
16 penalties for Defendants' violations of Labor Code sections 226, 226.7, 510, 512, 1194, 1197,
17 beginning one (1) year preceding Plaintiff sending the initial PAGA Claim Notice to the LWDA to
18 the present, in the following amounts:

19 a. For violations of Labor Code sections, 204, 226.7, and 512; one hundred
20 dollars (\$100) for each aggrieved employee per pay period for the initial violation and two
21 hundred dollars (\$200) for each aggrieved employee per pay period for each subsequent violation
22 [penalty amounts established by Labor Code section 2699(f)(2)].

23 b. For violations of Labor Code section 226, two hundred fifty dollars (\$250)
24 for each employee for each pay period for the initial violation, and for each subsequent violation,
25 one thousand dollars (\$1000) for each underpaid employee for each pay period [penalty amounts
26 established by Labor Code section 226.3].

27 c. For violations of Labor Code section 510, fifty dollars (\$50) for each
28 employee for each pay period for the initial violation, and for each subsequent violation, one

1 hundred dollars (\$100) for each underpaid employee for each pay period [penalty amounts
2 established by Labor Code section 558] and any unpaid wages.

3 d. For violations of Labor Code section 1194 and 1197, one hundred dollars
4 (\$100) for each underpaid employee for each pay period for the initial violation, and for each
5 subsequent violation, two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) for each underpaid employee for each pay
6 period [penalty amounts established by Labor Code section 1197.1] and any unpaid wages.

7 36. Pursuant to Labor Code section 2699(g), Plaintiff is entitled to an award of
8 reasonable attorneys' fees and costs in connection with her claims for civil penalties.

9 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

10 **WHEREFORE, PLAINTIFF, ON BEHALF OF HERSELF AND ON OTHER**
11 **AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES, PRAYS AS FOLLOWS:**

12 **ON THE FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION:**

13 1. That Defendants be found to have violated the provisions of the Labor Code and
14 the IWC Wages Orders as to the Plaintiff and aggrieved employees;

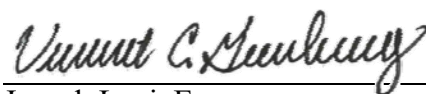
15 2. For any and all legally applicable penalties during the relevant statute of limitations
16 subject to any permissible tolling, including but not limited to those recoverable under the
17 California Labor Code, including but not limited to section 2699(f);

18 3. For attorneys' fees and costs of suit, including but not limited to those recoverable
19 under California Labor Code section 2699(g); and

20 4. For such and other further relief, in law and/or equity, as the Court deems just or
21 appropriate

22
23 Dated: October 7, 2022

Respectfully submitted,
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24
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