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Attorneys for Plaintiff, on a representative basis and on behalf of all others similarly situated

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

SAMUEL JOHNSON, individually, on a
representative basis, and on behalf of all
others similarly situated; and JAZMIN
VALERIO individually, on a representative
basis, and on behalf of all others similarly
situated;

Plaintiffs,

vs.

THE J.G WENTWORTH COMPANY, a
California Corporation; SETTLEMENT
FUNDING LLC, a California Corporation;
and DOES 1 through 20, inclusive;

Defendants.

Case No.: 37-2022-00048277-CU-OE-CTL
[Assigned to Hon. Katherine Bacal, Dept C-
69, for all purposes]

**DECLARATION OF SAMUEL
JOHNSON IN SUPPORT OF MOTION
FOR FINAL APPROVAL OF CLASS
ACTION SETTLEMENT**

Hearing

Date: August 16, 2024

Time: 1:30 p.m.

Dept.: C-69

Complaint filed: 12/1/2022

I, Samuel Johnson, state and declare:

1. I am a Plaintiff in the above captioned action and have personal knowledge of all
matters stated herein and could competently testify thereto.

2. I make this declaration in support of the motion for final approval of the class
action settlement reached in this matter. As discussed herein, I believe that the settlement is fair
and reasonable and constitutes a fair resolution of the claims alleged.

1 3. I was employed by The J.G. Wentworth Company/Settlement Funding LLC (“J.G.
2 Wentworth”) from approximately September 2022 to December 27, 2022. During my
3 employment for J.G. Wentworth, there were several issues that concerned me and which I thought
4 did not comply with California law, such as not being paid properly and not getting proper meal
5 periods and rest breaks. After bringing my concerns to the attention of J.G. Wentworth, I was
6 reprimanded and given warning that further “disruptive behavior” would result in corrective
7 action. Moreover, the issues continued. As a result, I retained Lauby, Mankin & Lauby LLP to
8 move forward with a case because I did not think that myself or the other employees were being
9 treated correctly.

10 4. After retaining my attorneys, I understood that I had two options: I could pursue
11 my individual case – including claims for discrimination and wrongful termination (as discussed
12 below) – and attempt to maximize my personal recovery, or I could bring a class/representative
13 action and put the interests of the class ahead of my own. The decision of whether to bring my
14 individual claims or to bring a class action put me in a tough spot, because on the one hand, I
15 wanted to hold the company accountable for how they treated me and, on the other hand, I
16 wanted to help other employees that were not paid correctly. And I knew that, if I wanted to
17 bring a class action, I would need to put the interests of the class first to better serve the class. In
18 the end, in the interest of helping all employees that were subjected to the wage violations, I
19 decided to help everyone by bringing a class/representative action.

20 5. Since first initiating this action, I estimate that I have spent at least forty-five (45)
21 hours engaged in activities to benefit the class. I have assisted my attorneys in numerous ways,
22 including helping to explain and discuss the company’s practices and their general practices and
23 procedures, locating and analyzing company documents, and communicating with other class
24 members. These efforts occurred through numerous meetings with Class Counsel, telephone
25 conferences, letters, emails, and text communications. I also assisted in preparation for mediation
26 and helped obtain a positive result for the class.

27 6. I also believe that the requested service award is fair and reasonable given that I
28 have faced substantial risks and made numerous sacrifices to obtain this class action settlement.

7. For example, filing this lawsuit and being a whistleblower was stressful on a day-to-day basis as I have constantly worried about the risk that this could impact my ability to find future jobs. I was worried that filing the case may get me labeled as a whistleblower, resulting in retaliation and difficulty finding work for the rest of my career.

8. Additionally, as a condition of this settlement, I was required to compromise on and waive my separate individual claims for harassment, retaliation, and wrongful termination. Notably, I believe that the company retaliated against me by threatening corrective action and termination after I voiced concerns about overtime wages.

9. I believe that request for the \$7,500 service award is justified based on (a) the time I have spent on the case, which resulted in a good settlement for the class, (b) the risks I took in bringing this case, which I believe were (unfortunately) realized as my ability to find work has been impacted, and (c) my agreement to waive all of my individual claims for harassment, retaliation, and wrongful termination in exchange for the requested service award.

10. I respectfully request that the Court approve this class action settlement. I agreed to set aside my personal interests, and to put the interests of the class ahead or on par with my own. In doing so, and by successfully bringing this case as a class action, I helped to obtain a highly beneficial settlement for the class members.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on July 23, 2024, at La Mesa, California.

By:  SAMUEL JOHNSON (Jul 23, 2024 10:47 PDT)
Samuel Johnson