

For All Purposes

BLUMENTHAL NORDREHAUG BHOWMIK DE BLOUW LLP

Norman B. Blumenthal (State Bar #068687)

Kyle R. Nordrehaug (State Bar #205975)

Aparajit Bhowmik (State Bar #248066)

Nicholas J. De Blouw (State Bar #280922)

2255 Calle Clara

La Jolla, CA 92037

Telephone: (858)551-1223

Facsimile: (858) 551-1232

Website: www.bamlawca.com

ELECTRONICALLY FILED

Superior Court of California,

County of Tulare

06/01/2023

By: Sevanah Trevino ,

Deputy Clerk

Case Management Conference

10/02/2023 08:30 AM - Department 07

Attorneys for Plaintiff

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF TULARE

JUAN ROMERO, on behalf of the State of
California, as a private attorney general,

Plaintiff,

vs.

SAPUTO DAIRY FOODS USA, LLC, a
Limited Liability Company; and DOES 1
through 50, inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No. VCU298775

**REPRESENTATIVE ACTION
COMPLAINT FOR:**

1. Civil Penalties Pursuant to Labor Code
§ 2699, *et seq.* for violations of Labor
Code §§ 201, 202, 203, 204 *et seq.*, 210,
221, 226(a), 226.7, 227.3, 246 *et seq.*,
510, 512, 558(a)(1)(2), 1194, 1197,
1197.1, 1198, 2802, California Code of
Regulations, Title 8, Section 11040,
Subdivision 5(A)-(B), California Code of
Regulations, Title 8, Section 11070(14)
(Failure to Provide Seating), and the
applicable Wage Order(s).

1 Plaintiff Juan Romero (“PLAINTIFF”), on behalf of the people of the State of California
2 and as an “aggrieved employee” acting as a private attorney general under the Labor Code
3 Private Attorney General Act of 2004, § 2699, *et seq.* (“PAGA”) only, alleges on information
4 and belief, except for his own acts and knowledge which are based on personal knowledge, the
5 following:

6 INTRODUCTION

7 1. PLAINTIFF brings this action against Saputo Dairy Foods USA, LLC (referred
8 to as “DEFENDANT”) seeking only to recover PAGA civil penalties for himself, and on behalf
9 of all current and former aggrieved employees that worked for DEFENDANT. PLAINTIFF
10 does **not seek to recover anything other than penalties as permitted by California Labor**
11 **Code § 2699.** To the extent that statutory violations are mentioned for wage violations,
12 PLAINTIFF does not seek underlying general and/or special damages for those violations, but
13 simply the civil penalties permitted by California Labor Code § 2699.

14 2. California has enacted the PAGA to permit an individual to bring an action on
15 behalf of himself and on behalf of others for PAGA penalties *only*, which is the precise and sole
16 nature of this action.

17 3. Accordingly, PLAINTIFF seeks to obtain all applicable relief for
18 DEFENDANT’s violations under PAGA and solely for the relief as permitted by PAGA – that
19 is, penalties and any other relief the Court deems proper pursuant to the PAGA. Nothing in this
20 complaint should be construed as attempting to obtain any relief that would not be available in
21 a PAGA-only action.

22 THE PARTIES

23 4. Defendant Saputo Dairy Foods USA, LLC (“DEFENDANT”) is at all relevant
24 times mentioned herein conducted and continues to conduct substantial business in the state of
25 California.

26 5. DEFENDANT produces, markets, and distributes a wide array of dairy products.

27 6. PLAINTIFF has been employed by DEFENDANT in California since March of
28

1 2015 and has been at all times classified by DEFENDANT as a non-exempt employee, paid on
2 an hourly basis, and entitled to the legally required meal and rest periods and payment of
3 minimum and overtime wages due for all time worked.

4 7. PLAINTIFF, and such persons that may be added from time to time who satisfy
5 the requirements and exhaust the administrative procedures under the Private Attorney General
6 Act, brings this Representative Action on behalf of the State of California with respect to
7 himself and all individuals who are or previously were employed by DEFENDANT in
8 California, including any employees staffed with DEFENDANT by a third party, and classified
9 as non-exempt employees ("AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES") during the time period of January
10 24, 2022 until a date as determined by the Court (the "PAGA PERIOD").

11 8. PLAINTIFF, on behalf of himself and all AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES
12 presently or formerly employed by DEFENDANT during the PAGA PERIOD, brings this
13 representative action pursuant to Labor Code § 2699, *et seq.* seeking fixed civil penalties for
14 DEFENDANT's violation of California Labor Code §§ 201, 202, 203, 204 *et seq.*, 210, 221,
15 226(a), 226.7, 227.3, 246 *et seq.*, 510, 512, 558(a)(1)(2), 1194, 1197, 1197.1, 1198, 2802,
16 California Code of Regulations, Title 8, Section 11040, Subdivision 5(A)-(B), California
17 Code of Regulations, Title 8, Section 11070(14) (Failure to Provide Seating), and the
18 applicable Wage Order(s). Based upon the foregoing, PLAINTIFF and all AGGRIEVED
19 EMPLOYEES are aggrieved employees within the meaning of Labor Code § 2699, *et seq.*

20 9. The true names and capacities, whether individual, corporate, subsidiary,
21 partnership, associate or otherwise of defendants DOES 1 through 50, inclusive, are
22 presently unknown to PLAINTIFF who therefore sues these Defendants by such fictitious
23 names pursuant to Cal. Civ. Proc. Code § 474. PLAINTIFF will seek leave to amend this
24 Complaint to allege the true names and capacities of Does 1 through 50, inclusive, when
25 they are ascertained. PLAINTIFF is informed and believes, and based upon that information
26 and belief alleges, that the Defendants named in this Complaint, including DOES 1 through
27 50, inclusive, are responsible in some manner for one or more of the events and happenings
28 that proximately caused the injuries and damages hereinafter alleged.

10. The agents, servants and/or employees of the Defendants and each of them acting on behalf of the Defendants acted within the course and scope of his, her or its authority as the agent, servant and/or employee of the Defendants, and personally participated in the conduct alleged herein on behalf of the Defendants with respect to the conduct alleged herein. Consequently, the acts of each Defendant are legally attributable to the other Defendants and all Defendants are jointly and severally liable to PLAINTIFF and all the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES, for the loss sustained as a proximate result of the conduct of the Defendants' agents, servants and/or employees.

THE CONDUCT

11. Pursuant to the Industrial Welfare Commission Wage Orders, DEFENDANT was required to pay PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES for all their time worked, meaning the time during which an employee is subject to the control of an employer, including all the time the employee is suffered or permitted to work. DEFENDANT requires PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES to work without paying them for all the time they are under DEFENDANT's control. Among other things, DEFENDANT requires PLAINTIFF to work while clocked out during what is supposed to be PLAINTIFF's off-duty meal break. PLAINTIFF was from time to time interrupted by work assignments while clocked out for what should have been PLAINTIFF's off-duty meal break. DEFENDANT, as a matter of established company policy and procedure, administers a uniform practice of rounding the actual time worked and recorded by PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES, always to the benefit of DEFENDANT, so that during the course of their employment, PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES are paid less than they would have been paid had they been paid for actual recorded time rather than "rounded" time. Additionally, DEFENDANT engages in the practice of requiring PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES to perform work off the clock in that DEFENDANT, as a condition of employment, required these employees to submit to mandatory temperature checks and symptom questionnaires for COVID-19

1 screening prior to clocking into DEFENDANT's timekeeping system for the workday. As a
2 result, PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES forfeit minimum wage, overtime
3 wage compensation, and off-duty meal breaks by working without their time being correctly
4 recorded and without compensation at the applicable rates. DEFENDANT's policy and
5 practice not to pay PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES for all time worked, is
6 evidenced by DEFENDANT's business records.

7 12. State law provides that employees must be paid overtime and meal and rest
8 break premiums at one-and-one-half times their "regular rate of pay." PLAINTIFF and the
9 AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES are compensated at an hourly rate plus incentive pay that is
10 tied to specific elements of an employee's performance.

11 13. The second component of PLAINTIFF's and the AGGRIEVED
12 EMPLOYEES' compensation is DEFENDANT's non-discretionary incentive program that
13 paid PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES incentive wages based on their
14 performance for DEFENDANT. The non-discretionary incentive program provided all
15 employees paid on an hourly basis with incentive compensation when the employees met the
16 various performance goals set by DEFENDANT. However, when calculating the regular
17 rate of pay in order to pay overtime and meal and rest break premiums to PLAINTIFF and
18 the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES, DEFENDANT failed to include the incentive
19 compensation as part of the employees' "regular rate of pay" for purposes of calculating
20 overtime pay and meal and rest break premium pay. Management and supervisors described
21 the incentive program to potential and new employees as part of the compensation package.
22 As a matter of law, the incentive compensation received by PLAINTIFF and the
23 AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES must be included in the "regular rate of pay." The failure to
24 do so has resulted in a underpayment of overtime compensation and meal and rest break
25 premiums to PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES by DEFENDANT.

26 14. As a result of their rigorous work schedules, PLAINTIFF and the
27 AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES are from time to time unable to take thirty (30) minute off
28 duty meal breaks and were not fully relieved of duty for their meal periods. PLAINTIFF

1 and the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES were required from time to time to perform work as
2 ordered by DEFENDANT for more than five (5) hours during some shifts without receiving
3 a meal break. Further, DEFENDANT from time to time fails to provide PLAINTIFF and
4 AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES with a second off-duty meal period for some workdays in
5 which these employees were required by DEFENDANT to work ten (10) hours of work.
6 DEFENDANT also engaged in the practice of rounding the meal period times to avoid
7 paying penalties to PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES. PLAINTIFF and the
8 AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES therefore forfeit meal breaks without additional compensation
9 and in accordance with DEFENDANT's corporate policy and practice.

10 15. During the PAGA PERIOD, PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED
11 EMPLOYEES are also required from time to time to work in excess of four (4) hours
12 without being provided ten (10) minute rest periods. Further, these employees were denied
13 their first rest periods of at least ten (10) minutes for some shifts worked of at least two (2)
14 to four (4) hours from time to time, a first and second rest period of at least ten (10) minutes
15 for some shifts worked of between six (6) and eight (8) hours from time to time, and a first,
16 second and third rest period of at least ten (10) minutes for some shifts worked of ten (10)
17 hours or more from time to time. PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES were
18 also not provided with one hour wages in lieu thereof. Additionally, the applicable
19 California Wage Order requires employers to provide employees with off-duty rest periods,
20 which the California Supreme Court defined as time during which an employee is relieved
21 from all work related duties and free from employer control. In so doing, the Court held that
22 the requirement under California law that employers authorize and permit all employees to
23 take rest period means that employers must relieve employees of all duties and relinquish
24 control over how employees spend their time which includes control over the locations
25 where employees may take their rest period. Employers cannot impose controls that prohibit
26 an employee from taking a brief walk - five minutes out, five minutes back. Here,
27 DEFENDANT's policy restricted PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES from
28 unconstrained walks and is unlawful based on DEFENDANT's rule which states

1 PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES cannot leave the work premises during
2 their rest period.

3 16. During the PAGA PERIOD, DEFENDANT fails to accurately record and pay
4 PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES for the actual amount of time these
5 employees worked. Pursuant to the Industrial Welfare Commission Wage Orders,
6 DEFENDANT was required to pay PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES for
7 all time worked, meaning the time during which an employee was subject to the control of
8 an employer, including all the time the employee was permitted or suffered to permit this
9 work. DEFENDANT required these employees to work off the clock without paying them
10 for all the time they were under DEFENDANT's control. As such, DEFENDANT knew or
11 should have known that PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES were under
12 compensated for all time worked. As a result, PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED
13 EMPLOYEES forfeited time worked by working without their time being accurately
14 recorded and without compensation at the applicable minimum wage and overtime wage
15 rates. To the extent that the time worked off the clock does not qualify for overtime
16 premium payment, DEFENDANT fails to pay minimum wages for the time worked off-the-
17 clock in violation of Cal. Lab. Code §§ 1194, 1197, and 1197.1.

18 17. From time to time, DEFENDANT also fails to provide PLAINTIFF and the
19 AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES with complete and accurate wage statements which failed to
20 show, among other things, the correct gross and net wages earned. Cal. Lab. Code § 226
21 provides that every employer shall furnish each of his or her employees with an accurate
22 itemized wage statement in writing showing, among other things, gross wages earned and all
23 applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay period and the corresponding amount of time
24 worked at each hourly rate. PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES were paid on
25 an hourly basis. As such, the wage statements should reflect all applicable hourly rates
26 during the pay period and the total hours worked, and the applicable pay period in which the
27 wages were earned pursuant to California Labor Code Section 226(a). The wage statements
28 DEFENDANT provided to PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES failed to

1 identify such information. More specifically, the wage statements failed to identify the
2 accurate total hours worked each pay period. When the hours shown on the wage statements
3 were added up, they did not equal the actual total hours worked during the pay period in
4 violation of Cal. Lab. Code 226(a)(2). Additionally, DEFENDANT violates Cal. Lab. Code
5 226(a)(8) by failing to list the correct name of the legal entity that employs PLAINTIFF and
6 other AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES. Aside, from the violations listed above in this
7 paragraph, DEFENDANT failed to issue to PLAINTIFF an itemized wage statement that
8 lists all the requirements under California Labor Code 226 *et seq.* As a result, DEFENDANT
9 from time to time provided PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES with wage
10 statements which violated Cal. Lab. Code § 226.

11 18. Cal. Lab. Code § 204(d) provides, the requirements of this section shall be
12 deemed satisfied by the payment of wages for weekly, biweekly, or semimonthly payroll if
13 the wages are paid not more than seven (7) calendar days following the close of the payroll
14 period. Cal. Lab. Code § 210 provides:

15 in [I]n addition to, and entirely independent and apart from, any other penalty provided
16 this article, every person who fails to pay the wages of each employee as provided in
17 Sections. . . .204. . .shall be subject to a civil penalty as follows: (1) For any initial
18 violation, one hundred dollars (\$100) for each failure to pay each employee; (2) For
19 each subsequent violation, or any willful or intentional violation, two hundred dollars
20 (\$200) for each failure to pay each employee, plus 25 percent of the amount
21 unlawfully withheld.

22 19. DEFENDANT from time to time fails to pay PLAINTIFF and the
23 AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES within seven (7) days of the close of the payroll period in
24 accordance with Cal. Lab. Code § 204(d), including but not limited to the “Other” regular
25 wage payment.

26 20. DEFENDANT underpays sick pay wages to PLAINTIFF and the
27 AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES by failing to pay such wages at the regular rate of pay in
28 violation of Cal. Lab. Code Section 246. Specifically, PLAINTIFF and other non-exempt
employees earn non-discretionary remuneration. Rather than pay sick pay at the regular rate
of pay, DEFENDANT underpays sick pay to PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED
EMPLOYEES at their base rates of pay.

1 21. Cal. Lab. Code Section 246(1)(2) requires that paid sick time for nonexempt
2 employees be calculated by dividing the employee's total wages, not including overtime
3 premium pay, by the employee's total hours worked in the full pay periods of the prior 90
4 days of employment.

5 22. DEFENDANT violated Cal. Lab. Code Section 246 by failing to pay sick pay
6 at the regular rate of pay. PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES routinely
7 earned non-discretionary incentive wages which increased their regular rate of pay.
8 However, when sick pay was paid, it was paid at the base rate of pay for PLAINTIFF and
9 the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES, as opposed to the correct, higher regular rate of pay, as
10 required under Cal. Lab. Code Section 246.

11 23. As a pattern and practice, DEFENDANT regularly failed to pay PLAINTIFF
12 and the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES their correct wages and accordingly owe waiting time
13 penalties pursuant to Cal. Lab. Code Section 203. Further, PLAINTIFF is informed and
14 believes and based thereon alleges that such failure to pay sick pay at regular rate was
15 willful, such that the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES whose employment has separated are
16 entitled to waiting time penalties pursuant to Cal. Lab. Code Sections 201-203.

17 24. Pursuant to Cal. Lab. Code Section 221, "It shall be unlawful for any employer
18 to collect or receive from an employee any part of wages theretofore paid by said employer
19 to said employee." DEFENDANT fails to pay all compensation due to PLAINTIFF and the
20 AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES, made unlawful deductions from compensation payable to
21 PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES, fails to disclose all aspects of the
22 deductions from compensation payable to PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED
23 EMPLOYEES, and thereby fails to pay these employees all wages due at each applicable
24 pay period and upon termination.

25 25. DEFENDANT intentionally and knowingly fails to reimburse and indemnify
26 PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES for required business expenses incurred
27 by the PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES in direct consequence of
28 discharging their duties on behalf of DEFENDANT. Under California Labor Code Section

1 2802, employers are required to indemnify employees for all expenses incurred in the course
2 and scope of their employment. Cal. Lab. Code § 2802 expressly states that "an employer
3 shall indemnify his or her employee for all necessary expenditures or losses incurred by the
4 employee in direct consequence of the discharge of his or her duties, or of his or her
5 obedience to the directions of the employer, even though unlawful, unless the employee, at
6 the time of obeying the directions, believed them to be unlawful."

7 26. In the course of their employment PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED
8 EMPLOYEES as a business expense, were required by DEFENDANT to use their own
9 personal cellular phones as a result of and in furtherance of their job duties as employees for
10 DEFENDANT but are not reimbursed or indemnified by DEFENDANT for the cost
11 associated with the use of their personal cellular phones for DEFENDANT's benefit.
12 Specifically, PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES were required by
13 DEFENDANT to use their personal cellular phones. As a result, in the course of their
14 employment with DEFENDANT, PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES
15 incurred unreimbursed business expenses which included, but were not limited to, costs
16 related to the use of their personal cellular phones all on behalf of and for the benefit of
17 DEFENDANT.

18 27. In violation of the applicable sections of the California Labor Code and the
19 requirements of the applicable Industrial Welfare Commission ("IWC") Wage Order,
20 DEFENDANT as a matter of company policy, practice and procedure, intentionally,
21 knowingly and systematically failed to provide PLAINTIFF and the other AGGRIEVED
22 EMPLOYEES suitable seating when the nature of these employees' work reasonably
23 permitted sitting.

24 28. DEFENDANT knew or should have known that PLAINTIFF and other
25 AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES were entitled to suitable seating and/or were entitled to sit
26 when it did not interfere with the performance of their duties, and that DEFENDANT did
27 not provide suitable seating and/or did not allow them to sit when it did not interfere with
28 the performance of their duties.

1 29. By reason of this conduct applicable to PLAINTIFF and all AGGRIEVED
2 EMPLOYEES, DEFENDANT violated California Labor Code Section 1198 and Wage
3 Order 4-2001, Section 14 by failing to provide suitable seats. PLAINTIFF seeks penalties
4 on behalf of PLAINTIFF and other AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES as provided herein.
5 Providing suitable seating is the DEFENDANT's burden. As a result of DEFENDANT's
6 intentional disregard of the obligation to meet this burden, DEFENDANT violated the
7 California Labor Code and regulations promulgated thereunder as herein alleged.

8 30. The employment of some AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES has terminated and
9 DEFENDANT has not tendered payment of all wages owed as required by law.
10 Additionally, at all times during the term of PLAINTIFF's employment with DEFENDANT,
11 the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES earned and accrued vested vacation and holiday time on
12 the date of their termination pursuant to DEFENDANT's uniform vacation policies and
13 applicable California law. The amount of vacation pay PLAINTIFF and the other
14 AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES earned and accumulated is evidenced by DEFENDANT's
15 business records. Additionally, DEFENDANT also underpaid accrued vested vacation
16 wages to AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES by failing to pay such wages at the regular rate of
17 pay and more specifically the final rate of pay that included all non-discretionary incentive
18 compensation. Rather than pay vacation wages at the regular rate of pay, DEFENDANT
19 underpaid vacation wages to AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES at their base rates of pay, instead
20 of including all of the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES' non-discretionary incentive
21 compensation into the vacation wage payment calculations. DEFENDANT failed to specify
22 in DEFENDANT's written vacation policy the rate at which PLAINTIFF and other
23 AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES would be paid vacation upon leaving employment with
24 DEFENDANT. As a result of DEFENDANT's unlawful practice, policy and procedure to
25 deny paying AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES all of their vested vacation and holiday time,
26 DEFENDANT failed to pay AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES all vested vacation time as wages
27 due upon employment termination, in violation of the California Labor Code, Sections 201,
28 202, 203 and 227.3. Similarly, DEFENDANT underpaid waiting time penalties to the

1 AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES at their base rates of pay, instead of including all of the
2 AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES' non-discretionary compensation into the waiting time penalty
3 calculations. This failure by DEFENDANT is believed to be the result of DEFENDANT's
4 unlawful, unfair and deceptive refusal to provide compensation for earned, accrued and
5 vested vacation and holiday time, as well as the corresponding waiting time penalties that
6 were paid. DEFENDANT perpetrated this unlawful, unfair and deceptive practice to the
7 detriment of PLAINTIFF and other AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES. DEFENDANT's uniform
8 practice and policy of failing to pay the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES for all vested vacation
9 and holiday time accumulated at employment termination violated and continues to violate
10 Section 227.3 of the California Labor Code.

11 31. All of the conduct and violations alleged herein occurred during the PAGA
12 PERIOD. To the extent that any of the conduct and violations alleged herein did not affect
13 PLAINTIFF during the PAGA PERIOD, PLAINTIFF seeks penalties for those violations
14 that affected the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES pursuant to *Carrington v. Starbucks Corp.*
15 2018 AJDAR 12157 (Certified for Publication 12/19/18).

16 17 **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

18 32. This Court has jurisdiction over this Action pursuant to California Code of
19 Civil Procedure, Section 410.10.

20 33. Venue is proper in this Court pursuant to California Code of Civil Procedure,
21 Sections 395.5 and 393, because DEFENDANT operates in locations across California,
22 employs AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES across California, including in this County, and
23 committed the wrongful conduct herein alleged in this County against AGGRIEVED
24 EMPLOYEES.

25 ///

26 ///

27 ///

28 ///

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8

2

3

4

5
6

7
8
9
0
1
2
3
4
5
6

7
8
9
20
21
22
23
24

25
26
27
28

1 herein (*PAGA Notice only without draft complaint*). The statutory waiting period for
2 PLAINTIFF to add these allegations to the Complaint has expired. As a result, pursuant to
3 Section 2699.3, PLAINTIFF may now commence a representative civil action under PAGA
4 pursuant to Section 2699 as the proxy of the State of California with respect to all
5 AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES as herein defined.

6 38. The policies, acts and practices heretofore described were and are an unlawful
7 business act or practice because DEFENDANT (a) failed to provide PLAINTIFF and the
8 AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES accurate itemized wage statements, (b) failed to properly
9 record and provide legally required meal and rest periods, (c) failed to pay minimum wages,
10 (d) failed to pay overtime wages and sick pay wages, (e) failed to reimburse employees for
11 required expenses, and (f) failed to provide suitable seating, all in violation of the applicable
12 Labor Code sections listed in Labor Code §§ 201, 202, 203, 204 *et seq.*, 210, 221, 226(a),
13 226.7, 227.3, 246 *et seq.*, 510, 512, 558(a)(1)(2), 1194, 1197, 1197.1, 1198, 2802, California
14 Code of Regulations, Title 8, Section 11040, Subdivision 5(A)-(B), California Code of
15 Regulations, Title 8, Section 1 1070(14) (Failure to Provide Seating), and the applicable
16 Wage Order(s), and thereby gives rise to civil penalties as a result of such conduct.¹
17 PLAINTIFF hereby seeks recovery of only civil penalties as prescribed by the Labor Code
18 Private Attorney General Act of 2004 as the representative of the State of California for the
19 illegal conduct perpetrated on PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES.

20
21 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

22 WHEREFORE, PLAINTIFF prays for judgment against each Defendant, jointly and
23 severally, as follows:

- 24 1. On behalf of the State of California and with respect to all AGGRIEVED
25 EMPLOYEES:

26
27 _____
28 ¹Plaintiff specifically excludes and/or does not allege any claims under California Labor
Code §558(a)(3).

1 A) Recovery of civil penalties as prescribed by the Labor Code Private
2 Attorneys General Act of 2004; and,

3 B) An award of attorneys' fees and cost of suit, as allowable under the
4 law, including, but not limited to, pursuant to Labor Code §2699.

5 Dated: June 1, 2023 BLUMENTHAL NORDREHAUG BHOWMIK DE BLOUW
6 LLP

7
8 By: /s/ Nicholas De Blouw
9 Norman B. Blumenthal
10 Kyle R. Nordrehaug
11 Nicholas J. De Blouw

12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
Attorneys for Plaintiff

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28

EXHIBIT 1

BLUMENTHAL NORDREHAUG BHOWMIK DE BLOUW LLP

**2255 CALLE CLARA
LA JOLLA, CALIFORNIA 92037**

Web Site: www.bamlawca.com

San Diego | San Francisco | Sacramento | Los Angeles | Riverside | Santa Clara | Orange | Chicago

Phone: (858) 551-1223

Fax: (858) 551-1232

WRITERS E-MAIL:
Nick@bamlawca.com

WRITERS EXT:
1004

January 24, 2023
CA2859

VIA ONLINE FILING TO LWDA AND CERTIFIED MAIL TO DEFENDANT

Labor and Workforce Development Agency
Online Filing

Saputo Dairy Foods USA, LLC
Certified Mail #702224100002477761106
C T Corporation System
Amanda Garcia
330 North Brand Blvd., Suite 700
Glendale, CA 91203

Re: Notice Of Violations Of California Labor Code Sections §§ 201, 202, 203, 204 *et seq.*, 210, 221, 226(a), 226.7, 227.3, 246 *et seq.*, 510, 512, 558(a)(1)(2), 1194, 1197, 1197.1, 1198, 2802, California Code of Regulations, Title 8, Section 11040, Subdivision 5(A)-(B), California Code of Regulations, Title 8, Section 1 1070(14) (Failure to Provide Seating), Violation of Applicable Industrial Welfare Commission Wage Order(s), and Pursuant To California Labor Code Section 2699.5.

Dear Sir/Madam:

“Aggrieved Employees” refers to all individuals who are or previously were employed by Saputo Dairy Foods USA, LLC in California, including any employees staffed with Saputo Dairy Foods USA, LLC by a third party, and classified as non-exempt employees during the time period of January 24, 2022 until a date as determined by the Court. Our offices represent Plaintiff Juan Romero (“Plaintiff”) and other Aggrieved Employees in a lawsuit against Saputo Dairy Foods USA, LLC (“Defendant”). Plaintiff has been employed by Defendant in California as a non-exempt employee since March of 2015 and entitled to the legally required meal and rest breaks and payment for all time worked under Defendant’s control. Defendant, however, unlawfully failed to record and pay Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees for, including but not limited to, all of their time worked, including minimum and overtime wages, for all of their missed meal and rest breaks, and for all of their time spent working off the clock. Moreover, when Defendant required Plaintiff and Aggrieved Employees to report for work, but “furnished less than half said employee’s usual or scheduled day’s work,” Defendant violated Cal. Code Regs., tit. 8 § 11040, subd. 5(A) by failing to pay Plaintiff and Aggrieved Employees for at least two (2) hours’ worth of work at their regular rate of pay. In addition, when Defendant required Plaintiff and Aggrieved Employees to respond to and engage in additional work, this resulted in a second reporting for work in a single workday, and Defendant failed to pay these employees reporting time pay as required by Cal. Code Regs., tit. 8, § 11040, subd. 5(B). Further, Defendant failed to advise Plaintiff and the other Aggrieved Employees of their right to take separately and hourly paid duty-free ten (10) minute rest periods. *See Vaquero v. Stoneledge Furniture, LLC*,

9 Cal. App. 5th 98, 110 (2017). Additionally, pursuant to Labor Code § 204 *et seq.*, Defendant failed to timely provide Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees with their wages. Plaintiff further contends that Defendant failed to provide accurate wage statements to her, and other Aggrieved Employees, in violation of California Labor Code section 226(a). Specifically, PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES were paid on an hourly basis. As such, the wage statements should reflect all applicable hourly rates during the pay period and the total hours worked, and the applicable pay period in which the wages were earned pursuant to California Labor Code Section 226(a). The wage statements Defendant provided to PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES failed to identify such information. More specifically, the wage statements failed to identify the accurate total hours worked each pay period in violation of Cal. Lab. Code Section 226(a)(2). Additionally, Plaintiff contends that Defendant failed to comply with Industrial Wage Order 7(A)(3) in that Defendant failed to keep time records showing when Plaintiff began and ended each shift and meal period. Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees perform tasks that reasonably permit sitting, and a seat would not interfere with their performance of any of their tasks that may require them to stand. Defendant failed to provide Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees with suitable seats. Said conduct, in addition to the foregoing, as well as the conduct alleged in the incorporated Complaint, violates Labor Code §§ 201, 202, 203, 204 *et seq.*, 210, 221, 226(a), 226.7, 227.3, 246, 510, 512, 558(a)(1)(2), 1194, 1197, 1197.1, 1198, 2802, California Code of Regulations, Title 8, Section 11040, Subdivision 5(A)-(B), California Code of Regulations, Title 8, Section 1 1070(14) (Failure to Provide Seating), Violation of the applicable Industrial Welfare Commission Wage Order(s), and is therefore actionable under California Labor Code section 2699.3.

A true and correct copy of the Complaint by Plaintiff against Defendant, which (i) identifies the alleged violations, (ii) details the facts and theories which support the alleged violations, (iii) details the specific work performed by Plaintiff, (iii) sets forth the people/entities, dates, classifications, violations, events, and actions which are at issue to the extent known to Plaintiff, and (iv) sets forth the illegal practices used by Defendant, is attached hereto. This information provides notice to the Labor and Workforce Development Agency of the facts and theories supporting the alleged violations for the agency's reference. Plaintiff therefore incorporates the allegations of the attached Complaint into this letter as if fully set forth herein. If the agency needs any further information, please do not hesitate to ask.

This notice is provided to enable Plaintiff to proceed with the Complaint against Defendant as authorized by California Labor Code section 2699, *et seq.* The lawsuit consists of other Aggrieved Employees. As counsel, our intention is to vigorously prosecute the claims as alleged in the Complaint, and to procure civil penalties as provided by the Private Attorney General Statue of 2004 on behalf of Plaintiff and all Aggrieved Employees.

Your earliest response to this notice is appreciated. If you have any questions of concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at the above number and address.

Respectfully,

/s/ Nicholas J. De Blouw

Nicholas J. De Blouw, Esq.