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SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FOR THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

CELESTE RAMIREZ, as an aggrieved
employee pursuant to the Private Attorneys
General Act ("PAGA"), on behalf of the State of
California and other non-party Aggrieved
Employees,

Plaintiff,

v.

STINKIN CRAWFISH RESTAURANTS
LLC, a California limited liability company;
STINKIN HOLDINGS LLC, a California
limited liability company; and DOES 1 through
10, inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No. 23STCV01420

PAGA SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

PAGA SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

Subject to Court approval by the Superior Court of the State of California for the County of Los Angeles (“Court”), Plaintiff Celeste Ramirez (“Plaintiff”) and Defendants Stinkin Crawfish Restaurants LLC and Stinkin Holdings LLC (“Defendants”) (collectively with Plaintiff, the “Parties”) hereby agree to the following binding settlement (“Settlement” or “Settlement Agreement”) of the action entitled *Ramirez v. Stinkin Crawfish Restaurants LLC*, No. 23STCV01420 (Los Angeles County Superior Court) (the “Action”).

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are applicable to this Settlement Agreement. Definitions contained elsewhere in this Settlement Agreement will also be effective:

1. “Action” means *Ramirez v. Stinkin Crawfish Restaurants LLC*, No. 23STCV01420 (Los Angeles County Superior Court).
2. “Aggrieved Employees” means all persons who were employed by Defendants in California as non-exempt, hourly-paid employees at any time from November 18, 2021 through February 6, 2024.
3. “Court” means the Superior Court for the State of California, County of Los Angeles.
4. “Gross Settlement Amount” means the settlement amount of Four Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$450,000) to be paid by Defendants in full satisfaction of all Settled Claims arising from the Action.
5. “LWDA” means the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency.
6. “PAGA Penalties Fund” means the Gross Settlement Amount less the Attorneys’ Fees and Costs, Service Award, and Settlement Administrator Costs.
7. “Plaintiff’s Counsel” means Capstone Law APC.
8. “Service Award” means the amount to be paid to Plaintiff as payment for her service on behalf of the LWDA and Aggrieved Employees, and for a general release of all claims arising out of her employment with Defendants.
9. “Settled Claims” means all claims for PAGA civil penalties under the California Labor Code, Wage Orders, regulations, and/or other provisions of law alleged to have been violated in

Plaintiff's November 18, 2022 Notice to the LWDA and Action during the Settlement Period.

10. "Settlement Period" means the period from November 18, 2021 through February 6, 2024.

TERMS

11. Gross Settlement Amount. In consideration for Plaintiff's promises and representations described in this Settlement Agreement, and subject to all of the conditions of the Settlement being met, Defendants will pay Four Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$450,000) ("Gross Settlement Amount") to settle the Action. The Gross Settlement Amount includes Plaintiff's attorneys' fees, litigation costs and expenses, consideration for Plaintiff's service on behalf of the LWDA and Aggrieved Employees, Settlement Administration Costs, and payments to Aggrieved Employees and the LWDA for their share of the PAGA Penalties Fund. No portion of the Gross Settlement Amount will be retained by, or revert to, Defendants. Defendants shall not owe any additional amounts beyond the Gross Settlement Amount as a result of this Settlement Agreement.

12. PAGA Penalties Fund. The PAGA Penalties Fund will be paid to Aggrieved Employees and the LWDA in full satisfaction of all claims for PAGA civil penalties under the California Labor Code, Wage Orders, regulations, and/or other provisions of law alleged to have been violated in the Action with respect to Aggrieved Employees. Pursuant to PAGA, Seventy-Five Percent (75%) of the PAGA Penalties Fund will be paid to the LWDA, and the remaining Twenty-Five Percent (25%) will be paid to all Aggrieved Employees according to the following formula:

12(a) The Settlement Administrator will calculate: (i) the total number of pay periods worked by each Aggrieved Employee during the Settlement Period, and (ii) the total number of pay periods worked by all Aggrieved Employees during the Settlement Period.

12(b) To determine each Aggrieved Employee's payment from the PAGA Penalties Fund, the Settlement Administrator will use the following formula:

$$\text{Settlement Payment} = 25\% \text{ of PAGA Penalties Fund} \times [\text{Pay Periods Worked by Individual Aggrieved Employee During the Settlement Period} \div \text{Total Pay Periods Worked by All Aggrieved Employees during the}$$

Settlement Period].

12(c) Defendants estimate that Aggrieved Employees worked a combined total of approximately 7,606 pay periods during the Settlement Period. If there is a ten percent (10%) increase in the number of pay periods beyond 7,606, such increase shall trigger an escalation of the Gross Settlement Amount in the amount equivalent to one percent (1%) for every one percent (1%) increase in pay periods over the ten percent (10%) threshold.

13. Attorneys' Fees and Costs. Defendants agree not to oppose or impede any application or motion by Plaintiff's Counsel for Attorneys' Fees and Costs of not more than One Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$150,000), plus the reimbursement of all out-of-pocket costs and expenses associated with Plaintiff's Counsel's litigation and settlement of the Action (including expert/consultant fees, investigations costs, etc.), not to exceed Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000), both of which will be paid from the Gross Settlement Amount. Any portion of the Attorneys' Fees and Costs not awarded to Plaintiff's Counsel will be added to the PAGA Penalties Fund.

14. Service Award. For a general release of all claims Plaintiff may have against Defendants arising out of her employment, and for her service on behalf of the LWDA and Aggrieved Employees, Defendants agree not to oppose or impede any application or motion by Plaintiff for a service award of up to Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000) ("Service Award"). Upon receipt of the Service Award, Plaintiff will be deemed to have fully released and discharged Defendants from any and all claims, demands, obligations, causes of action, rights, or liabilities of any kind which have been or could have been asserted against Defendants arising out of, or relating to, Plaintiff's employment with Defendants or termination thereof, including but not limited to claims for wages, restitution, penalties, retaliation, defamation, discrimination, harassment or wrongful termination of employment. This release specifically includes any and all claims, demands, obligations and/or causes of action for damages, restitution, penalties, interest, and attorneys' fees and costs (except provided by the Settlement) relating to or in any way connected with the matters referred to herein, whether or not known or suspected to exist, and whether or not specifically or particularly described herein. Specifically, Plaintiff will be deemed to have waived all rights and benefits afforded by California Civil Code Section 1542, which provides:

1 **A GENERAL RELEASE DOES NOT EXTEND TO CLAIMS THAT THE CREDITOR**
2 **OR RELEASING PARTY DOES NOT KNOW OR SUSPECT TO EXIST IN HIS OR**
3 **HER FAVOR AT THE TIME OF EXECUTING THE RELEASE AND THAT, IF**
4 **KNOWN BY HIM OR HER, WOULD HAVE MATERIALLY AFFECTED HIS OR**
5 **HER SETTLEMENT WITH THE DEBTOR OR RELEASED PARTY.**

6 15. Plaintiff understand and agrees that this Settlement Agreement shall remain in full force
7 and effect even if the full amount of Service Award sought by Plaintiff is not ultimately awarded by the
8 Court.

9 16. Settlement Administration Costs. The Parties will retain CPT Group, Inc. as the third-
10 party settlement administrator (“Settlement Administrator”). The Settlement Administrator will be
11 responsible for establishing a qualified settlement fund (“QSF”) and issuing payments and appropriate
12 tax forms to Aggrieved Employees, the LWDA, Plaintiff, and Plaintiff’s Counsel. The Settlement
13 Administration Costs will be paid from the Gross Settlement Amount. Based on the estimate that there
14 are approximately 228 Aggrieved Employees, Settlement Administration Costs are estimated at Seven
15 Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$7,500).

16 17. Court Approval of the Settlement and Distribution of Settlement Payments. The Parties
17 will present this Settlement Agreement to the Court and the LWDA. The Parties will request that the
18 Court issue an order and judgment approving and incorporating by reference the terms and conditions of
19 the Settlement Agreement (the “Order and Judgment”).

20 18. List of Aggrieved Employees. Within fourteen (14) calendar days after entry of the
21 Order and Judgment, Defendants will provide the Settlement Administrator a complete list of all
22 Aggrieved Employees (“Aggrieved Employee List”). The Aggrieved Employee List will be formatted in
23 Microsoft Office Excel and will include each Aggrieved Employees full name; most recent mailing
24 address and telephone number; Social Security number; the respective number of pay periods during
25 which each Aggrieved Employee worked during the Settlement Period; and any other relevant
26 information needed to calculate settlement payments.

27 19. Funding of the Settlement. Within fourteen (14) calendar days after entry of the Order
28 and Judgment, Defendant will deposit the Gross Settlement Amount into the QSF to be established by

1 the Settlement Administrator. Within fourteen (14) calendar days of the funding of the Settlement, the
2 Settlement Administrator will issue payments to: (a) Aggrieved Employees; (b) the Labor and
3 Workforce Development Agency; (c) Plaintiff; (d) Plaintiff's Counsel; and (e) itself. The Settlement
4 Administrator, and not Defendants, will issue the appropriate tax forms for all payments issued under
5 this Settlement.

6 20. Settlement Payments to Aggrieved Employees. The Settlement Administrator will issue
7 each Aggrieved Employee one check for his or her share of the PAGA Penalties Fund along with an
8 explanatory letter, attached as Exhibit A. Prior to mailing, the Settlement Administrator will perform a
9 search based on the National Change of Address Database for information to update and correct for any
10 known or identifiable address changes. Any checks returned as non-deliverable on or before the check
11 cashing deadline will be sent promptly via regular First-Class U.S. Mail to the forwarding address
12 affixed thereto. If no forwarding address is provided, the Settlement Administrator will promptly attempt
13 to determine the correct address using a skip-trace, or other search using the name, address or Social
14 Security number of the Aggrieved Employee involved, and will then perform a single re-mailing.
15 Checks will remain negotiable for 180 days. Those funds represented by un-cashed checks which remain
16 outstanding 180 days after the mailing of the Settlement checks by the Settlement Administrator will be
17 tendered to the California Controller's Unclaimed Property Fund in the name of the aggrieved employee
18 thereby leaving no "unpaid residue" subject to the requirements of California Code of Civil Procedure
19 Section 384, sub (b). All settlement payments to Aggrieved Employees will be attributed to penalties and
20 treated as miscellaneous income for which a 1099 will be issued.

21 21. Settled Claims. Upon entry of the Order and Judgment, Plaintiff, the LWDA, and all
22 Aggrieved Employees will be forever barred from pursuing against Defendants any and all Settled
23 Claims during the Settlement Period. Aggrieved Employees, other than Plaintiff, will not be deemed to
24 have released any individual wage and hour claims by virtue of this Settlement.

25 22. No Right to Exclusion or Objections by Representative Action Members. Because this
26 settlement resolves claims and actions brought pursuant to PAGA by Plaintiff acting as a proxy and as a
27 Private Attorney General of, and for, the State of California and the LWDA, the Parties agree that no
28 Aggrieved Employee has the right to exclude himself or herself from the Settlement. Aggrieved

1 Employees will be bound by the terms of the Settlement Agreement, upon its approval by the Court,
2 regardless of whether he or she cashes any payment received as a result of this Settlement. The Parties
3 also agree that no Aggrieved Employee has the right to object to the terms of the Settlement Agreement.

4 23. No Credit Toward Benefit Plans. Payments to Aggrieved Employees as referenced
5 herein will not be utilized to calculate any additional benefits under any benefit plans to which any
6 Aggrieved Employee may be eligible, including, but not limited to profit-sharing plans, bonus plans,
7 401(k) plans, stock purchase plans, vacation plans, sick leave plans, PTO plans, and any other benefit
8 plan. Rather, it is the Parties' intention that this Settlement Agreement will not affect any rights,
9 contributions, or amounts to which any Aggrieved Employee may be entitled under any benefit plans.

10 24. No Prior Assignments. The Parties and their counsel represent, covenant, and warrant
11 that they have not directly or indirectly assigned, transferred, encumbered, or purported to assign,
12 transfer, or encumber to any person or entity any portion of any liability, claim, demand, action, cause of
13 action or right herein released and discharged.

14 25. Nullification of Settlement Agreement. In the event that: (i) the Court does not approve
15 the Settlement as provided herein; or (ii) the Settlement does not become final for any other reason, then
16 this Settlement Agreement, and any documents generated to bring it into effect, will be null and void,
17 and the Parties will be returned to their original respective positions.

18 26. Judgment and Continued Jurisdiction. After entry of the Order and Judgment, the Court
19 will have continuing jurisdiction solely for purposes of addressing: (i) the interpretation and enforcement
20 of the terms of the Settlement, (ii) settlement administration matters, and (iii) such post-Judgment matters
21 as may be appropriate under court rules or as set forth in this Settlement.

22 27. Entire Agreement. This Settlement Agreement constitutes the entirety of the Parties'
23 settlement terms. No other prior or contemporaneous written or oral agreements may be deemed binding
24 on the Parties.

25 28. Amendment or Modification. This Settlement Agreement may be amended or modified
26 only by a written instrument, signed by either the Parties or their successors-in-interest or counsel for all
27 Parties, and approved by the Court.

28 29. Authorization to Enter Into Settlement Agreement. Counsel for all Parties warrant and

1 represent they are expressly authorized by the Parties whom they represent to negotiate this Settlement
2 Agreement and to take all appropriate action required or permitted to be taken by such Parties pursuant
3 to this Settlement Agreement to effectuate its terms and to execute any other documents required to
4 effectuate the terms of this Settlement Agreement. The Parties and their counsel will cooperate with each
5 other and use their best efforts to affect the implementation of the Settlement. If the Parties are unable to
6 reach agreement on the form or content of any document needed to implement the Settlement, or on any
7 supplemental provisions that may become necessary to effectuate the terms of this Settlement, the Parties
8 may seek the assistance of the Court to resolve such disagreement.

9 30. Binding on Successors and Assigns. This Settlement Agreement will be binding upon,
10 and inure to the benefit of, the successors or assigns of the Parties hereto, as previously defined.

11 31. California Law Governs. All terms of this Settlement Agreement will be governed by
12 and interpreted according to the laws of the State of California.

13 32. Execution and Counterparts. This Settlement Agreement is subject only to the execution
14 of all Parties. However, the Settlement Agreement may be executed in one or more counterparts. All
15 executed counterparts and each of them, including electronic signatures (e.g., Docusign), facsimiles, and
16 scanned copies of the signature pages, will be deemed to be one and the same instrument.

17 33. Acknowledgement that the Settlement is Fair and Reasonable. The Parties believe this
18 Settlement Agreement is a fair, adequate, and reasonable settlement of the Action and have arrived at this
19 Settlement after arm's-length negotiations by experienced counsel. The Parties further acknowledge that
20 they are each represented by competent counsel and that they have had an opportunity to consult with
21 their counsel regarding the fairness and reasonableness of this Settlement.

22 34. Waiver of Certain Appeals. The Parties agree to waive appeals; except, however, that
23 Plaintiff may appeal any reduction to the Attorneys' Fees and Costs below the amount they request from
24 the Court, and either party may appeal any court order that materially alters the Settlement's terms. The
25 Court's decision to award less than the amounts requested for the Service Award and Settlement
26 Administration Costs shall not constitute a material alteration of the Settlement's terms.

27 35. Invalidity of Any Provision. Before declaring any provision of this Settlement
28 Agreement invalid, the Court will first attempt to construe the provision as valid to the fullest extent

possible consistent with applicable precedents so as to define all provisions of this Settlement Agreement valid and enforceable.

36. Captions. The captions and section numbers in this Settlement Agreement are inserted for the reader's convenience, and in no way define, limit, construe or describe the scope or intent of the provisions of this Settlement Agreement.

37. Waiver. No waiver of any condition or covenant contained in this Settlement Agreement or failure to exercise a right or remedy by any of the Parties hereto will be considered to imply or constitute a further waiver by such party of the same or any other condition, covenant, right or remedy.

38. Enforcement Action. In the event that one or more of the Parties institutes any legal action or other proceeding against any other Party or Parties to enforce the provisions of this Settlement or to declare rights and/or obligations under this Settlement, the successful Party or Parties will be entitled to recover from the unsuccessful Party or Parties reasonable attorneys' fees and costs, including expert witness fees incurred in connection with any enforcement actions.

39. Mutual Preparation. The Parties have had a full opportunity to negotiate the terms and conditions of this Settlement Agreement. Accordingly, this Settlement Agreement will not be construed more strictly against one party merely by virtue of the fact that it may have been prepared by counsel for one of the Parties, it being recognized that, because of the arm's-length negotiations between the Parties, all Parties have contributed to the preparation of this Settlement Agreement.

40. Representation By Counsel. The Parties acknowledge that they have been represented by counsel throughout all negotiations that preceded the execution of this Settlement Agreement, and that this Settlement Agreement has been executed with the consent and advice of counsel, and reviewed in full.

41. Cooperation and Execution of Necessary Documents. All Parties will cooperate in good faith and execute all documents to the extent reasonably necessary to effectuate the terms of this Settlement Agreement.

42. Binding Agreement. The Parties warrant that they understand and have full authority to enter into this Settlement, and further intend that this Settlement Agreement will be fully enforceable and binding on all parties, and agree that it will be admissible and subject to disclosure in any proceeding to

1 enforce its terms, notwithstanding any mediation confidentiality provisions that otherwise might apply
2 under federal or state law.

3 43. Denial of Liability. The Parties expressly recognize that the making of this agreement
4 does not in any way constitute an admission or concession of wrongdoing on the part of Defendants.
5 Nothing in this Settlement, nor any action taken in implementation thereof, nor any statements,
6 discussions or communications, nor any materials prepared, exchanged, issued or used during the
7 pendency of the Action, is intended by the Parties to, nor will any of the foregoing constitute, be
8 introduced, be used or be admissible in any way in any other judicial, arbitral, administrative,
9 investigative or other forum or proceeding, as evidence of any violation of any federal, state, or local law,
10 statute, ordinance, regulation, rule or executive order, or any obligation or duty at law or in equity.
11 Notwithstanding the foregoing, this agreement may be used in any proceeding in the Court that has as its
12 purpose the interpretation, implementation, or enforcement of the Settlement or any orders or judgments
13 of the Court entered into in connection therewith.

14 44. Motion or Application for Approval of Settlement. Plaintiff's Counsel will be responsible
15 for expeditiously finalizing and filing the application or motion for approval of this Settlement no later
16 than 30 days after the full execution of this agreement, and, if necessary, obtaining a prompt hearing date
17 for the motion and appearing in Court to advocate in favor of the motion. Plaintiff's Counsel is responsible
18 for delivering the Court's approval of this Settlement to the Settlement Administrator.

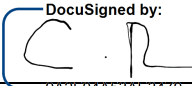
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READ CAREFULLY BEFORE SIGNING

PLAINTIFF

Dated: 1/22/2024

DocuSigned by:

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Celeste Ramirez

DEFENDANT

Dated:

Allison Campos HR Manager
Stinkin Crawfish Restaurants LLC

DEFENDANT

Dated:

Allison Campos HR Manager
Stinkin Holdings LLC

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READ CAREFULLY BEFORE SIGNING

PLAINTIFF

Dated: _____

Celeste Ramirez

DEFENDANT

Dated: 07/31/2024

Allison Campos
Allison Campos HR Manager
Stinkin Crawfish Restaurants LLC

DEFENDANT

Dated: 07/31/2024

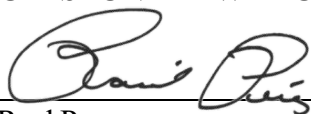
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APPROVED AS TO FORM

CAPSTONE LAW APC

Dated: 1/22/2024 _____



Raul Perez

CUMMINS & WHITE, LLP

Dated: _____

Erick Becker

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APPROVED AS TO FORM

CAPSTONE LAW APC

Dated: _____

Raul Perez

CUMMINS & WHITE, LLP

Dated: July 31, 2024



Erick Becker

Exhibit A

<<DATE>>

<<FIRST_NAME>> <<LAST_NAME>>

<<ADDRESS 1>>

<<ADDRESS 2>>

**Re: Payment From *Ramirez v. Stinkin Crawfish Restaurants LLC*, No. 23STCV01420
(Los Angeles County Superior Court)**

Dear <<FIRST_NAME>> <<LAST_NAME>>:

Enclosed you will find a check made payable to you. This is your payment from the settlement of the lawsuit entitled *Ramirez v. Stinkin Crawfish Restaurants LLC*, No. 23STCV01420 (Los Angeles County Superior Court) (the “Action”).

The Action was filed against Defendants Stinkin Crawfish Restaurants LLC and Stinkin Holdings LLC (“Defendants”) pursuant to the California Private Attorneys General Act of 2004, Cal. Lab. Code § 2698 *et seq.* (called “PAGA”). The Action was brought by a former employee of Defendants on behalf of the State of California and all allegedly “aggrieved employees” of Defendants. You have been identified as one of the employees on whose behalf the case was brought.

The Plaintiff in the Action claimed that Defendants owed civil penalties recoverable under PAGA for alleged violations of the California Labor Code and California Wage Orders. Defendants deny that they violated the Labor Code or California Wage Orders. Moreover, in agreeing to this settlement, Defendants do not admit that they are liable in any way for any penalties.

The Court has not ruled on the merits of the Action but it has approved the settlement of the claims for PAGA civil penalties, of which 75% will be paid to the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency, and the remaining 25% will be paid to aggrieved employees. Pursuant to the settlement, enclosed is a check for your share of a portion of the settlement amount attributed to civil penalties, based on the number of pay periods you worked for Defendants during the settlement period of November 18, 2021 through February 6, 2024.

Aggrieved employees, other than Plaintiff, will not be deemed to have released any individual wage and hour claims based on alleged violations of the Labor Code or of a California Wage Order, for which they may have a private right of action, by virtue of the Settlement.

You are not a party to this lawsuit, but you and the government will be bound by the settlement in this matter as to civil penalties. If you have any questions, you can contact the settlement administrator (whose contact information is at the top of this letter).

Very Truly Yours,

[Administrator]