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SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO

CARLOS MARGARITO FLORES, individually, and on behalf of all others similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

vs.

EL RODEO CAFE CORP., a California corporation; and DOES 1 through 10, inclusive,

Defendant.

Case No.: CIVSB2514242

DECLARATION OF KANE MOON IN SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFF'S MOTION FOR PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF CLASS AND REPRESENTATIVE ACTION SETTLEMENT

[*Filed with Plaintiff's Notice of Motion and Memorandum of Points and Authorities, the Declaration of Plaintiff, the Declaration of Sean Hartranft, and [Proposed] Preliminary Approval Order*]

PRELIMINARY APPROVAL HEARING:
Date: July 22, 2026
Time: 8:30 a.m.
Dept.: S27
Judge: Honorable Thomas S. Garza

Action Filed: May 20, 2025
FAC Filed: July 30, 2025
Trial Date: Not Set

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 Courts of the State of California and am one of the attorneys of record for Plaintiff Carlos Margarito Flores ("Plaintiff") and the putative Class. I have personal knowledge of the matters set forth herein and could competently testify to the facts described herein.

CASE BACKGROUND

2. This is a wage and hour class action and representative action for alleged Labor Code violations and claims for civil penalties pursuant to the California Private Attorneys General Act, Labor Code sections 2698, *et seq.* ("PAGA"). Plaintiff seeks to represent a class of all current and former hourly paid, non-exempt employees of Defendant El Rodeo Cafe Corp. ("Defendant") (together with Plaintiff, the "Parties") who were employed by Defendant in the State of California at any time commencing May 20, 2021, through January 6, 2026,[1] as set forth in the Joint Stipulation of Class and Representative Action Settlement Agreement (the "Settlement"). A true and correct copy of the Settlement is attached to the instant Declaration as **Exhibit 1**. The proposed Class Notice is attached to the Settlement as **Exhibit A**

3. Defendant operates a restaurant serving traditional American breakfast and lunch options, as well as Tex-Mex and Mexican fusion cuisine, in seven locations in California. Plaintiff worked for Defendant as a Cook from approximately 2023 to April 2025 and was classified as non-exempt throughout the duration of his employment. Defendant has employed Plaintiff and other putative Class Members in California during the putative Class Period.

4. Plaintiff's claims for unpaid minimum and overtime wages stem from allegations that Defendant failed to incorporate all remunerations into the regular rate of pay for purposes of paying Class Members overtime wages, meal break premiums, and sick pay and that Defendant required Class Members to work off-the-clock without compensation. Plaintiff's meal and rest period claims are based on allegations that due to the nature of their work, Class Members' breaks were often short, late, interrupted, and

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[1] The Class Period is defined as "the period from May 20, 2021, through the earlier of (i) the date of preliminary approval of the Settlement by the Court or (ii) January 6, 2026." (Settlement, ¶ 1.12.) January 6, 2026 is earlier than the date of preliminary approval.

sometimes missed altogether, and that Defendant did not pay all premium wages for non-code-compliant breaks. Plaintiff further brings a claim for unreimbursed necessary business expenses based on allegations that Class Members were required to use their personal cellphones for business purposes, without reimbursement for the same. Plaintiff and the Class Members were also required to purchase clothing items as part of their uniform, and incur gas and travel expenses. Finally, Plaintiff also brings derivative claims for waiting time penalties, wage statement violations, unfair business practices, and civil penalties under PAGA.

5. Pursuant to PAGA, on May 18, 2025, Plaintiff gave written notice to the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency (the "LWDA") of the alleged Labor Code violations, with certified mail service on Defendant, and paid the required filing fee. A true and correct copy of Plaintiff's Notice is attached hereto as **Exhibit 2**. On May 20, 2025, Plaintiff filed a Class Action Complaint against Defendant, which alleged eight individual and class causes of action for violation of the Labor Code and California Business and Professions Code: (1) failure to pay minimum wages; (2) failure to pay overtime wages; (3) failure to provide meal periods; (4) failure to authorize and permit rest breaks; (5) failure to indemnify necessary business expenses; (6) failure to timely pay final wages at termination; (7) failure to provide accurate itemized wage statements; and (8) unfair business practices.

6. On July 30, 2025, Plaintiff filed a First Amended Class and Representative Action Complaint against Defendant, which alleged a ninth individual and representative cause of action for violation of PAGA, *as modified* (the "Operative Complaint"). A file-stamped copy of the Operative Complaint containing the Court-assigned case number was submitted to the LWDA. To date, the LWDA has not given its intention to investigate and intervene on the matter.

7. Defendant ardently opposes the merits of this case and denies Plaintiff's factual allegations. Defendant argues the putative Class was paid all minimum wages, overtime wages, and sick pay owed, that it did not fail to incorporate any remunerations into the regular rate of pay as such remunerations were discretionary bonuses, and that Defendant did not allow its employees to work off-the-clock. Defendant maintains compliance with all its meal and rest period obligations. As for the unreimbursed business expenses, Defendant maintains it reimbursed Class Members for all necessary business expenses incurred, and that personal cellphone and vehicle use were not required for work purposes. To the extent Class Members received wage statements that were allegedly inaccurate, Defendant asserts Class Members suffered

no actual damage or harm as a result, and that there was no knowing or intentional violation. (*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."].) With respect to Plaintiff's claim for waiting time penalties, Defendant alleges its good-faith belief that they paid all wages precludes the imposition of waiting time penalties since Plaintiff cannot prove Defendant's alleged failure to pay all final wages at the time of separation was "willful." (*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 improper for class treatment, in part, due to the individualized and testimony-intensive nature of the wage claims that could bar class certification or significantly reduce Defendant's overall liability.

DISCOVERY AND INVESTIGATION

8. Following the filing of Plaintiff complaint, the Parties met and conferred regarding an agreement to mediate Plaintiff's claims. The Parties agreed to mediate with Tripper Ortman, Esq., an experienced class and PAGA action mediator. In preparation for mediation, the Parties agreed to a protocol for an informal exchange of documents and information before the mediation. Prior to mediation, Plaintiff obtained from Defendant, through informal but extensive discovery, information sufficient to meaningfully evaluate the claims at issue in the action, including applicable written policies, the employee handbook in effect during the Class Period, Plaintiff's complete personnel file, sample time records and corresponding payroll records for employees, and information regarding the estimated number of current and former employees, Workweeks, PAGA Pay Periods, and average hourly pay.

9. In preparation for mediation, Plaintiff's Counsel reviewed and analyzed all the information Defendant provided, including the sample time/pay records and documents regarding Defendant's wage and hour policies. Plaintiff's Counsel retained a statistics expert to analyze the sample records and prepare a damage analysis prior to mediation. Plaintiff's expert reviewed a statistically significant sample of time and pay records, which allowed him to prepare an analysis with a high degree of certainty. In conjunction with their extensive factual investigation, Plaintiff's Counsel also investigated the applicable law regarding the claims and defenses asserted in the litigation. Accordingly, Plaintiff's Counsel were able to evaluate the

probability of class certification, success on the merits, and Defendant's maximum and realistic monetary exposure for all claims. Thus, Plaintiff's and his Counsel's familiarity with the facts of the case and the legal issues raised by the pleadings allowed them to act intelligently in negotiating the Settlement.

SETTLEMENT NEGOTIATIONS

10. Mediation occurred on November 7, 2025. The settlement negotiations were at arm's length and, although conducted in a professional manner, were adversarial. The Parties went into the mediation willing to explore the potential for a settlement of the dispute, but each side was also prepared to litigate their position through trial and appeal if a settlement had not been reached. After extensive negotiations and discussions regarding the strengths and weaknesses of Plaintiff's claims and Defendant's defenses, the Parties reached a settlement, the material terms of which are encompassed within the Settlement.

11. To the best of my knowledge, I am not aware of any individual, representative, or class action in this jurisdiction, or any other court or jurisdiction, asserting claims similar to those asserted in this action on behalf of a class or group of individuals who would also be members of the putative Class, as defined in this matter. I have come to the foregoing conclusion after a reasonable inquiry and review of the LWDA's PAGA Case Search website, this Court's case search website, and other information reasonably available online. Additionally, Defendant has not indicated there is any other related case pending as of the date of this declaration. As such, I am unable to name any case or the definition of a class of parties on whose behalf any action was brought that would overlap with the putative Class, as defined in this matter, or would otherwise be extinguished or adversely affected by approval of this Settlement.

12. In compliance with Labor Code section 2699, Plaintiff's Counsel submitted to the LWDA a notice of settlement and a copy of the proposed Settlement Agreement. 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 intent to investigate the allegations, intervene in the litigation, or object to the proposed Settlement.

13. The key financial terms of the Settlement are as follows:

Gross Settlement Amount ("GSA")	$475,000.00, non-reversionary (this amount is subject to increase if the Escalator Clause is triggered)

Deductions from GSA	
Class Representative Service Payment	Not to exceed $7,500.00
Class Counsel Fees Payment	Not to exceed One-Third of the GSA (currently estimated to be $158,333.33; this amount is subject to increase if the Escalator Clause is triggered)
Class Counsel Expenses Payment	Not to exceed $26,000.00
Administration Expenses Payment	Not to exceed $6,990.00
PAGA Penalties	$40,000.00 (to be distributed as: 65%, or $26,000.00, to the LWDA; and 35%, or $14,000.00, to Aggrieved Employees). The estimated average Individual PAGA Payment for each of the estimated 122 Aggrieved Employees is $114.75. Actual amounts of Individual PAGA Payments will be based on the number of PAGA Period Pay Periods worked by each Aggrieved Employee.
Estimated Net Settlement Amount ("NSA")	$236,176.67. The estimated average Individual Class Payments to each of the approximately 175 Class Members is $1,349.58. Actual amounts of Individual Class Payments will be based on the number of Workweeks worked by each Class Member.
Employer-Side Payroll Taxes	Defendant agrees to separately pay any and all employer payroll taxes owed on the Wage Portions of the Individual Class Payments.

(a) The Gross Settlement Amount is $475,000.00, non-reversionary, and subject to potential increase under an escalator clause. (Settlement, ¶ 3.0.)

(b) The Settlement includes a Class Representative Service Payment to Plaintiff in an amount up to $7,500.00 from the Gross Settlement Amount, subject to the Court's approval, and in addition to the amount he is eligible to receive as a Class Members. (*Id.* at ¶ 3.1.1.) This service payment is for Plaintiff initiating and providing services in support of the Action. (*Id.* at ¶ 1.14.) If the Court approves a Class Representative Service Payment less than the amount requested, the Administrator will retain the remainder in the Net Settlement Amount. (*Id.* at ¶ 3.1.1.)

(c) The Settlement provides for a Class Counsel Fees Payment of up to one-third of the Gross Settlement Amount (currently estimated to be $158,333.33) for Plaintiff's Counsel's attorneys' fees, and a Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment of not more than $26,000.00. (*Id.* at ¶ 3.1.2.) If the Court approves a Class Counsel Fees Payment and/or a Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment less than the amounts requested, the Administrator will allocate the remainder to the Net Settlement Amount. (*Id.*) At this time, my firm has incurred $18,047.88 in costs, and a true and correct copy of these litigation costs is attached hereto as **<u>Exhibit 4</u>**. Additionally, I estimate that my office will incur not more than $500.00 in costs for filing fees that are reasonably incurred between preliminary and final approval.

(d) The Parties jointly appoint Apex Class Action Administration as the neutral entity to administer this Settlement. (*Id.* at ¶ 1.1.) The Settlement Agreement provides the Administrator will be paid an Administration Expenses Payment from the Gross Settlement Amount, in an amount up to $6,990.00, for its fees and expenses in administering this Settlement. (*Id.* at ¶ 3.1.3.) To the extent actual expenses are less and/or the Court approves payment less than the requested amount, the Administrator will allocate the remainder to the Net Settlement Amount. (*Id.*) A true and correct copy of the Administrator's will not exceed bid of $6,990.00 is attached hereto as **<u>Exhibit 5</u>**.

(e) The Settlement provides for PAGA Penalties in the amount of $40,000.00, which will be distributed sixty-five percent (65%) ($26,000.00) to the LWDA through the LWDA PAGA Payment and thirty-five percent (35%) ($14,000.00) to Aggrieved Employees through Individual PAGA Payments. (*Id.* at ¶ 3.1.4.) Each Aggrieved Employee will be entitled to his or her pro rata share of the Individual PAGA Payments that is directly proportional to the number of PAGA Pay Periods during which the Aggrieved Employee worked in the PAGA Period. (*Id.* at ¶ 3.1.4.1.)

(f) The "Net Settlement Amount" means the Gross Settlement Amount less the following court-approved payments: Individual PAGA Payments, LWDA PAGA Payment, Class Counsel

Fees Payment, Class Counsel Expenses Payment, Class Representative Service Payment, and Administration Expenses Payment. (*Id.* at ¶ 1.27.) The remainder is to be paid to Participating Class Members as Individual Class Payments. (*Id.*) The Administrator will disburse the entire Gross Settlement Amount without asking or requiring Participating Class Members or Aggrieved Employees to submit any claim as a condition of payment. (*Id.* at ¶ 3.0.)

(g) Twenty percent (20%) of each Participating Class Member's Individual Class Payment will be allocated to the settlement of claims for wages (the "Wage Portion"). (*Id.* at ¶ 3.1.3.2.) Eighty percent (80%) of each Participating Class Member's Individual Class Payment will be allocated to the settlement of claims for interest and penalties (the "Non-Wage Portion"), with forty percent (40%) as interest and forty percent (40%) as penalties. (*Id.*) One hundred percent (100%) of each Individual PAGA Payment will be allocated as penalties. (*Id.* at ¶ 3.1.4.2.)

(h) The Net Settlement Amount available for Participating Class Members is $236,176.67. The estimated average Individual Class Payment for each of the approximately 175 Class Members is $1,349.58. From the $14,000.00 Individual PAGA Payments to Aggrieved Employees, the estimated average Individual PAGA Payment for each of the estimated 122 Aggrieved Employees is $114.75. Actual amounts of Individual Class Payments and Individual PAGA Payments will be based on the number of Workweeks and PAGA Period Pay Periods worked by each Class Member and Aggrieved Employee, respectively.

(i) Each check will be voided 180 days after the date of mailing ("void date"). For any Class Member whose Individual Class Payment check or Individual PAGA Payment check is uncashed and cancelled after the void date, or for any Class Member whose envelope is returned and no forwarding address can be located for the Class Member after reasonable efforts have been made, the Administrator shall transmit the funds represented by such checks to the California Controller's Unclaimed Property Fund in the name of the Class Member, thereby leaving no "unpaid residue" subject to the requirements of California Code of Civil Procedure ("CCP") section 384(b). (Settlement, ¶¶ 4.1.1, 4.1.3.)

14. The Gross Settlement Amount and all employer payroll taxes owed on the Wage Portions of the Individual Class Payments shall be fully funded by transmission of such funds to the Administrator

within thirty (30) calendar days of the Effective Date. (*Id.* at ¶ 4.0.) "Effective Date" means the later of the following: (a) if no timely objections are filed or if all objections are withdrawn, the date upon which the Court enters Final Approval; (b) if an objection is filed and not withdrawn, the date for filing an appeal and no such appeal is filed; (c) if any timely appeals are filed, the day after the final resolution (or withdrawal) or any such appeal (including any request for rehearing and/or petitions for certiorari), in a way that does not alter the material terms of the settlement and results in final judicial approval of the Settlement. (*Id.* at ¶ 1.18.)

THE PROPOSED SETTLEMENT IS FAIR, REASONABLE, AND ADEQUATE

15. Plaintiff's Counsel have conducted a thorough investigation into the facts of this case. Based on the foregoing document and information exchange and on their own independent investigation and evaluation, Plaintiff's 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, and the defenses that Defendant may assert both to certification and on the merits, the Settlement is in the best interests of the Class.

16. Based on Plaintiff's Counsel's review of the time, payroll, and additional records and information provided by Defendant, on Plaintiff's expert's analysis of the sample time and payroll records provided by Defendant, and on information from Plaintiff, Plaintiff's Counsel evaluated and estimated Defendant's maximum and realistic risk-adjusted exposure. Based on a review of its records, it is estimated that there are 175 Class Members who collectively worked a total of 12,807 Workweeks during the Class Period. (*Id.* at ¶ 7.0.) Additionally, Defendant's payroll data showed there were approximately 122 Aggrieved Employees who worked approximately 3,084 PAGA Pay Periods, 60 former employees falling within the three-year statute of limitations ("SOL") period for waiting time penalties, approximately 122 employees falling within the statutory period for inaccurate wage statement penalties, and that Class Members' average rate of pay is approximately $18.63.

Accordingly, I calculated Defendant's potential exposure as follows:[2]

[2] While Plaintiff alleged that Defendant failed to incorporate all remunerations into the regular rate of pay for purposes of paying Class Members overtime wages, meal break premiums, and sick pay, which resulted in unpaid wages, Plaintiff's expert's review of the time and pay records did not reveal

Claim	Relevant Time Period	Rate	Number of Violations	Realistic Exposure Amount
Unpaid Wages (Due to Off-the-Clock Work)	12,807 Workweeks	$18.63 average rate of pay	4,803 net unpaid hours (assuming 5 minutes per Shift; 95% overtime)	**$39,594.85** **
Meal Period Violations	12,807 Workweeks	$18.63 average rate of pay	28,816 unique meal break violations (assumes 50% violation rate)	**$214,736.83***
Rest Period Violations	12,807 Workweeks	$18.63 average rate of pay	28,816 unique rest break violations (assumes 50% violation rate)	**$161,052.62** **
Unreimbursed Business Expenses	12,807 Workweeks	$25 per month	Assumes $25 per month	**$23,535.00** **
Labor Code § 203	Based on approx. 60 terminated employees within the 3-year SOL	$18.63 average rate of pay / 30-day max.	Assumes 7.5 hours/day	**$25,150.50** ***
Labor Code § 226	Based on approx. 122 employees within the 1-year SOL	$50 per initial pay period /$100 per subsequent pay periods /$4,000 employee max.	Based on 3,080 pay periods within the 1-year SOL	**$30,190.00** ***
PAGA	Based on 3,084 PAGA pay periods within the 1-year SOL	$100 per pay period	Based on 3,084 PAGA pay periods within the 1-year SOL	**$30,840.00** ***
Total				**$525,099.81**
* These figures are discounted based on a 40% probability of prevailing at class certification and on the merits. ** These figures are discounted based on a 30% probability of prevailing at class certification and on the merits.				

violations on a Class-wide basis. Defendant also argued any remunerations were discretionary and were not required to be incorporated into the regular rate. As a result, this claim was determined to have negligible, if any, value and is not included in the exposure analysis below.

*** These figures are discounted based on a 10% probability of prevailing at class certification and on the merits.[3]

17. Plaintiff's unpaid wages claim is also due, in part, to allegations that Defendant did not compensate Class Members for all hours worked. Plaintiff alleges that he and Class Members had to wait in line to clock in and out using Defendant's time keeping machine. For purposes of mediation, Plaintiff's Counsel estimated Class Members spent an average of 5 minutes off-the-clock per shift during the Class Period. Plaintiff's Counsel then estimated that Defendant failed to pay Class Members for approximately 4,803 hours, 95% of which was overtime, resulting in a maximum potential liability of $131,982.84. Defendant contended that all time worked was compensated, and that proving any such claim would prove that this issue is highly individualized and not susceptible to class-wide treatment. Additionally, "off-the-clock" claims are difficult to be tried on a class wide basis because there is no apparatus that can be used to prove this claim – e.g. there are no records to be used as evidence. In light of these defenses, and for purposes of settlement, Plaintiff's Counsel discounted the maximum potential liability by 70% ($131,982.84 * .30). Accordingly, I arrived at **a realistic damage estimate of $39,594.85 for the off-the-clock work claim**.

18. Plaintiff's meal period claim is based on allegations that Defendant did not provide or maintain sufficient meal period practices, such that Class Members were not always permitted or able to take meal periods and/or were sometimes subjected to late, short and/or interrupted meal periods without compensation in lieu thereof. Based on Defendant's production and for purposes of mediation, I assumed a 50% violation rate. Plaintiff's expert thus determined there were approximately 28,816 meal period violations, resulting in an estimated maximum exposure of $536,842.08. Defendant contends that many compliant meal breaks were taken and that where a violation appears, it was a result of employees voluntarily waiving their break rights. Defendant also argues this claim is improper for class treatment, in part, given the individualized nature of assessing non-compliant meal periods and resulting damages. Although I believe there is merit to this

[3] A discount for risk at certification and trial is reasonable because the Judicial Council of California found that only 21.4% of all class actions were certified either as part of a settlement *or* as part of a contested certification motion. (*See* Findings of the Study of California Class Action Litigation, 2000-2006, available at http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/class-action-lit-study.pdf.) Moreover, discounting is particularly warranted in this case because of the individualized and testimony-intensive nature of the wage claims and the existence of valid and enforceable arbitration agreements that could bar or limit the likelihood of any recovery whatsoever.

claim, I acknowledge the foregoing presents significant risk with certifying this claim and proof on the merits. Certification and proof of this claim would require declarations from Class Members and obtaining such declarations potentially would reveal that each Class Member had a different experience with respect to meal periods. Therefore, I believe a 60% discount to the maximum exposure figure is warranted. Applying this discount, I accordingly arrived at **a realistic damage estimate of $214,736.83 for the meal period claim**.

19. The rest break claim is based on the allegation that Defendant did not provide or maintain sufficient rest break practices, such that Class Members were regularly required to work in excess of four consecutive hours a day, or a major fraction thereof, without authorization or permission to take a ten-minute, continuous and uninterrupted rest period or without compensation in lieu thereof. The precise number of rest break violations could not be calculated since Defendant neither documented, nor is required to document, when Class Members took their required rest breaks. For purposes of mediation, I assumed, based on information from Plaintiff, a 50% violation rate for shifts greater than or equal to 3.5 hours in length. Plaintiff's expert thus determined 28,816 unique rest period violations, and that Defendant did not pay any premium wages, resulting in an estimated maximum exposure of $536,842.08. Defendant maintains its compliance with all rest period obligations and that the putative Class was provided with the opportunity to take all rest periods to which they were entitled or otherwise voluntarily waived breaks. Moreover, Defendant argues this claim is improper for class treatment, in part, given the individualized nature of assessing non-compliant rest periods and resulting damages. Although I believe there is merit to this claim, I acknowledge the foregoing presents significant risk with certifying this claim and proof on the merits, particularly as rest periods were not recorded nor are they required to be recorded under California law. Certification and proof of this claim would require declarations from Class Members and obtaining such declarations potentially would reveal that each Class Member had a different experience with respect to rest periods. Therefore, I believe a 70% discount to the maximum exposure figure is warranted. Applying this discount, I accordingly arrived at **a realistic damage estimate of $161,052.62 for the rest period claim**.

20. The unreimbursed business expenses claim is based on the allegation that Defendant did not reimburse Class Members for all expenses Class Members incurred in direct consequence of the discharge of their duties. Plaintiff alleges that Plaintiff and the other Class Members were required to use their personal cellphone for work purposes. Plaintiff also alleges that they were required by Defendant to wear uniforms

and purchase specific clothing items as part of their uniform, without any reimbursement from Defendant. Further, Plaintiff and other Class Members incurred gas and travel expenses for their travel to multiple locations weekly, as part of their duties, which were similarly not reimbursed by Defendant. For purposes of mediation, I assumed $25 per month of unreimbursed business expenses, resulting in a maximum exposure of $78,450.00. Defendant argues that it complied with its reimbursement obligations. Defendant also argues that it did not require its employees to use their personal cellphones for work purposes and that this claim is improper for class treatment, in part, given the individualized nature of assessing unreimbursed expenses and resulting damages. I acknowledge the foregoing risk with certifying this claim and proof on the merits. Certification and proof of this claim would require declarations from almost all Class Members and obtaining such declarations potentially would reveal that each Class Member had a different experience with respect to unreimbursed expenses. Therefore, I believe a 70% discount to the maximum exposure figure is warranted. Applying this discount, I accordingly arrived at **a realistic damage estimate of $23,535.00 for the unreimbursed expense claim**.

21. With respect to Plaintiff's derivative claims for statutory and civil penalties, Plaintiff estimates Defendant's maximum potential exposure, prior to risk-adjustment, is $861,805.00, which is broken down as follows: $251,505.00 for waiting time penalties for approximately 60 terminated Class Members during the 3-year SOL; a $301,900.00 penalty for inaccurate wage statements based on approximately 122 Class Members within the 1-year SOL; and $308,400.00 for PAGA penalties based on the Court assessing a $100 penalty for each pay period containing a violation (approx. 3,084 PAGA Pay Periods). However, I believe it would be unrealistic to expect the Court to award the full exposure amount given the discretionary nature of awarding penalties and given Defendant's defenses, including that any failure to pay all final wages at the time of separation was not willful or intentional and that to the extent Plaintiff received wage statements that were allegedly inaccurate, Plaintiff suffered no actual resulting damage or harm. Moreover, I understand the individualized and testimony-intensive nature of the wage claims could bar class certification or otherwise significantly reduce Defendant's overall liability for statutory and civil penalties. Furthermore, considering the underlying wage claims are realistically estimated to be $438,919.31, awarding such a disproportional amount in penalties would also raise Due Process concerns. Weighing these factors, I applied a 90% discount to each penalty (resulting in $25,150.50 for waiting time penalties, $30,190.00 for inaccurate wage statement

penalties, and $30,840.00 for PAGA penalties) and accordingly arrived at **a realistic damage estimate of $86,180.50 for statutory and civil penalties**.

22. **Using these estimated figures, Plaintiff predicted the *realistic* recovery for all claims, including penalties, would be $525,099.81. This means the $475,000.00 gross settlement figure represents roughly 90.5% of the realistic (*risk-adjusted*) recovery.** This is an excellent result for the Class, particularly because, under the proposed Settlement Agreement, Class Members will receive timely, guaranteed relief and will avoid the risk of not being able to recover anything.

23. While Plaintiff is confident in the merits of his claims, a legitimate controversy exists as to each cause of action. Plaintiff also recognizes that proving the amounts of wages owed to each Class Member would be an expensive, time-consuming, and uncertain proposition.

24. Plaintiff's Counsel are also of the opinion that because the issues here are fairly contested, there is a possibility of the Court not awarding the PAGA penalties even if Plaintiff 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.

25. The Settlement obviates the significant risk that this Court may deny certification of all or some of Plaintiff's claims, particularly considering the arbitration agreement signed by Plaintiff containing a class action waiver. Furthermore, even if Plaintiff was able to pursue his claims on a class-wide basis and obtain certification of all or some of the claims, continued litigation would be expensive, involving a trial and possible appeals, and would substantially delay and reduce any recovery by the Class.

26. This Settlement avoids the risks, burdens, and the accompanying expense of further litigation. Although the Parties have engaged in a significant amount of investigation, informal discovery, and class-wide data analysis, they have not conducted extensive formal discovery. Moreover, preparation for class certification and a trial would remain for the Parties as well as the prospect of appeals in the wake of a disputed class certification ruling for Plaintiff and/or any summary judgment ruling. As a result, the Parties would incur considerably more attorneys' fees and costs through trial.

27. The Net Settlement Amount available for settlement payments is no less than **$236,176.67** for an estimated Class size of **175 individuals**.[4] As a result, it is estimated each Participating Class Member is eligible to receive an average benefit of approximately **$1,349.58** prior to tax withholdings on the wage portion of payments. Considering Class Members' average hourly rate is $18.63, the average benefit is approximately **72.44 hours of work**. Additionally, it is estimated there are **122 Aggrieved Employees** who are each receive an estimated average of **$114.75** from the total Individual PAGA Payments of $14,000.00, which results in an estimated **PAGA Pay Period value of $4.54** based on the estimated **3,084 PAGA Pay Periods** during the PAGA Period. The actual amounts to Participating Class Members and Aggrieved Employees will vary based on each individual's duration of work during the Class Period or PAGA Period, respectively; thus, those who worked longer for Defendant during the relevant period will receive a benefit greater than the average estimated amount. The high and low range of payments to Class Members will be calculated by the Administrator following preliminary approval and receipt and processing of the Class Data and will be provided to the Court in a motion for final approval.

28. The proposed settlement of $475,000.00 therefore represents a substantial recovery when compared to the reasonably forecasted recovery of the Class. 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 Settlement amount of $475,000.00 is within the "ballpark" of reasonableness, and that preliminary settlement approval is appropriate.

THE SERVICE PAYMENT TO PLAINTIFF IS REASONABLE

29. Throughout this litigation, Plaintiff, who was a former employee of Defendant, has cooperated immensely with my office, and has taken many actions to protect the interests of the Class. Plaintiff provided valuable information regarding his hours worked and what duties were performed during those hours. Plaintiff also provided information regarding meal and rest periods taken and missed by Plaintiff and other Class Members. Plaintiff participated in decisions concerning this action, assisted in preparation for the full-day

[4] The Net Settlement Amount is at least $475,000.00 less the following: $7,500.00 for the Class Representative Service Payment, $6,990.00 for the Administration Expenses Payment, $40,000.00 for the PAGA Penalties to the LWDA and to Aggrieved Employees, $158,333.33 for Class Counsel's attorneys' fees, and up to $26,000.00 for Class Counsel's litigation expenses. (Settlement, ¶¶ 1.27, 3.1. *et seq.*)

mediation session, and provided Plaintiff's Counsel with the names and contact information of potential witnesses in this action. Before we filed this case, Plaintiff worked with my office to determine the viability of his claims. Plaintiff also provided information and documents relating to his employment by Defendant. The information and documentation provided by Plaintiff was instrumental in establishing the wage and hour violations alleged in this action, and the recovery provided for in the Settlement would have been impossible to obtain without his participation.

30. At the same time, Plaintiff faced many risks in adding himself as the Class Representative in this matter. Plaintiff faced actual risks with his future employment, as putting himself on public record in an employment lawsuit could also very well affect his likelihood for future employment. For example, a search of Plaintiff's name will reveal this action, and as a result, many employers may likely forego hiring Plaintiff in learning he sued a former employer.

31. In turn, Class Members now have the opportunity to participate in a settlement, reimbursing them for wage violations they may have never known about or been willing to pursue on their own. If each Class Member would have tried to pursue legal remedies on their own, that would have resulted in each having to expend a significant amount of their own monetary resources and time, not to mention limited judicial resources, which were obviated by Plaintiff putting himself on the line on behalf of the Class.

32. This class action would not have been possible without the aid of Plaintiff, who put his own time and effort into this litigation and placed himself at risk for the sake of the Class. The requested service payment is therefore reasonable to compensate Plaintiff for his active participation in this lawsuit, in addition to his general release of claims, both known and unknown, and waiver of section 1542 rights.

MY EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

33. 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.

34. 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 representative actions.

35. 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.

36. My current billing rate is $950.00 per hour, which is my usual hourly rate for wage and hour litigations A $950 per hour 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 Feb. 12, 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 **<u>Exhibit 6</u>**. 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 firm's location in Los Angeles, California, the current 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, Effective January 12, 2026 *with* Judiciary Salary Plan of Washington-Baltimore-Arlington, Effective January 12, 2026.) True and correct copies of the Los Angeles-Long Beach and Washington-Baltimore-Arlington salary plans are attached hereto as **<u>Exhibit 7</u>** and **<u>Exhibit 8</u>**, respectively. Based on my 17+ years of experience, 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 current billing rate of $950 per hour is reasonable.

37. I am experienced in prosecuting and defending employment matters, particularly class actions and PAGA representative 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 California counties, 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 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

38. 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.

39. Mr. Feghali began working at Moon Law Group, PC in May 2015, and his practice focuses on advocating for the rights of employees at the trial-court and appellate level. Prior to approximately 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. In June 2018, Mr. Feghali became heavily involved in the firm's class action practice.

40. Mr. Feghali's current billing rate is $900.00 per hour, which is his usual hourly rate in wage and hour litigations. Based on Mr. Feghali's 10+ years of experience, his Laffey Matrix rate with a 2.53% adjustment is $860.23 per hour ($839 Laffey Matrix rate + (2.53% x $839)). (*See* Exh. 6.) As compared to the Laffey Matrix rate and when considering his experience, Mr. Feghali's billing rate of $900.00 per hour is reasonable.

41. 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).

(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. March 13, 2018, No. 2:17–cv–09056–RSWL–MRWx) 2018 WL 1352910. Defendant 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.

42. Since June 2018, Mr. Feghali's practice has shifted to almost exclusively representing employees in wage and hour class and 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); *Stanley Black & Decker Wage and Hour Cases* (No. JCCP5218) ($3,500,000); *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).

ENZO NABIEV'S EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

43. Enzo Nabiev is an associate attorney at Moon Law Group, PC. Mr. Nabiev represents employees in all aspects of employment litigation, including wage and hour class action and representative actions involving claims related to overtime and minimum wages, meal and rest break violations, improper wage statements, the California Private Attorneys General Act and unfair business practices.

44. Mr. Nabiev received his Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of California, Berkeley and his Juris Doctorate from The George Washington University Law School, where he served as a member of the Federal Circuit Bar Journal. He also served as a Judicial Extern for the Honorable William Nooter of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

45. Mr. Nabiev is a member in good standing with the California State Bar and in the United States District Court for the Central and Northern Districts. Mr. Nabiev's billing rate is $750.00 per hour, which is his usual hourly rate in wage and hour litigations. Based on Mr. Nabiev's nearly 6 years of experience, his Laffey Matrix rate with a 2.53% adjustment is $596 per hour ($581 Laffey Matrix rate + (2.53% x $581)). (*See* Exh. 6.) As compared to the Laffey Matrix rate and when considering his experience, Mr. Nabiev's billing rate of $750.00 per hour is reasonable.

46. During his employment with Moon Law Group, PC, he has played a critical role in obtaining outstanding results for employees who have been wronged by their employers. His litigation experience

includes, but is not limited to:

(a) In August 2025, Mr. Nabiev prepared the briefing in the matter of *Slaughter v. Finlite, Inc.* (Alameda Case No.: 22CV018565), which resulted in a certification order following contested briefing in a wage and hour class action.

(b) In March 2023, he prepared the briefing in *Aguirre JR. v. B.W Packaging Systems*. et al., No. 222CV04980ODWGJSX, 2023 WL 2605016 (C.D. Cal. Mar. 22, 2023), which resulted in a remand order where defendant's removal was based on CAFA jurisdiction.

(c) In April 2022, he fully briefed, argued, and won in the Court of Appeal in the Fourth Appellate District, regarding the issue of whether a pre-dispute arbitration agreement is enforceable under the Federal Arbitration Act when it includes a contractual waiver of representative claims under PAGA.

(d) In February 2022, he briefed a motion for class certification in *Brown v. NTI-CA, Inc.* (LASC No. 21STCV04397) where Defendant elected to file bankruptcy.

(e) In September 2021, he fully briefed, argued, and won an Opposition to a Motion for Summary Adjudication in the matter of *Dorsey v. Circa Tile & Stone, Inc.* (LASC Case No: 19STCV08365) where Defendant attempted to release individual claims under PAGA on behalf of each employee who executed a release agreement.

(f) In May 2021, he fully briefed and won an Opposition to a Motion to Compel Arbitration in the matter of *Morales v. Precision Aerospace Corp.* (Case No: CIV-DS2006541) where Defendant attempted to compel individual arbitration and dismiss class action claims based on Plaintiff's signed arbitration agreement within an employee handbook. There, the matter was settled on a class-wide basis for $900,000.00.

(g) In December 2020, he fully briefed, argued, and won an Opposition to a Motion for Summary Judgment in the matter of *Gonzalez v. Lipscomb* (LASC Case No:

19STCV10352) where he successfully established triable issues of material facts of whether a general manager of a hotel is considered a joint employer for purposes of liability for wage & hour violations.

(h) He has participated in the litigation and resolution of approximately 100 wage and hour class actions, including obtaining preliminary and final approval of settlements on the first attempt.

PLAINTIFF'S COUNSEL'S EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

47. 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 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 knowledge in areas of wage and hour class actions, PAGA representative actions, and labor and employment law generally, the substantiative (state and federal) and procedural law of which is frequently evolving.

48. 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) relating to employment matters. As noted above, Moon Law Group, PC 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.

49. 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.

50. To my knowledge, I do not have any conflicts of interest with Plaintiff, other Class Members, or the proposed Administrator, and I am not related to Plaintiff. I respectfully submit that the attorneys of Moon Law Group, PC, myself included, are well suited to act as Class Counsel in this action, and we have, and will continue to, vigorously represent the interests of the Class. We respectfully request to be appointed as Class Counsel, for settlement purposes.

THE REQUEST FOR ATTORNEYS' FEES AND COSTS IS REASONABLE

51. The Settlement provides for attorneys' fees payable to Class Counsel in an amount up to one-third of the Gross Settlement Amount (currently estimated to be $158,333.33), plus reimbursement for actual litigation expenses not to exceed $26,000.00. (Settlement, ¶ 3.12.) The proposed award of attorneys' fees to Class Counsel in this case can be justified under either the lodestar method or the percentage/common fund recovery method. Plaintiff's Counsel, however, intend to base the proposed award of fees on the percentage method as many of the entries in the time records will have to be redacted to preserve attorney-client and attorney work product privileges.

52. I am informed and believe that the fees and costs provision in the Settlement Agreement is reasonable. The fee percentage requested is less than that charged by my office for most employment cases. Moreover, 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.

53. It is further estimated that my office will need to expend at least another 50 to 100 hours to monitor the process leading up to the final approval and payments made to the Class. My office also bears the risk of taking whatever actions are necessary should Defendant fail to pay.

54. The risk to my office has been very significant, particularly if we would not be successful in pursuing this class action. In such instance, we would have been left with no compensation for all the time taken in litigating this case due to the contingency fee arrangement. Indeed, I have taken on a number of class action cases that have resulted in thousands of attorney hours being expended and ultimately having the defendant company going bankrupt during litigation. 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.

55. Because most individuals cannot afford to pay for representation in litigation on an hourly basis, Moon Law Group, PC represents virtually all its employment law clients on a contingency fee basis, including Plaintiff Murrieta in this matter. Pursuant to this arrangement, we are not compensated for our time unless we prevail at trial or successfully settle our clients' cases. 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.

56. As of the drafting of this motion, my office has incurred $18,047.88 in expenses litigating this action, and we anticipate accruing additional costs up to final approval. These expenses were reasonably necessary to the litigation and were actually incurred by my office. Moreover, because total litigation costs are below the maximum amount allowed under the Settlement, the difference will revert to Participating Class Members. (*Id.* at ¶ 3.1.2.) Therefore, our costs should be reimbursed in full.

57. 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 included, without limitation, the following:

(a) Numerous interviews with Plaintiff 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's PAGA notice letter;

(d) Preparation, finalization, and filing of multiple drafts of the PAGA complaint, class action complaint and subsequent amended complaints;

(e) Extensive "meet and confer" correspondence and discussions with Defendant's counsel to obtain relevant documents and information through informal discovery;

(f) Contacting witnesses;

(g) Analysis of the informal discovery production and preparation of a damages model with the aid of a statistics expert;

(h) Research and preparation of Plaintiff's mediation brief;

(i) Attendance and active participation at a full day of mediation;

(j) Drafting, negotiating, and reviewing multiple drafts of the Settlement Agreement and proposed Class Notice thereto; and

(k) Preparation of the motion for preliminary approval and the accompanying filings.

58. Through the efforts of my office and Plaintiff in this case, a fair and reasonable joint resolution has been reached that includes a gross, non-reversionary payment by Defendant of $475,000.00 to compensate Class Members for the alleged unlawful wage and hour practices. I am informed and believe that, without the efforts of my office or Plaintiff, the Labor Code and Wage Order violations alleged in the Operative Complaint would have gone completely unremedied.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California and the United States that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on February 18, 2026, at Los Angeles, California.

____

Kane Moon