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11 Attorneys for Plaintiffs Benjamin Edward Seilhamer and
12 Trevor West, individually, and on behalf of all others
13 similarly situated.

14 **SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**
15 **FOR THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES**

16 BENJAMIN EDWARD SEILHAMER and
17 TREVOR WEST, individually and on behalf of
18 all others similarly situated,

19 Plaintiffs,

20 v.

21 GUITAR CENTER STORES, INC.; and DOES
22 1 through 20, inclusive,

23 Defendants.

Case No. 23STCV00544

Assigned for all purposes to:

Hon. Elihu M. Berle

Dept. 6

24 **DECLARATION OF KRISTY R. CONNOLLY**
25 **IN SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFFS' MOTION**
26 **FOR PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF CLASS**
27 **AND REPRESENTATIVE PAGA**
28 **SETTLEMENT**

1 I, Kristy R. Connolly, hereby declare as follows:

2 1. I am an attorney at law licensed to practice before all of the courts of the State of
3 California. I am a Senior Associate with Aegis Law Firm, PC (“Aegis”), counsel for Plaintiffs in this
4 matter. I am thoroughly familiar with and have personal knowledge of all of the facts set forth herein.

5 2. I submit this declaration in support of Plaintiffs’ Motion for Preliminary Approval of
6 Class Action Settlement. If called as a witness, I could and would competently testify thereto.

7 **Case History**

8 3. On January 11, 2023, Plaintiff Benjamin Edward Seilhamer filed this putative class action
9 lawsuit on behalf of Defendant’s non-exempt employees alleging the following causes of action: (1)
10 failure to pay minimum wages; (2) failure to pay overtime wages; (3) failure to provide meal periods; (4)
11 failure to permit rest breaks; (5) failure to reimburse business expenses; (6) failure to provide accurate
12 itemized wage statements; (7) failure to pay wages timely during employment; (8) failure to pay all wages
13 due upon separation of employment; (9) Violation of Business and Professions Code § 17200, et seq., for
14 the preceding claims.

15 4. Also, on January 11, 2023, Plaintiffs’ counsel provided written notice to the LWDA and
16 Defendant regarding Defendant’s alleged Labor Code violations, as required by Labor Code section
17 2699.3(a). The LWDA did not respond to this notice, indicating it did not intend to investigate, thus
18 allowing Mr. Seilhamer to bring a PAGA claim against Defendant. Therefore, on April 7, 2023, Mr.
19 Seilhamer filed a First Amended Complaint to add a PAGA claim.

20 5. On September 6, 2023, Plaintiff Trevor West commenced a separate action against
21 Defendant in the Superior Court of California, County of Santa Clara, alleging causes of action against
22 Defendant for (1) failure to pay minimum wages; (2) failure to pay overtime wages; (3) failure to provide
23 meal periods; (4) failure to permit rest breaks; (5) failure to reimburse business expenses; (6) failure to
24 provide accurate itemized wage statements; (7) failure to pay all wages due upon separation of
25 employment; and (8) violation of Business and Professions Code §§ 17200, et seq. Mr. West also provided
26 notice of his intention to recover penalties on behalf of him and other aggrieved employees to the LWDA
27 and Defendant on September 6, 2023. On November 15, 2023, after the LWDA did not respond to this
28 notice, Mr. West filed a First Amended Complaint to add a cause of action for PAGA.

1 6. The Parties proceeded with formal discovery. Plaintiff initially served Defendant with
2 written discovery, seeking, inter alia, contact information for Defendant's employees, their time and pay
3 records, and policy documents. After Defendant served its written responses, the Parties engaged in initial
4 discussions about the case and ultimately agreed to early, global mediation with an informal exchange of
5 discovery. To this end, Defendant informally produced a sample of class members' time and pay records,
6 all handbooks in effect during the relevant liability period, and information regarding the Class data.
7 Plaintiffs' Counsel engaged an expert to quantify the potential exposure using the time and payroll records,
8 and then assessed the risks associated with each of the claims meriting reductions in the likely recovery
9 at trial.

10 7. On March 12, 2025, the Parties attended a mediation session with Monique Ngo-Bonnici,
11 a respected wage and hour mediator. The Parties did not settle at mediation, but continued to engage in
12 settlement discussions. The Parties then attended a second mediation session with Ms. Ngo-Bonnici on
13 April 11, 2025. Although the Parties did not settle at mediation, the mediator made a proposal which was
14 ultimately accepted by the Parties. The Parties spent the next month negotiating the terms of the
15 Settlement, which was finalized in May of 2025. The negotiations were adversarial, conducted at arm's
16 length and tempered by the efforts of both sides to serve the interests of their clients.

17 8. Pursuant to the Parties' settlement, on May 12, 2025, Plaintiff Benjamin Seilhamer filed a
18 Second Amended Complaint to add Trevor West as a second named plaintiff and class representative in
19 this Action. Mr. West dismissed his action without prejudice in order to effectively get approval of the
20 settlement in one action. The Second Amended Complaint is the operative complaint in this action.

21 9. On July 23, 2025, Plaintiffs submitted the Settlement and this Motion to the LWDA
22 pursuant to Labor Code section 2699(1)(2).

23 10. Defendant's records show the Class consists of approximately 3,364 individuals, making
24 joinder of all Class Members impracticable. Further, the Class is readily ascertainable from Defendant's
25 business records because all Class Members are current or former employees of Defendant.

26 11. Plaintiffs alleged that Defendant maintained uniform employment policies and/or practices
27 that illegally deprived Class Members of lawful wages, meal periods, rest breaks, accurate wage
28 statements, and waiting time pay. Plaintiffs' allegations present common legal and factual questions of,

1 *inter alia*, whether Defendant applied the same scheduling, timekeeping, minimum and overtime pay,
2 meal period, and rest break policies to all Class Members; whether these policies and practices resulted in
3 Labor Code violations; whether Defendant's conduct was intentional; and whether Class Members are
4 entitled to penalties. These common questions could be resolved using Class Members' schedules, time
5 punches, and payroll records, Defendant's corporate representative's testimony, written communications
6 between Defendant and Class Members, and Class Member declarations.

7 12. Plaintiffs allege that they and other Class Members were employed by Defendant and
8 injured by Defendant's common wage and hour policies and practices, including Defendant's
9 scheduling, timekeeping, minimum wage pay, overtime pay, meal period, and rest break practices and
10 policies. Through documents and information exchanged in discovery, Plaintiffs confirmed that these
11 common policies and practices similarly affected Plaintiffs and the Class. Plaintiffs' counsel extensively
12 reviewed policy documents and Class Members' time and pay records to perform a thorough analysis.
13 Further, Plaintiffs' Counsel engaged an expert to quantify the potential exposure using the time and
14 payroll records, and then assessed the risks associated with each of the claims meriting reductions in the
15 likely recovery at trial. Accordingly, Plaintiffs' Counsel fully understood the strengths and weaknesses
16 of the claims before the Parties reached a settlement.

17 13. Plaintiffs contend that their claims are based on Defendant's common, class-wide
18 policies and procedures, and that liability could be determined on a class-wide basis without dependence
19 on individual assessments of liability.

20 **Exposure Analysis**

21 14. While Plaintiffs and their counsel believed and continue to believe this is a strong case
22 for certification, the significant risks and expenses associated with class certification and liability
23 proceedings must be taken into account.

24 15. In determining whether the amount offered in settlement was reasonable, Plaintiffs'
25 Counsel weighed that figure against many risk factors. If Plaintiffs continued to prosecute the claims
26 rather than accept a settlement, Plaintiffs would have faced deadlines to file a motion for class
27 certification, had to have engaged in more formal written discovery and taken depositions, expended
28 time and resources to resolve disputes, prepared and filed potential dispositive motions and/or discovery

1 motions, and engaged in extensive trial preparation. An adverse ruling at any one of these stages could
2 have prevented the Class from obtaining any recovery. Although the amount of the Class's maximum
3 potential damages – if proven – is substantial, legitimate and serious risks compelled a considerable
4 discount for settlement.

5 16. Plaintiffs' minimum wage and overtime claims were premised on the theory that
6 Defendant failed to compensate class members for all time worked. Specifically, Plaintiffs alleged that
7 Class Members were required to maintain their cell phones on them at all times, and expected to respond
8 to all calls and texts messages, regardless of whether the employee was on a break. Plaintiffs also alleged
9 that Class Members who provided music lessons were required to prepare for these lessons and complete
10 progress reports on their own time. Assuming unpaid wages of ten minutes per shift, Plaintiffs' expert
11 calculated a maximum exposure of \$2,358,356. However, Defendant argued that there was no evidence
12 that it required Class Members to maintain any sort of communication device while working. Defendant
13 further provided evidence of the use of an intercom device at its stores if it ever needed to reach an
14 employee on-duty. As to those who provided music lessons, Defendant provided evidence that it allowed
15 its employees to create their own work-schedules and that they were expected to schedule time for
16 themselves to complete lesson preparations and progress reports. Accordingly, to the extent any
17 schedules did not have an entry for these job duties, Defendant argued that it was the voluntary choice
18 of the employees. Defendant also provided evidence of its written policies which provided that it
19 maintained a policy and practice of paying for all time recorded. As such, this claim could become
20 highly individualized and difficult to certify. As such, Plaintiffs assumed there was a 30% chance of
21 success at class certification and 20% chance of success on the merits at trial, rendering the claim worth
22 approximately \$141,501 for settlement purposes.

23 17. Plaintiffs' unpaid overtime wages claim was also based on the theory that Defendant
24 failed to properly calculate the regular rate of pay to include nondiscretionary payments, such as shift
25 differentials and bonuses based on meeting sales goals. Plaintiffs' expert calculated that this claim was
26 worth approximately \$498,577 when extrapolated to the class. However, Defendant provided evidence
27 that not all Class Members were eligible for these payments; rather, it was limited to music instructors
28 and those worked in management positions. Accordingly, Plaintiffs would be unable to prove

1 commonality for the entire class. As such, Plaintiffs assumed there was a 50% chance of success at class
2 certification and 40% chance of success on the merits at trial, rendering the claim worth approximately
3 \$99,715 for settlement purposes.

4 18. Plaintiffs' meal period claim was potentially worth about \$4,146,172 in light of the
5 violations shown in the records. However, Defendant provided evidence that it maintained facially
6 lawful written policies that provided compliant meal periods. Further, Defendant argued that it was not
7 responsible for policing meal periods, and that any missed breaks were the employees' personal choice
8 to waive the break, citing to *Brinker Restaurant Corp. v. Superior Court* 53 Cal. 4th 1004, 1029 (2012),
9 in which the Supreme Court explained that employers do not need to "police" breaks, i.e., ensure that a
10 meal is being taken if it was provided. *See also Murphy v. Kenneth Cole Productions, Inc.*, 40 Cal. 4th
11 1094, 1104 (2007) (finding a violation occurs only if the employee is "forced to forgo his or her meal
12 period"). Thus, Plaintiffs discounted this claim for the risk that the damages could at least be reduced,
13 and that the claim would be hard to certify with a compliant policy. As such, Plaintiffs' counsel believed
14 there was a 40% chance succeeding at class certification and a 20% chance at trial, resulting in a value
15 of \$331,694.

16 19. Plaintiffs alleged that Defendant failed to authorize timely rest breaks due to Defendant's
17 failure to schedule adequate coverage. If Plaintiffs could prove a 100% violation rate for each shift over
18 3.5 hours, then damages could reach up to \$16.2 million. However, Defendant argued that it maintained
19 compliant written rest break policies and that class members could again choose to waive their rest
20 breaks. As such, this claim would have mainly relied on Class Member testimony, making it a riskier
21 claim at class certification and liability stages. Plaintiffs' counsel considered that a 100% violation rate
22 was unrealistic since there are no records to prove missed rest breaks (such as recorded rest breaks or
23 incompliant written policies). Therefore, Plaintiffs' counsel believed there was a 30% chance
24 succeeding at class certification and a 20% chance at trial, resulting in an ultimate maximum value of
25 \$970,966.

26 20. Plaintiffs argued that they were not reimbursed for expenses related to personal cell
27 phones required to carry out their job duties. Specifically, Plaintiffs alleged that they were required to
28 maintain their personal cell phones while working in order to communicate with co-workers as well as

1 take photos of the merchandise for Defendant’s website. However, as discussed above, Defendant
2 provided evidence that it used its intercom device to communicate with employees at the store.
3 Furthermore, as for pictures of the merchandise, it provided evidence of its policies that require images
4 to meet specific standards set by Defendant and that the cameras on cell phones would not meet its
5 standards. Therefore, to the extent any Class Member did use their personal cell phone, such use went
6 against the policies of Defendant and that there would not be any source of common proof as to who
7 incurred expenses, whether those expenses were necessary in light of the other communication devices
8 offered, and whether they sought reimbursement, making the claim difficult to prove at trial. As such,
9 Plaintiffs did not allocate any monetary value to this claim.

10 21. Plaintiffs’ Counsel also considered the arguable presence of various derivative penalties,
11 and weighed the potential recoveries against probable defenses. Specifically, Defendant could argue
12 that Plaintiffs could not prove the “willful” prong needed to obtain waiting time penalties under Labor
13 Code section 203. Additionally, Defendant could argue that Plaintiffs could not show that Class
14 Members suffered an “injury” as a result of wage statement violations, as required by Labor Code
15 section 226. Moreover, Plaintiffs would not recover any of these derivative penalties if they failed to
16 prove the underlying claims. Although the Class arguably could have seen a payout of approximately
17 \$6 million for waiting time penalties and \$6.8 million for wage statement penalties, Plaintiffs would not
18 recover any of these derivative penalties if they failed to prove the underlying claims. Thus, Plaintiffs
19 discounted these claims assuming a 40% chance of class certification and 20% chance at the merits for
20 both claims, resulting in a realistic value of about \$486,000 for the waiting time claim and about
21 \$549,000 for the wage statement claim.

22 22. The PAGA claim presented even higher hurdles. Although Plaintiffs’ Counsel found
23 Defendant’s exposure could potentially reach up to \$6,777,100 under Labor Code section 2699(f),
24 assuming the initial penalty rate of \$100 for all 67,771 pay periods, Plaintiffs would have to prove a
25 violation in every pay period. Most importantly, the Court would have discretion to reduce the PAGA
26 award based on whether the amount of the award would be “unjust, arbitrary and oppressive, or
27 confiscatory.” Labor Code § 2699(e)(2). In theory, the Court could reduce the award by 99% if it so
28 wished. Plaintiffs were doubtful they could recover any PAGA penalties, especially if a large class

1 judgment was entered for the same violations and in light of Defendant's facially compliant written
2 policies. Accordingly, Plaintiffs could not place a high value on the PAGA penalties, and therefore
3 allocated \$200,000 of the Gross Settlement Amount to settle these claims.

4 23. Another factor that weighed heavily on the negotiations were the existence of arbitration
5 agreements signed by Plaintiffs and the Class. Plaintiffs' Counsel considered that the arbitration
6 agreements would likely be upheld by the Court, in which all class claims would then be dismissed and
7 the Class would not recover any damages.

8 **Service Award**

9 24. Plaintiffs had the option to pursue their claims individually, but instead chose to pursue
10 this action, delaying individual recovery until final approval of the settlement. Throughout the case,
11 Plaintiffs assisted counsel in gathering the evidence necessary to prosecute the class claims, maintained
12 regular contact with counsel, were available on the two days of mediation and communicated with their
13 attorneys during the day of mediation to answer critical questions, and reviewed the Settlement to make
14 sure it was fair to the Class. None of the other 3,364 Class Members had shown any interest in bearing
15 the expense and burden of litigating their own claims. No action would likely have been taken by Class
16 Members individually, and no compensation would have been recovered for them, but for Plaintiffs'
17 services on behalf of the Class.

18 25. The amount of Plaintiffs' requested Service Awards was not negotiated until after the
19 Parties agreed to the Gross Settlement Amount and many other terms.

20 26. At the final approval stage, Plaintiffs will further support the request for the Service
21 Awards by a declaration that addresses the factors for the award.

22 **Counsel's Qualifications**

23 27. Aegis Law Firm prosecutes wage and hour cases, including class actions on behalf of
24 employees and others who have had their rights violated. Aegis, either on its own, or with co-counsel is
25 currently serving as plaintiffs' counsel of record in dozens of wage and hour and employment class
26 action cases pending in both state and federal court.

27 28. The attorneys working on this case have been appointed class counsel in many cases,
28 through both contested motions and settlement approval motions.

29. Aegis has litigated and successfully resolved many wage and hour class action cases involving failure to pay wages and derivative Labor Code claims and penalties. *See, e.g., Calma v. Scooter Brew, Inc.*, San Diego Superior Court, Case No. 37-2021-00050379-CU-OE-CTL (class certification granted on April 12, 2024 for non-exempt restaurant employees' on issues of expense reimbursement, unpaid wages for off-the-clock work, meal violations, inaccurate wage statements and waiting time penalties); *Vinalay v. Union City Hotel Management Corp. et al.*, Case No. 37-2019-00021268-CU-OE-CTL (class certification granted on April 4, 2022 for non-exempt employees on issues of unpaid overtime, automatic meal period deductions, inaccurate wage statements, and waiting time penalties); *Roman, et al. v. TRM Manufacturing, Inc.*, Riverside Superior Court, Case No. RIC1706458 (class certification granted on December 17, 2020 for all current and former non-exempt workers' on issues of rounding, meal period, and rest period claims); *Gamboa v. Kamran, et al.*, San Bernardino Superior Court, Case No. CIVDS1605273 (class certification granted on September 16, 2019, for factory workers on issues of rounding, automatic deduction of first meal period, and second meal period); *Romo, et. al, v. GMRI, Inc. d/b/a/ Olive Garden*, United States District Court Central District of California, Case No. EDCV-12-0715-JLQ (class certification granted for restaurant workers' rest period claims); *Sawyer v. Retail Data, LLC*, Orange County Superior Court, Case No. 30-2014-00753767-CU-OE-CXC (unpaid wage and rest break claims for piece rate workers); *Gonzalez v. SFFI Company, Inc., et. al*, San Bernardino County Superior Court, Case No. CIV DS1504287 (unpaid wages, meal period and rest break claims for non-exempt employees); *Antoine v. Riverstone Residential California, Inc., et. al*, Sacramento County Superior Court, Case No. 34-2013-00155974 (rate of pay, on-call time, unpaid wage, meal period, rest break, and expense reimbursement claims for non-exempt employees); *Nguyen v. Pharmerica*, Orange County Superior Court, Case No. 30-2014-00716072-CU-OE-CXC (unpaid wages and unreimbursed expenses for pharmacists); *Orellana v. Westlake*, Los Angeles County Superior Court, Case No. BC539614 (unpaid overtime, meal period and rest break claims for call center employees); *Kent v. Mountain View Child Care, Inc.*, Los Angeles County Superior Court, Case No. BC539633 (minimum wage, overtime, meal period, and rest break claims for hospital workers); *Durroh v. East West Bank*, Los Angeles County Superior Court, Case No. BC528860 (overtime claims for failure to include bonuses in regular rate of pay for bank workers); *O'Brien et al.*

1 *v. Pizza Hut of Southeast Kansas, Inc. et al.*, Riverside County Superior Court, Case No MCC 1301030
2 (meal period and expense reimbursement claims for delivery drivers); *Bell v. Prime Healthcare*, Orange
3 County Superior Court, Case No. 30-2011-00475240-CU-OE-CXC (overtime claims for failure to
4 include shift premiums in regular rate of pay and failure to provide meal and rest periods to hospital
5 workers), *Grana v. Toys R US-Delaware, Inc.*, Central District of California, Case No. 2:13-cv-01302-
6 DSF-JCG (bag check claims for unpaid wages and failure to provide meal periods and rest breaks to
7 retail employees); *Mendez v. H.J. Heinz Company, L.P., et. al*, Orange County Superior Court, Case No.
8 30-2013-00644915-CU-OE-CXC (failure to pay all wages to factory workers due to rounding practice);
9 *Fresh & Easy Wage and Hour Cases*, Los Angeles Superior Court, Cas No. JCCP 4705 (failure to
10 provide meal and rest periods to supermarket workers); *Lunsford v Stater Bros.*, Riverside Superior
11 Court, Case No. RIC 1104475 (failure to provide meal and rest periods to supermarket workers); *Gregg*
12 *v. Belo*, Riverside Superior Court, Case No. RIC 523697 (unpaid wages and missed meal and rest
13 periods due to misclassification of newspaper delivery employees); *Brown v. Experian Information*
14 *Solutions, Inc., et. al.*, Orange County Superior Court, Case No. 30-2012-00375163 (misclassification
15 of engineers and similar positions); *Tereth v. Shakey's USA, Inc.*, Los Angeles Superior Court, Case No.
16 BC441359 (failure to provide meal and rest periods to restaurant employees); *Azurin v. Harbor*
17 *Distributing LLC, et. al.*, Los Angeles Superior Court, Case No. BC421392 (failure to pay overtime
18 wages, provide meal and rest periods, reimburse business expenses to Account Managers); *Caffero v.*
19 *ABC* (failure to provide meal periods and reimburse expenses of therapists).

20 30. Kashif Haque received his J.D. in 2001 from Washington University School of Law.
21 While in law school, Mr. Haque was a member of the Law Review Editorial Board, author of an article
22 published in the Law Review, Executive Board Member of Moot Court, and a member of the Dean's
23 List. He received a Bachelor's of Science in Business Administration from the University of Central
24 Missouri in 1998, where he was a member of the Beta Alpha Psi honors fraternity.

25 31. Since 2004, Mr. Haque has exclusively focused his practice on plaintiff's employment
26 litigation with a specific focus on wage and hour claims. Since then, he has represented over 500,000
27 employees with their employment claims, many of which included wage and hour claims. He has been
28

1 appointed class counsel in approximately 100 cases and is currently litigating over 150 employment
2 wage and hour class action cases.

3 32. Mr. Haque authored a book on employment litigation strategies with West Publishing
4 and has been invited to speak on class action and wage and hour issues on numerous occasions. He has
5 spoken at seminars by the State Bar of California, California Employment Lawyer's Association
6 (CELA), Orange County Bar Association, and various other CLE providers. Mr. Haque is the former
7 Chair for the Labor and Employment Section of the Orange County Bar Association. He was selected
8 as one of the Top 50 Attorneys in Orange County by Super Lawyers for 2017 and 2019. He has been a
9 Super Lawyer for every year from 2009 to the present. OC Register/Metro has selected him as one of
10 the Top 5 Employment Lawyers in Orange County for every year the list was published, from 2012 to
11 2018.

12 33. Samuel A. Wong is a graduate of University of Pennsylvania Law School, where he
13 received his J.D. in 2001. Mr. Wong received a Bachelors of Arts in Sociology from the University of
14 California at Berkeley in 1997.

15 34. After graduation from law school in 2001, the same year in which Mr. Wong took and
16 successfully passed the California Bar Exam, Mr. Wong moved to back to Los Angeles, California
17 where he was employed at Paul Hastings, Janofsky & Walker, LLP. While working in the employment
18 department at Paul Hastings, he was involved in numerous wage and hour class action lawsuits and
19 other employment related matters.

20 35. Mr. Wong became a founding partner of Aegis Law Firm, PC in 2003, and focused his
21 practice on plaintiff's side employment work. Throughout his years of practice, Mr. Wong represented
22 and obtained successful outcomes for his clients, including awards through arbitration and trial.

23 36. Mr. Wong is a member of the Orange County Bar Association, Orange County Trial
24 Lawyers Association, and California Employment Lawyers Association.

25 37. Mr. Wong was chosen by Law and Politics Magazine as a Super Lawyer Rising Star,
26 representing one of the top 2.5% of lawyers under 40 in Southern California in 2011, 2012, 2013, and
27 2014. He was chosen by Law and Politics Magazine as a Super Lawyer in 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018.
28

1 Mr. Wong was also chosen as a Top Attorney in the field of employment law by OC Metro in 2014,
2 2015, and 2018.

3 38. Jessica L. Campbell is a partner at Aegis Law Firm. Ms. Campbell was admitted to the
4 California Bar in December of 2011, and received her J.D. from Santa Clara University School of Law
5 and her B.A. from the University of California, Berkeley. Ms. Campbell has dedicated her career to
6 plaintiffs' side class actions. Ms. Campbell's experience includes successful work on class action
7 appeals, class certification motions, and class settlements. She was chosen by Law and Politics
8 Magazine as a Super Lawyer Rising Star, representing one of the top 2.5% of lawyers under 40 in
9 Southern California for several years.

10 39. I am a Senior Associate at Aegis Law Firm. I was admitted to the California Bar in
11 December of 2019. I received my J.D. from Chapman University Dale E. Fowler School of Law where
12 I graduated cum laude. While in law school, I was a recipient of numerous honors, including Merit
13 Scholarships and CALI Awards, and externed for Judge Di Cesare of the Orange County Superior Court.
14 I received my B.A. from the University of California, Davis. Prior to joining Aegis Law Firm, I worked
15 at a midsize civil defense firm. I have been with Aegis Law Firm since 2020, where I have primarily
16 represented plaintiffs in wage and hour class and representative actions. My experience includes
17 successful work on class certification motions, summary judgment motions, and class settlements.

18 40. Ali S. Carlsen is a Senior Attorney at Aegis Law Firm. Ms. Carlsen was admitted to the
19 California Bar in June of 2013. She received her J.D. from Golden Gate University School of Law and
20 her B.S. from California State University, East Bay. Prior to joining Aegis Law Firm, Ms. Carlsen
21 worked at Magarian & DiMercurio, APLC, where she primarily handled employment litigation matters
22 representing both employers and employees, including matters involving wage and hour issues,
23 harassment and discrimination, and wrongful termination. She was chosen by Law and Politics
24 Magazine as a Super Lawyer Rising Star, representing one of the top 2.5% of lawyers under 40 in
25 Southern California from 2017-2022.

26 41. Aegis Law Firm has performed significant work and expended litigation costs in
27 prosecuting the matter with no guarantee of any payment.
28

42. At final approval, Plaintiffs' Counsel will fully brief the merits of its request for the award of attorneys' fees and litigation costs.

Exhibits

43. A true and correct copy of the CLASS AND PAGA SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT is attached hereto as **Exhibit 1**.

44. A true and correct copy of the PAGA notice my office sent to the LWDA and Defendant on January 11, 2023 on behalf of Benjamin Edward Seilhamer is attached hereto as **Exhibit 2**.

45. A true and correct copy of the PAGA notice my office sent to the LWDA and Defendant on September 6, 2023 on behalf of Trevor West is attached hereto as **Exhibit 3**.

46. A true and correct copy of the PAGA notice my office sent to the LWDA and Defendant on May 5, 2025 on behalf of Plaintiffs is attached hereto as **Exhibit 4**.

47. A true and correct copy of the LWDA's confirmation that my office submitted the Settlement and this Motion is attached hereto as **Exhibit 5**.

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, 2025 at Irvine, California.


Kristy R. Connolly

EXHIBIT 1

CLASS AND PAGA SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

This Class and PAGA Settlement Agreement (“Agreement”) is made by and between plaintiffs Benjamin Edward Seilhamer and Trevor West (collectively, “Plaintiffs”) and defendant Guitar Center Stores, Inc. (“Defendant”). The Agreement refers to Plaintiffs and Defendant collectively as “Parties,” or individually as “Party.”

1. DEFINITIONS.

- 1.1. “Action” means the Plaintiffs’ lawsuit alleging wage and hour violations against Defendant captioned *Seilhamer v. Guitar Center Stores, Inc.*, Case No. 23STCV00544, initiated on January 11, 2023, and pending in the Superior Court of the State of California, County of Los Angeles
- 1.2. “Administrator” means Atticus Administration, LLC, the neutral entity the Parties have agreed to appoint to administer the Settlement.
- 1.3. “Administration Expenses Payment” means the amount the Administrator will be paid from the Gross Settlement Amount to reimburse its reasonable fees and expenses in accordance with the Administrator’s “not to exceed” bid submitted to the Court in connection with Preliminary Approval of the Settlement.
- 1.4. “Aggrieved Employee” means all persons currently or formerly employed by Defendant as a non-exempt employee in the State of California at any time during the PAGA Period.
- 1.5. “Class” means all persons currently or formerly employed by Defendant as a non-exempt employee in the State of California at any time during the Class Period.
- 1.6. “Class Counsel” means Kashif Haque, Samuel Wong, Jessica L. Campbell and Kristy R. Connolly of Aegis Law Firm, PC.
- 1.7. “Class Counsel Fees Payment” and “Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment” mean the amounts allocated to Class Counsel for reimbursement of reasonable attorneys’ fees and expenses, respectively, incurred to prosecute the Action.
- 1.8. “Class Data” means Class Member identifying information in Defendant’s possession including the Class Member’s name, last-known mailing address, Social Security number, and number of Workweeks and PAGA Pay Periods.
- 1.9. “Class Member” means a member of the Class, as either a Participating Class Member or Non-Participating Class Member (including a Non-Participating Class Member who qualifies as an Aggrieved Employee).
- 1.10. “Class Member Address Search” means the Administrator’s investigation and search for current Class Member mailing addresses using all reasonably available sources, methods and means including, but not limited to, the National Change of

Address database, skip traces, and direct contact by the Administrator with Class Members.

- 1.11. “Class Notice” means the COURT APPROVED NOTICE OF CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT AND HEARING DATE FOR FINAL COURT APPROVAL, to be mailed to Class Members in English with a Spanish translation, in the form, without material variation, attached hereto as Exhibit A and incorporated by reference into this Agreement.
- 1.12. “Class Period” means the period from January 11, 2020 through the earlier of Preliminary Approval or July 11, 2025.
- 1.13. “Class Representative” means the named Plaintiffs in the Operative Complaint in the Action who will seek Court approval to serve as the Class Representatives.
- 1.14. “Class Representative Service Payments” means the payments to the Class Representatives for initiating the Action and providing services in support of the Action.
- 1.15. “Court” means the Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles.
- 1.16. “Defendant” means Guitar Center Stores, Inc., the named defendant in the Action.
- 1.17. “Defense Counsel” means Jimmy Macias and Leticia Kimble of Jackson Lewis P.C.
- 1.18. “Effective Date” means the date by when both of the following have occurred: (a) the Court enters a Judgment on its Order Granting Final Approval of the Settlement; and (b) the Judgment is final. The Judgment is final as of the latest of the following occurrences: (a) if no Participating Class Member objects to the Settlement, the day the Court enters Judgment; (b) if one or more Participating Class Members objects to the Settlement, the day after the deadline for filing a notice of appeal from the Judgment; or if a timely appeal from the Judgment is filed, the day after the appellate court affirms the Judgment and issues a remittitur.
- 1.19. “Final Approval” means the Court’s order granting final approval of the Settlement.
- 1.20. “Final Approval Hearing” means the Court’s hearing on the Motion for Final Approval of the Settlement.
- 1.21. “Final Judgment” means the Judgment Entered by the Court upon Granting Final Approval of the Settlement.
- 1.22. “Gross Settlement Amount” means \$2,418,495.00 which is the total amount Defendant agrees to pay under the Settlement, except as provided in Paragraph 8 below. The Gross Settlement Amount will be used to pay Individual Class Payments, Individual

PAGA Payments, the LWDA PAGA Payment, Class Counsel Fees Payment, Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment, Class Representative Service Payments, and the Administration Expenses Payment.

- 1.23. “Individual Class Payment” means a Participating Class Member’s pro rata share of the Net Settlement Amount calculated according to the number of Workweeks worked during the Class Period
- 1.24. “Individual PAGA Payment” means an Aggrieved Employee’s pro rata share of 25% of the PAGA Penalties paid to the Aggrieved Employees calculated according to the number of PAGA Pay Periods worked during the PAGA Period.
- 1.25. “Judgment” means the judgment entered by the Court based upon the Final Approval.
- 1.26. “LWDA” means the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency, the agency entitled, under Labor Code section 2699, subd. (i).
- 1.27. “LWDA PAGA Payment” means the 75% of the PAGA Penalties paid to the LWDA under the Labor Code section 2699, subd. (i).
- 1.28. “Net Settlement Amount” means the Gross Settlement Amount, less the following payments in the amounts approved by the Court: Individual PAGA Payments, the LWDA PAGA Payment, Class Representative Service Payments, Class Counsel Fees Payment, Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment, and the Administration Expenses Payment. The remainder is to be paid to Participating Class Members as Individual Class Payments.
- 1.29. “Non-Participating Class Member” means any Class Member who opts out of the Settlement by sending the Administrator a valid and timely Request for Exclusion.
- 1.30. “PAGA Pay Period” means any pay period during which an Aggrieved Employee worked for Defendant for at least one day during the PAGA Period.
- 1.31. “PAGA Period” means the period from January 11, 2023 to the earlier of Preliminary Approval or July 11, 2025.
- 1.32. “PAGA” means the Private Attorneys General Act (Labor Code §§ 2698. et seq.).
- 1.33. “PAGA Notice” means Plaintiffs’ January 11, 2023 letter to Defendant and the LWDA, Plaintiffs’ June 13, 2023 letter to Defendant and the LWDA, and Plaintiffs’ May 5, 2025 letter to Defendant and the LWDA, providing notice pursuant to Labor Code section 2699.3, subd.(a).
- 1.34. “PAGA Penalties” means the total amount of \$200,000.00 in PAGA civil penalties to be paid from the Gross Settlement Amount, allocated 25% to the Aggrieved

Employees (\$50,000.00) and the 75% to the LWDA (\$150,000.00) in settlement of PAGA claims.

- 1.35. “Participating Class Member” means a Class Member who does not submit a valid and timely Request for Exclusion from the Settlement.
- 1.36. “Plaintiffs” mean Benjamin Seilhamer and Trevor West, the named plaintiffs in the Action.
- 1.37. “Preliminary Approval” means the Court’s order granting preliminary approval of the Settlement.
- 1.38. “Released Class Claims” means the claims being released as described in Paragraph 5.2 below.
- 1.39. “Released PAGA Claims” means the claims being released as described in Paragraph 5.3 below.
- 1.40. “Released Parties” means Defendant and each of its former and present directors, officers, shareholders, owners, members, investors, attorneys, insurers, predecessors, successors, assigns, parents, subsidiaries and affiliates.
- 1.41. “Request for Exclusion” means a Class Member’s submission of a written request to be excluded from the Class portion of the Settlement signed by the Class Member.
- 1.42. “Response Deadline” means 60 days after the Administrator mails the Class Notice to Class Members and Aggrieved Employees, and shall be the last date on which Class Members may: (a) fax, email, or mail Requests for Exclusion from the Class portion of the Settlement, or (b) fax, email, or mail his or her objection to the Class portion of the Settlement. Class Members to whom Notice Packets are resent after having been returned undeliverable to the Administrator shall have an additional 14 calendar days beyond the Response Deadline has expired.
- 1.43. “Settlement” means the disposition of the Action effected by this Agreement and the Judgment.
- 1.44. “Workweek” means any week during which a Class Member worked for Defendant for at least one day during the Class Period.

2. RECITALS.

- 2.1. On January 11, 2023, Plaintiff Benjamin Seilhamer commenced this Action by filing a complaint alleging causes of action against Defendant for failure to pay minimum wages; failure to pay overtime wages; failure to provide meal periods; failure to permit rest breaks; failure to reimburse business expenses; failure to provide accurate itemized wage statements; failure to pay all wages due upon separation of employment; and

violation of Business and Professions Code §§ 17200, *et seq.* On April 7, 2023, Plaintiff Benjamin Seilhamer filed a First Amended Complaint alleging an additional cause of action against Defendant for Enforcement of Labor Code § 2698 *et seq.* (“PAGA”).

- 2.2. On September 6, 2023, Plaintiff Trevor West commenced an action against Defendant in the Superior Court of California, County of Santa Clara, by filing a complaint alleging causes of action against Defendant for failure to pay minimum wages; failure to pay overtime wages; failure to provide meal periods; failure to permit rest breaks; failure to reimburse business expenses; failure to provide accurate itemized wage statements; failure to pay all wages due upon separation of employment; and violation of Business and Professions Code §§ 17200, *et seq.* On November 15, 2023, Plaintiff Trevor West filed a First Amended Complaint to add a cause of action for PAGA.
- 2.3. On May 12, 2025, Plaintiff Benjamin Seilhamer filed a Second Amended Complaint to add Trevor West as a second named plaintiff and class representative in the Action. The Second Amended Complaint is the Operative Complaint in the Action. Defendant denies the allegations in the Operative Complaint, denies any failure to comply with the laws identified in the Operative Complaint, and denies any and all liability for the causes of action alleged.
- 2.4. Upon the filing of the Second Amended Complaint, Plaintiff Trevor West will file a request for dismissal of his action without prejudice in order to effectively obtain approval of the Settlement in the Action.
- 2.5. Pursuant to Labor Code section 2699.3, subd.(a), Plaintiffs gave timely written notice to Defendant and the LWDA by sending the PAGA Notice.
- 2.6. On March 12, 2025 and April 11, 2025, the Parties participated in an all-day mediation presided over by Monique Ngo-Bonnici, which led to this Agreement to settle the Action.
- 2.7. Prior to mediation, Plaintiffs obtained through informal discovery, a sample of time and pay records for the Class, relevant policy documents, and information regarding the Class data. Plaintiffs’ investigation was sufficient to satisfy the criteria for court approval set forth in *Dunk v. Foot Locker Retail, Inc.* (1996) 48 Cal.App.4th 1794, 1801 and *Kullar v. Foot Locker Retail, Inc.* (2008) 168 Cal.App.4th 116, 129-130 (“*Dunk/Kullar*”).
- 2.8. The Court has not granted class certification.

3. MONETARY TERMS.

- 3.1. Gross Settlement Amount. Except as otherwise provided by Paragraph 8 below, Defendant promises to pay \$2,418,495.00 and no more as the Gross Settlement Amount and to separately pay any and all employer payroll taxes owed on the Wage Portions of the Individual Class Payments. Defendant has no obligation to pay the Gross Settlement

Amount (or any payroll taxes) prior to the deadline stated in Paragraph 4.3 of this Agreement. 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. None of the Gross Settlement Amount will revert to Defendant.

- 3.2. Payments from the Gross Settlement Amount. The Administrator will make and deduct the following payments from the Gross Settlement Amount, in the amounts specified by the Court in the Final Approval:

3.2.1. To Plaintiffs: Class Representative Service Payments to the Class Representatives of not more than \$10,000.00 each (in addition to any Individual Class Payment and any Individual PAGA Payment the Class Representatives are entitled to receive as a Participating Class Member). Defendant will not oppose Plaintiffs' requests for a Class Representative Service Payment that does not exceed this amount. As part of the motion for final approval, Plaintiffs will seek Court approval for the Class Representative Service Payments no later than 16 court days prior to the Final Approval Hearing. 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. The Administrator will pay the Class Representative Service Payments using IRS Form 1099. Plaintiffs assume full responsibility and liability for employee taxes owed on the Class Representative Service Payments.

3.2.2. To Class Counsel: A Class Counsel Fees Payment of not more than 35% of the Gross Settlement Amount, which is currently estimated to be \$846,473.25, and a Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment of not more than \$35,000.00. Defendant will not oppose requests for these payments provided that they do not exceed these amounts. Plaintiffs and/or Class Counsel will file a motion for final approval of the Class Counsel Fees Payment and Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment no later than 16 court days prior to the Final Approval Hearing. 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. Released Parties shall have no liability to Class Counsel or any other Plaintiffs' Counsel arising from any claim to any portion any Class Counsel Fee Payment and/or Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment. The Administrator will pay the Class Counsel Fees Payment and Class Counsel Expenses Payment using one or more IRS 1099 Forms. Class Counsel assumes full responsibility and liability for taxes owed on the Class Counsel Fees Payment and the Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment and holds Defendant harmless, and indemnifies Defendant, from any dispute or controversy regarding any division or sharing of any of these Payments.

3.2.3. To the Administrator: An Administration Expenses Payment not to exceed \$26,000.00 except for a showing of good cause and as approved by the Court. To the extent the Administration Expenses Payment is less or the Court approves

payment less than \$26,000.00, the Administrator will retain the remainder in the Net Settlement Amount.

- 3.2.4. To Each Participating Class Member: An Individual Class Payment calculated by (a) dividing the Net Settlement Amount by the total number of Workweeks worked by all Participating Class Members during the Class Period and (b) multiplying the result by each Participating Class Member's Workweeks.

- 3.2.4.1. Tax Allocation of Individual Class Payments. 20% of each Participating Class Member's Individual Class Payment will be allocated to settlement of wage claims (the "Wage Portion"). The Wage Portions are subject to tax withholding and will be reported on an IRS W-2 Form. 80% of each Participating Class Member's Individual Class Payment will be allocated to settlement of claims for interest and penalties (the "Non-Wage Portion"). The Non-Wage Portions are not subject to wage withholdings and will be reported on IRS 1099 Forms. Participating Class Members assume full responsibility and liability for any employee taxes owed on their Individual Class Payment.

- 3.2.4.2. Effect of Non-Participating Class Members on Calculation of Individual Class Payments. Non-Participating Class Members will not receive any Individual Class Payments. The Administrator will retain amounts equal to their Individual Class Payments in the Net Settlement Amount for distribution to Participating Class Members on a pro rata basis.

- 3.2.5. To the LWDA and Aggrieved Employees: PAGA Penalties in the amount of \$200,000.00 to be paid from the Gross Settlement Amount, with 75% (\$150,000.00) allocated to the LWDA PAGA Payment and 25% (\$50,000.00) allocated to the Individual PAGA Payments.

- 3.2.5.1. The Administrator will calculate each Individual PAGA Payment by (a) dividing the amount of the Aggrieved Employees' 25% share of PAGA Penalties (or \$50,000.00) by the total number of PAGA Pay Periods worked by all Aggrieved Employees during the PAGA Period and (b) multiplying the result by each Aggrieved Employee's PAGA Pay Periods. Aggrieved Employees assume full responsibility and liability for any taxes owed on their Individual PAGA Payment.

- 3.2.5.2. If the Court approves PAGA Penalties of less than the amount requested, the Administrator will allocate the remainder to the Net Settlement Amount. The Administrator will report the Individual PAGA Payments on IRS 1099 Forms.

4. SETTLEMENT FUNDING AND PAYMENTS.

- 4.1. Class Workweeks and Aggrieved Employee Pay Periods. Based on a review of its records, as of April 11, 2025, Defendant estimates there are 3,364 Class Members who collectively worked a total of approximately 230,000 Workweeks, and 2,429 Aggrieved Employees who worked a total of 67,771 bi-weekly PAGA Pay Periods.
- 4.2. Class Data. Not later than 10 business days after the Court grants Preliminary Approval, Defendant will deliver the Class Data to the Administrator, in the form of a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. To protect Class Members' privacy rights, the Administrator must maintain the Class Data in confidence, use the Class Data only for purposes of this Settlement and for no other purpose, and restrict access to the Class Data to Administrator employees who need access to the Class Data to effect and perform under this Agreement. Defendant has a continuing duty to immediately notify Class Counsel if it discovers that the Class Data omitted class member identifying information and to provide corrected or updated Class Data as soon as reasonably feasible. Without any extension of the deadline by which Defendant must send the Class Data to the Administrator, the Parties and their counsel will expeditiously use best efforts, in good faith, to reconstruct or otherwise resolve any issues related to missing or omitted Class Data.
- 4.3. Funding of Gross Settlement Amount. Defendant shall fully fund the Gross Settlement Amount, and also fund the amounts necessary to fully pay Defendant's share of payroll taxes by transmitting the funds to the Administrator no later than 10 business days after the Effective Date.
- 4.4. Payments from the Gross Settlement Amount. Within 10 business days after Defendant fully funds the Gross Settlement Amount, the Administrator will mail checks for all Individual Class Payments, all Individual PAGA Payments, the LWDA PAGA Payment, the Administration Expenses Payment, the Class Counsel Fees Payment, the Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment, and the Class Representative Service Payments. Disbursement of the Class Counsel Fees Payment, the Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment and the Class Representative Service Payments shall not precede disbursement of Individual Class Payments and Individual PAGA Payments.
 - 4.4.1. The Administrator will issue checks for the Individual Class Payments and/or Individual PAGA Payments and send them to the Class Members via First Class U.S. Mail, postage prepaid. The face of each check shall prominently state the date (not less than 180 days after the date of mailing) when the check will be voided. The Administrator will cancel all checks not cashed by the void date. The Administrator will send checks for Individual Settlement Payments to all Participating Class Members (including those for whom Class Notice was returned undelivered). The Administrator will send checks for Individual PAGA Payments to all Aggrieved Employees including Non-Participating Class Members who qualify as Aggrieved Employees (including those for whom Class Notice was returned undelivered). The Administrator may send Participating Class Members a single check combining the Individual Class Payment and the Individual PAGA Payment. Before mailing any checks, the Settlement Administrator must update the

recipients' mailing addresses using the National Change of Address Database.

4.4.2. The Administrator must conduct a Class Member Address Search for all other Class Members whose checks are returned undelivered without USPS forwarding address. Within 7 days of receiving a returned check the Administrator must re-mail checks to the USPS forwarding address provided or to an address ascertained through the Class Member Address Search. The Administrator need not take further steps to deliver checks to Class Members whose re-mailed checks are returned as undelivered. The Administrator shall promptly send a replacement check to any Class Member whose original check was lost or misplaced, requested by the Class Member prior to the void date.

4.4.3. For any Class Member whose Individual Class Payment check or Individual PAGA Payment check is uncashed and cancelled after the void date, 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 Section 384, subd. (b).

4.4.4. The payment of Individual Class Payments and Individual PAGA Payments shall not obligate Defendant to confer any additional benefits or make any additional payments to Class Members (such as 401(k) contributions or bonuses) beyond those specified in this Agreement.

5. RELEASES OF CLAIMS. Effective on the date when Defendant fully funds the entire Gross Settlement Amount and funds all employer payroll taxes owed on the Wage Portion of the Individual Class Payments, Plaintiffs, Participating Class Members, and Class Counsel will release claims against all Released Parties as follows:

5.1. Plaintiffs' Release. Plaintiffs and their respective former and present spouses, representatives, agents, attorneys, heirs, administrators, successors, and assigns generally, release and discharge Released Parties from all claims, transactions, or occurrences arising out of Plaintiffs' employment that occurred prior to the date of execution of this agreement, including, but not limited to: (a) all claims that were, or reasonably could have been, alleged, based on the facts contained, in the Operative Complaint and (b) all PAGA claims that were, or reasonably could have been, alleged based on facts contained in the Operative Complaint, Plaintiffs' PAGA Notice,. ("Plaintiff's Release.") Plaintiffs' Release does not extend to any claims or actions to enforce this Agreement, or to any claims for vested benefits, unemployment benefits, disability benefits, social security benefits, workers' compensation benefits that arose at any time, or based on occurrences outside the Class Period. Plaintiffs acknowledge that Plaintiffs may discover facts or law different from, or in addition to, the facts or law that Plaintiffs now knows or believes to be true but agrees, nonetheless, that Plaintiffs' Release shall be and remain effective in all respects, notwithstanding such different or

additional facts or Plaintiffs' discovery of them.

5.1.1. Plaintiffs' Waiver of Rights Under California Civil Code Section 1542.

For purposes of Plaintiffs' Release, Plaintiffs expressly waive and relinquish the provisions, rights, and benefits, if any, of section 1542 of the California Civil Code, which reads:

A general release does not extend to claims that the creditor or releasing party does not know or suspect to exist in his or her favor at the time of executing the release, and that if known by him or her would have materially affected his or her settlement with the debtor or Released Party.

5.1.2. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Parties agree that Plaintiff Trevor West does not release any claims under the California Fair Employment and Housing Act against the Released Parties by way of this Agreement.

5.2. Release by Participating Class Members:

All Participating Class Members, on behalf of themselves and their respective former and present representatives, agents, attorneys, heirs, administrators, successors, and assigns, release Released Parties from all claims arising during the Class Period that were alleged, or reasonably could have been alleged, based on the facts stated in the Operative Complaint. Except as set forth in Section 5.3 of this Agreement, Participating Class Members do not release any other claims, including claims for vested benefits, wrongful termination, violation of the Fair Employment and Housing Act, unemployment insurance, disability, social security, workers' compensation, or claims based on facts occurring outside the Class Period.

5.3. Release by Aggrieved Employees:

All Aggrieved Employees are deemed to release, on behalf of themselves and their respective former and present representatives, agents, attorneys, heirs, administrators, successors, and assigns, the Released Parties from all claims for PAGA penalties arising during the PAGA Period that were alleged, or reasonably could have been alleged, based on the facts stated in the Operative Complaint and the PAGA Notice.

6. MOTION FOR PRELIMINARY APPROVAL. Plaintiffs shall file a motion for preliminary approval ("Motion for Preliminary Approval").

6.1. Responsibilities of Counsel. Class Counsel is responsible for expeditiously finalizing and filing the Motion for Preliminary Approval no later than 30 days after the full execution of this Agreement; obtaining a prompt hearing date for the Motion for Preliminary Approval; and for appearing in Court to advocate in favor of the Motion for Preliminary Approval. Class Counsel is responsible for delivering the Court's Preliminary Approval Order to the Administrator.

6.2. Duty to Cooperate. If the Parties disagree on any aspect of the proposed Motion for Preliminary Approval and/or the supporting declarations and documents, Class

Counsel and Defense Counsel will expeditiously work together on behalf of the Parties by meeting in person or by telephone, and in good faith, to resolve the disagreement. If the Court does not grant Preliminary Approval or conditions Preliminary Approval on any material change to this Agreement, Class Counsel and Defense Counsel will expeditiously work together on behalf of the Parties by meeting in person or by telephone, and in good faith, to modify the Agreement and otherwise satisfy the Court's concerns.

7. SETTLEMENT ADMINISTRATION.

- 7.1. Selection of Administrator. The Parties have jointly selected Atticus Administration, LLC to serve as the Administrator and verified that, as a condition of appointment, Atticus Administration, LLC agrees to be bound by this Agreement and to perform, as a fiduciary, all duties specified in this Agreement in exchange for payment of Administration Expenses. The Parties and their Counsel represent that they have no interest or relationship, financial or otherwise, with the Administrator other than a professional relationship arising out of prior experiences administering settlements.
- 7.2. Employer Identification Number. The Administrator shall have and use its own Employer Identification Number for purposes of calculating payroll tax withholdings and providing reports to state and federal tax authorities.
- 7.3. Qualified Settlement Fund. The Administrator shall establish a settlement fund that meets the requirements of a Qualified Settlement Fund ("QSF") under US Treasury Regulation section 468B-1.
- 7.4. Notice to Class Members.
 - 7.4.1. No later than three (3) business days after receipt of the Class Data, the Administrator shall notify Class Counsel that the list has been received and state the number of Class Members, Aggrieved Employees, Workweeks, and PAGA Pay Periods in the Class Data.
 - 7.4.2. Using best efforts to perform as soon as possible, and in no event later than 14 days after receiving the Class Data, the Administrator will send to all Class Members identified in the Class Data, via first-class United States Postal Service ("USPS") mail, the Class Notice, with Spanish translation, substantially in the form attached to this Agreement as Exhibit A. The first page of the Class Notice shall prominently estimate the dollar amounts of any Individual Class Payment and/or Individual PAGA Payment payable to the Class Member, and the number of Workweeks and PAGA Pay Periods (if applicable) used to calculate these amounts. Before mailing Class Notices, the Administrator shall update Class Member addresses using the National Change of Address database.
 - 7.4.3. Not later than 3 business days after the Administrator's receipt of any Class Notice returned by the USPS as undelivered, the Administrator shall re-mail

the Class Notice using any forwarding address provided by the USPS. If the USPS does not provide a forwarding address, the Administrator shall conduct a Class Member Address Search, and re-mail the Class Notice to the most current address obtained. The Administrator has no obligation to make further attempts to locate or send Class Notice to Class Members whose Class Notice is returned by the USPS a second time.

7.4.4. The deadlines for Class Members' written objections, challenges to Workweeks and/or PAGA Pay Periods, and Requests for Exclusion will be extended an additional 14 days beyond the 60 days otherwise provided in the Class Notice for all Class Members whose notice is re-mailed. The Administrator will inform the Class Member of the extended deadline with the re-mailed Class Notice.

7.4.5. If the Administrator, Defendant, or Class Counsel is contacted by or otherwise discovers any persons who believe they should have been included in the Class Data and should have received Class Notice, the Parties will expeditiously meet and confer in person or by telephone, and in good faith in an effort to agree on whether to include them as Class Members. If the Parties agree, such persons will be Class Members entitled to the same rights as other Class Members, and the Administrator will send, via email or overnight delivery, a Class Notice requiring them to exercise options under this Agreement not later than 14 days after receipt of Class Notice, or the deadline dates in the Class Notice, whichever are later.

7.5. Requests for Exclusion (Opt-Outs).

7.5.1. Class Members who wish to exclude themselves from (opt-out of) the Class portion of the Settlement must send the Administrator, by fax, email, or mail, a signed written Request for Exclusion not later than 60 days after the Administrator mails the Class Notice (plus an additional 14 days for Class Members whose Class Notice is re-mailed). A Request for Exclusion is a letter from a Class Member or his/her representative that reasonably communicates the Class Member's election to be excluded from the Class portion of the Settlement and includes the Class Member's name, address and email address or telephone number. To be valid, a Request for Exclusion must be timely faxed, emailed, or postmarked by the Response Deadline.

7.5.2. The Administrator may not reject a Request for Exclusion as invalid because it fails to contain all the information specified in the Class Notice. The Administrator shall accept any Request for Exclusion as valid if the Administrator can reasonably ascertain the identity of the person as a Class Member and the Class Member's desire to be excluded. The Court has the power to make the final determination on challenges. If the Administrator has reason to question the authenticity of a Request for Exclusion, the Administrator may demand additional proof of the Class Member's identity.

- 7.5.3. Every Class Member who does not submit a timely and valid Request for Exclusion is deemed to be a Participating Class Member under this Agreement, entitled to all benefits and bound by all terms and conditions of the Settlement, including the Participating Class Members' Releases under Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of this Agreement, regardless of whether the Participating Class Member actually receives the Class Notice or objects to the Class portion of the Settlement.
- 7.5.4. Every Class Member who submits a valid and timely Request for Exclusion is a Non-Participating Class Member and shall not receive an Individual Class Payment or have the right to object to the class action components of the Settlement. Because future PAGA claims are subject to claim preclusion upon entry of the Judgment, Non-Participating Class Members who are Aggrieved Employees are deemed to release the Released PAGA Claims identified in Paragraph 5.3 of this Agreement and are eligible for an Individual PAGA Payment.
- 7.6. Challenges to Calculation of Workweeks and/or PAGA Pay Periods. Each Class Member shall have 60 days after the Administrator mails the Class Notice (plus an additional 14 days for Class Members whose Class Notice is re-mailed) to challenge the number of Workweeks and/or PAGA Pay Periods (if any) allocated to the Class Member in the Class Notice. The Class Member may challenge the allocation by communicating with the Administrator via fax, email or mail, and must provide any supporting documentation to the Administrator. The Administrator must encourage the challenging Class Member to submit supporting documentation. In the absence of any contrary documentation, the Administrator is entitled to presume that the Workweeks and/or PAGA Pay Periods contained in the Class Notice are correct as long as they are consistent with the Class Data. The Administrator shall promptly provide copies of all challenges to calculation of Workweeks and/or Pay Periods to Defense Counsel and Class Counsel and the Administrator's determination of the challenges. The Court has the power to make the final determination on challenges.
- 7.7. Objections to Settlement.
- 7.7.1. Only Participating Class Members may object to the class components of the Settlement and/or this Agreement, including contesting the fairness of the Settlement, and/or amounts requested for the Class Counsel Fees Payment, Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment and/or Class Representative Service Payments.
- 7.7.2. Participating Class Members may send written objections to the Administrator, by fax, email, or mail. In the alternative, Participating Class Members may appear in Court (or hire an attorney to appear in Court) to present verbal objections at the Final Approval Hearing. A Participating Class Member who elects to send a written objection to the Administrator must do so not later than 45 days after the Administrator's mailing of the Class Notice (plus an additional 14 days for Class Members whose Class Notice was re-mailed).

7.7.3. Non-Participating Class Members have no right to object to the Settlement.

7.8. Administrator Duties. The Administrator has a duty to perform or observe all tasks to be performed or observed by the Administrator contained in this Agreement or otherwise.

7.8.1. Website, Email Address and Toll-Free Number. The Administrator will establish and maintain and use an internet website to post information of interest to Class Members including the date, time and location for the Final Approval Hearing and copies of the Settlement Agreement, Motion for Preliminary Approval, the Preliminary Approval, the Class Notice, the motion for Final Approval, the Final Approval and the Judgment. The Administrator will also maintain and monitor an email address and a toll-free telephone number to receive Class Member calls, faxes and emails.

7.8.2. Requests for Exclusion (Opt-outs) and Exclusion List. The Administrator will promptly review on a rolling basis Requests for Exclusion to ascertain their validity. Not later than 5 days after the expiration of the deadline for submitting Requests for Exclusion, the Administrator shall email a list to Class Counsel and Defense Counsel containing (a) the names and other identifying information of Class Members who have timely submitted valid Requests for Exclusion (“Exclusion List”); (b) the names and other identifying information of Class Members who have submitted invalid Requests for Exclusion; (c) copies of all Requests for Exclusion submitted (whether valid or invalid).

7.8.3. Weekly Reports. The Administrator must, on a weekly basis provide written reports to Class Counsel and Defense Counsel that, among other things, tally the number of: Class Notices mailed or re-mailed, Class Notices returned undelivered, Requests for Exclusion (whether valid or invalid) received, objections received, challenges to Workweeks and/or PAGA Pay Periods received and/or resolved, and checks mailed for Individual Class Payments and Individual PAGA Payments (“Weekly Report”). The Weekly Reports must include the Administrator’s assessment of the validity of Requests for Exclusion and attach copies of all Requests for Exclusion and objections received.

7.8.4. Administrator’s Declaration. Not later than 14 days before the date by which Plaintiffs are required to file the Motion for Final Approval, the Administrator will provide to Class Counsel and Defense Counsel, a signed declaration suitable for filing in Court attesting to its due diligence and compliance with all of its obligations under this Agreement, including but not limited to, its mailing of the Class Notice, the Class Notices returned as undelivered, the re-mailing of Class Notices, attempts to locate Class Members, the total number of Requests for Exclusion it received (both valid or invalid), the number of written objections and attach the Exclusion List. The Administrator will supplement its declaration as needed or requested by the Parties and/or the Court. Class Counsel is

responsible for filing the Administrator's declaration(s) in Court.

7.8.5. Final Report by Administrator. Within 10 days after the Administrator disburses all funds in the Gross Settlement Amount, the Administrator will provide Class Counsel and Defense Counsel with a final report detailing its disbursements by Employee Identification Number only of all payments made under this Agreement. At least 15 days before any deadline set by the Court, the Administrator will prepare, and submit to Class Counsel and Defense Counsel, a signed declaration suitable for filing in Court attesting to its disbursement of all payments required under this Agreement. Class Counsel is responsible for filing the Administrator's declaration in Court.

8. CLASS SIZE ESTIMATES and ESCALATOR CLAUSE. Defendant has represented that there are approximately 230,000 Workweeks from January 11, 2020 to April 11, 2025. This is a material representation for Plaintiffs to enter into this Agreement. If the number of total Workweeks during the Class Period exceed 230,000 by more than 10%, Defendant shall have the option of (1) increasing the Gross Settlement Amount by the percentage increase in the number of Workweeks above 10% (e.g., if the number of Workweeks increases by 11%, the Gross Settlement Amount will increase by 1%) or (2) shortening the Class Period and PAGA Period to an earlier date in which there are only 253,000 Workweeks.

9. DEFENDANT'S RIGHT TO WITHDRAW. If the number of valid Requests for Exclusion identified in the Exclusion List exceeds 20% of the total of all Class Members, Defendant may, but is not obligated, elect to withdraw from the Settlement. The Parties agree that, if Defendant withdraws, the Settlement shall be void ab initio, have no force or effect whatsoever, and that neither Party will have any further obligation to perform under the Agreement; provided, however, Defendant will remain responsible for paying all Settlement Administration Expenses incurred to that point. Defendant must notify Class Counsel and the Court of its election to withdraw not later than seven days after the Administrator sends the final Exclusion List to Defense Counsel.

10. MOTION FOR FINAL APPROVAL. Not later than 16 court days before the calendared Final Approval Hearing, Plaintiffs will file a motion for final approval of the Settlement that includes a request for final approval of the PAGA settlement under Labor Code section 2699, subd. (1), and a Proposed Final Approval Order (collectively "Motion for Final Approval").

10.1. Response to Objections. Each Party retains the right to respond to any objection raised by a Participating Class Member, including the right to file responsive documents in Court no later than five court days prior to the Final Approval Hearing, or as otherwise ordered or accepted by the Court.

10.2. Duty to Cooperate. If the Court does not grant Final Approval or conditions Final Approval on any material change to the Settlement (including, but not limited to, the scope of release to be granted by Class Members), the Parties will expeditiously work together in good faith to address the Court's concerns by revising the Agreement as necessary to obtain Final Approval. The Court's decision to award less than the amounts

requested for the Class Representative Service Payment, Class Counsel Fees Payment, Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment and/or Administrator Expenses Payment shall not constitute a material modification to the Agreement within the meaning of this paragraph.

10.3. Continuing Jurisdiction of the Court. The Parties agree that, after entry of Judgment, the Court will retain jurisdiction over the Parties, Action, and the Settlement solely for purposes of (i) enforcing this Agreement and/or Judgment, (ii) addressing settlement administration matters, and (iii) addressing such post-Judgment matters as are permitted by law pursuant to California Code of Civil Procedure section 664.6.

10.4. Waiver of Right to Appeal. Provided the Judgment is consistent with the terms and conditions of this Agreement, specifically including the Class Counsel Fees Payment and Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment set forth in this Settlement, the Parties, their respective counsel, and all Participating Class Members who did not object to the Settlement as provided in this Agreement, waive all rights to appeal from the Judgment, including all rights to post-judgment and appellate proceedings, the right to file motions to vacate judgment, motions for new trial, extraordinary writs, and appeals. The waiver of appeal does not include any waiver of the right to oppose such motions, writs or appeals. If an objector appeals the Judgment, the Parties' obligations to perform under this Agreement will be suspended until such time as the appeal is finally resolved and the Judgment becomes final, except as to matters that do not affect the amount of the Net Settlement Amount.

10.5. Appellate Court Orders to Vacate, Reverse, or Materially Modify Judgment. If the reviewing Court vacates, reverses, or modifies the Judgment in a manner that requires a material modification of this Agreement (including, but not limited to, the scope of release to be granted by Class Members), this Agreement shall be null and void. The Parties shall nevertheless expeditiously work together in good faith to address the appellate court's concerns and to obtain Final Approval and entry of Judgment, sharing, on a 50-50 basis, any additional Administration Expenses reasonably incurred after remittitur. An appellate decision to vacate, reverse, or modify the Court's award of the Class Representative Service Payments or any payments to Class Counsel shall not constitute a material modification of the Judgment within the meaning of this paragraph, as long as the Gross Settlement Amount remains unchanged.

11. AMENDED JUDGMENT. If any amended judgment is required under Code of Civil Procedure section 384, the Parties will work together in good faith to jointly submit a proposed amended judgment.

12. ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS.

12.1. No Admission of Liability, Class Certification or Representative Manageability for Other Purposes. This Agreement represents a compromise and settlement of highly disputed claims. Nothing in this Agreement is intended or should be construed as an admission by Defendant that any of the allegations in the Operative Complaint have

merit or that Defendant have any liability for any claims asserted; nor should it be intended or construed as an admission by Plaintiffs that Defendant's defenses in the Action have merit. The Parties agree that class certification and representative treatment is for purposes of this Settlement only. If, for any reason the Court does not grant Preliminary Approval, Final Approval or enter Judgment, Defendant reserves the right to contest certification of any class for any reasons, and Defendant reserves all available defenses to the claims in the Action, and Plaintiffs reserve the right to move for class certification on any grounds available and to contest Defendant's defenses. The Settlement, this Agreement and Parties' willingness to settle the Action will have no bearing on, and will not be admissible in connection with, any litigation (except for proceedings to enforce or effectuate the Settlement and this Agreement).

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- 12.2. No Solicitation. The Parties separately agree that they and their respective counsel and employees will not solicit any Class Member to opt out of or object to the Settlement, or appeal from the Judgment. Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to restrict Class Counsel's ability to communicate with Class Members in accordance with Class Counsel's ethical obligations owed to Class Members.
 - 12.3. Integrated Agreement. Upon execution by all Parties and their counsel, this Agreement together with its attached exhibits shall constitute the entire agreement between the Parties relating to the Settlement, superseding any and all oral representations, warranties, covenants, or inducements made to or by any Party.
 - 12.4. Attorney Authorization. Class Counsel and Defense Counsel separately warrant and represent that they are authorized by Plaintiffs and Defendant, respectively, to take all appropriate action required or permitted to be taken by such Parties pursuant to this Agreement to effectuate its terms, and to execute any other documents reasonably required to effectuate the terms of this Agreement including any amendments to this Agreement.
 - 12.5. Cooperation. The Parties and their counsel will cooperate with each other and use their best efforts, in good faith, to implement the Settlement by, among other things, modifying the Settlement Agreement, submitting supplemental evidence and supplementing points and authorities as requested by the Court. In the event the Parties are unable to agree upon the form or content of any document necessary to implement the Settlement, or on any modification of the Agreement that may become necessary to implement the Settlement, the Parties will seek the assistance of a mediator and/or the Court for resolution.
 - 12.6. No Prior Assignments. The Parties separately represent and warrant that they have not directly or indirectly assigned, transferred, encumbered, or purported to assign, transfer, or encumber to any person or entity and portion of any liability, claim, demand, action, cause of action, or right released and discharged by the Party in this Settlement.
 - 12.7. No Tax Advice. Neither Plaintiffs, Class Counsel, Defendant nor Defense Counsel are providing any advice regarding taxes or taxability, nor shall anything in this

Settlement be relied upon as such within the meaning of United States Treasury Department Circular 230 (31 CFR Part 10, as amended) or otherwise.

- 12.8. Modification of Agreement. This Agreement, and all parts of it, may be amended, modified, changed, or waived only by an express written instrument signed by all Parties or their representatives, and approved by the Court.
- 12.9. Agreement Binding on Successors. This Agreement will be binding upon, and inure to the benefit of, the successors of each of the Parties.
- 12.10. Applicable Law. All terms and conditions of this Agreement and its exhibits will be governed by and interpreted according to the internal laws of the state of California, without regard to conflict of law principles. Any action to enforce this Agreement shall be filed in the Superior Court of California for the County of Los Angeles.
- 12.11. Cooperation in Drafting. The Parties have cooperated in the drafting and preparation of this Agreement. This Agreement will not be construed against any Party on the basis that the Party was the drafter or participated in the drafting.
- 12.12. Confidentiality. To the extent permitted by law, all agreements made, and orders entered during Action and in this Agreement relating to the confidentiality of information shall survive the execution of this Agreement.
- 12.13. Headings. The descriptive heading of any section or paragraph of this Agreement is inserted for convenience of reference only and does not constitute a part of this Agreement.
- 12.14. Calendar Days. Unless otherwise noted, all reference to “days” in this Agreement shall be to calendar days. In the event any date or deadline set forth in this Agreement falls on a weekend or federal legal holiday, such date or deadline shall be on the first business day thereafter.
- 12.15. Notice. All notices, demands or other communications between the Parties in connection with this Agreement will be in writing and deemed to have been duly given as of the third business day after mailing by United States mail, or the day sent by email or messenger, addressed as follows:

To Plaintiff: Aegis Law Firm, PC
Kashif Haque
Samuel Wong
Jessica L. Campbell
jcampbell@aegislawfirm.com
Kristy R. Connolly
kconnolly@aegislawfirm.com
9811 Irvine Center Drive, Suite 100
Irvine, California 92618

To Defendant:

Leticia Kimble
725 S. Figueroa St Suite 2800
Los Angeles, CA 90017
Direct: (213) 356-7388
Main: (213) 689-0404

Jimmy Macias
JACKSON LEWIS P.C.
160 W Santa Clara St Suite 400
San Jose, CA 95113
Direct: (408) 513 2262
Main: (408) 579 0404

Leticia.Kimble@jacksonlewis.com
Jimmy.Macias@jacksonlewis.com
Esperansa.Reinold@jacksonlewis.com
Craig.Gosselin@guitarcenter.com
Tomi.Oshita@guitarcenter.com

- 12.16. Execution in Counterparts. This Agreement may be executed in one or more counterparts by facsimile, electronically, (i.e. DocuSign), or email which for purposes of this Agreement shall be accepted as an original. All executed counterparts and each of them will be deemed to be one and the same instrument if counsel for the Parties will exchange between themselves signed counterparts. Any executed counterparts will be admissible in evidence to prove the existence and contents of this Agreement.
- 12.17. Stay of Litigation. The Parties agree that upon the execution of this Agreement the litigation shall be stayed, except to effectuate the terms of this Agreement. The Parties further agree that upon the signing of this Agreement that pursuant to CCP section 583.330 to extend the date to bring a case to trial under CCP section 583.310 for the entire period of this settlement process.

[signature page follows]

IN WITNESS THEREOF, the undersigned Parties do hereby execute this Agreement as of the Effective Date.

Date: 05/07/2025

PLAINTIFF BENJAMIN SEILHAMER


Benjamin Seilhamer (May 7, 2025 08:25 PDT)
Benjamin Seilhamer

Date: 05/05/2025

PLAINTIFF TREVOR WEST


Trevor West

Date: 5/23/2025

DEFENDANT GUITAR CENTER
STORES, INC.

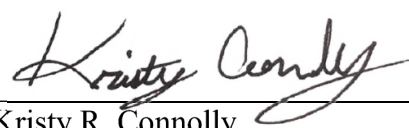

Tim Martin

By: Tim Martin

Title: Chief Financial Officer

Date: 5/7/2025

AEGIS LAW FIRM, PC


Kristy R. Connolly
Attorneys for Plaintiff

Date: 05/27/2025

JACKSON LEWIS P.C.


Leticia Kimble
Jimmy Macias
Attorneys for Defendant

Exhibit A

**COURT-APPROVED NOTICE OF CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT AND
HEARING DATE FOR FINAL COURT APPROVAL**

Seilhamer v. Guitar Center Stores, Inc.

Los Angeles County Superior Court, Case No. 23STCV00544

*The Superior Court for the State of California authorized this Notice. Read it Carefully!
It's not junk mail, spam, an advertisement, or solicitation by a lawyer. You are not being sued.*

You may be eligible to receive money from an employee class action lawsuit (“Action”) against Guitar Center Stores, Inc. (“Defendant” is used herein as a placeholder) for alleged wage and hour violations. The Action was brought by two former employees, Benjamin Seilhamer and Trevor West (“Plaintiffs”), and seeks payment of (1) back wages and other relief for a class of non-exempt employees (“Class Members”) who worked for Defendant during the Class Period (January 11, 2020 through July 11, 2025); and (2) penalties under the California Private Attorneys General Act (“PAGA”) for all non-exempt employees who worked for Defendant during the PAGA Period (January 11, 2020 through July 11, 2025) (“Aggrieved Employees”).

The proposed Settlement has two main parts: (1) a Class Settlement requiring Defendant to fund Individual Class Payments, and (2) a PAGA Settlement requiring Defendant to fund individual PAGA Payments and pay penalties to the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency (“LWDA”).

Based on Defendant’s records, **your Individual Class Payment is estimated to be \$_____ (less withholding) and your Individual PAGA Payment is estimated to be \$_____.** The actual amount you may receive likely will be different and will depend on a number of factors. If no amount is stated for your Individual PAGA Payment, then according to Defendant’s records, you are not eligible for an Individual PAGA Payment because you did not work for Defendant during the PAGA Period.

The above estimates are based on Defendant’s records showing that **you worked _____ workweeks** during the Class Period and **you worked _____ pay periods** during the PAGA Period. If you believe that you worked more workweeks during either period, you can submit a challenge by the deadline date. See Section 4 of this Notice.

The Court has already preliminarily approved the proposed Settlement and approved this Notice. The Court has not yet decided whether to grant final approval. Your legal rights are affected whether you act or not act. Read this notice carefully. You will be deemed to have carefully read and understood it. At the Final Approval Hearing, the Court will decide whether to finally approve the Settlement and how much of the Settlement will be paid to Plaintiffs and Plaintiff’s attorneys (“Class Counsel”). The Court will also decide whether to enter a judgment that requires Defendant to make payments under the Settlement and requires Class Members and Aggrieved Employees to give up their rights to assert certain claims against Defendant.

If you worked for Defendant during the Class Period and/or the PAGA Period, you have two basic options under the Settlement:

(1) **Do Nothing.** You don't have to do anything to participate in the proposed Settlement and be eligible for an Individual Class Payment and/or an Individual PAGA Payment. As a Participating Class Member, though, you will give up your right to assert the Released Class Claims and Released PAGA Claims against Defendant.

(2) **Opt-Out of the Class Settlement.** You can exclude yourself from the Class portion of the Settlement (opt-out) by submitting a written Request for Exclusion or otherwise notifying the Administrator in writing. If you opt-out of the Settlement, you will not receive an Individual Class Payment. You will, however, preserve your right to personally pursue the Released Class Claims against Defendant, and, if you are an Aggrieved Employee, remain eligible for an Individual PAGA Payment. You cannot opt-out of the PAGA portion of the proposed Settlement.

Defendant will not retaliate against you for any actions you take with respect to the proposed Settlement

SUMMARY OF YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS AND OPTIONS IN THIS SETTLEMENT

You Don't Have to Do Anything to Participate in the Settlement	If you do nothing, you will be a Participating Class Member, eligible for an Individual Class Payment and an Individual PAGA Payment (if any). In exchange, you will give up your right to assert the wage claims against Defendant that are covered by this Settlement (Released Claims).
You Can Opt-out of the Class Settlement but not the PAGA Settlement The Opt-out Deadline is _____	If you don't want to fully participate in the proposed Settlement, you can opt-out of the Class Settlement by sending the Administrator a written Request for Exclusion. Once excluded, you will be a Non-Participating Class Member and no longer eligible for an Individual Class Payment. Non-Participating Class Members cannot object to any portion of the proposed Settlement. See Section 6 of this Notice. You cannot opt-out of the PAGA portion of the proposed Settlement. Defendant must pay Individual PAGA Payments to all Aggrieved Employees and the Aggrieved Employees must give up their rights to pursue Released Claims (defined below).
Participating Class Members Can Object to the Class Settlement but not the PAGA Settlement Written Objections Must be Submitted by _____	All Class Members who do not opt-out ("Participating Class Members") can object to any aspect of the proposed Settlement. The Court's decision whether to finally approve the Settlement will include a determination of how much will be paid to Class Counsel and Plaintiffs who pursued the Action on behalf of the Class. You are not personally responsible for any payments to Class Counsel or Plaintiff, but every dollar paid to Class Counsel and Plaintiffs reduces the overall amount paid to Participating Class Members. You can object to the amounts requested by Class Counsel or

	Plaintiffs if you think they are unreasonable. See Section 7 of this Notice.
You Can Participate in the _____ Final Approval Hearing	The Court's Final Approval Hearing is scheduled to take place on _____. You don't have to attend but you do have the right to appear (or hire an attorney to appear on your behalf at your own cost), in person, by telephone or by using the Court's virtual appearance platform. Participating Class Members can verbally object to the Settlement at the Final Approval Hearing. See Section 8 of this Notice.
You Can Challenge the Calculation of Your Workweeks/Pay Periods Written Challenges Must be Submitted by _____	The amount of your Individual Class Payment and PAGA Payment (if any) depend on how many weeks you worked at least one day during the Class Period and how many pay periods you worked at least one day during the PAGA Period, respectively. The number of Class Period Workweeks and number of PAGA Pay Periods you worked according to Defendant's records is stated on the first page of this Notice. If you disagree with either of these numbers, you must challenge it by _____. See Section 4 of this Notice.

1. WHAT IS THE ACTION ABOUT?

Plaintiffs are former employees of Defendant. The Action accuses Defendant of violating California labor laws by failing to pay overtime wages, minimum wages, wages due upon termination and reimbursable expenses and failing to provide meal periods, rest breaks and accurate itemized wage statements. Based on the same claims, Plaintiffs also sought civil penalties under the California Private Attorneys General Act (Labor Code §§ 2698, et seq.) ("PAGA"). Plaintiffs are represented by attorneys in the Action: Samuel A. Wong, Kashif Haque, Jessica L. Campbell, and Kristy R. Connolly from Aegis Law Firm, PC ("Class Counsel.")

Defendant strongly denies violating any laws or failing to pay any wages and contends it complied with all applicable laws.

2. WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT THE ACTION HAS SETTLED?

So far, the Court has made no determination whether Defendant or Plaintiffs are correct on the merits. In the meantime, Plaintiffs and Defendant hired an experienced, neutral mediator in an effort to resolve the Action by negotiating to settle the case rather than continuing the expensive and time-consuming process of litigation. The negotiations were successful. By signing a lengthy written settlement agreement ("Agreement") and agreeing to jointly ask the Court to enter a judgment ending the Action and enforcing the Agreement, Plaintiffs and Defendant have negotiated a proposed Settlement that is subject to the Court's Final Approval. Both sides agree the proposed Settlement is a compromise of disputed claims. By agreeing to settle, Defendant does not admit any violations or concede the merit of any claims. Plaintiffs and Class Counsel strongly believe the Settlement is a good deal for you because they believe that: (1) Defendant

have agreed to pay a fair, reasonable and adequate amount considering the strength of the claims and the risks and uncertainties of continued litigation; and (2) Settlement is in the best interests of the Class Members and Aggrieved Employees. The Court preliminarily approved the proposed Settlement as fair, reasonable and adequate, authorized this Notice, and scheduled a hearing to determine Final Approval.

3. WHAT ARE THE IMPORTANT TERMS OF THE PROPOSED SETTLEMENT?

- A. Defendant Will Pay \$2,418,495.00 as the Gross Settlement Amount (Gross Settlement). Defendant has agreed to deposit the Gross Settlement into an account controlled by the Administrator of the Settlement. The Administrator will use the Gross Settlement to pay the Individual Class Payments, Individual PAGA Payments, Class Representative Service Payments, Class Counsel's attorney's fees and expenses, the Administrator's expenses, and penalties to be paid to the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency ("LWDA"). Assuming the Court grants Final Approval, and there are no objections to the Settlement, Defendant will fund the Gross Settlement not more than 14 business days after the Court grants final approval and the Judgment entered by the Court becomes final.
- B. Court Approved Deductions from Gross Settlement. At the Final Approval Hearing, Plaintiffs and/or Class Counsel will ask the Court to approve the following deductions from the Gross Settlement, the amounts of which will be decided by the Court at the Final Approval Hearing:
 - i. Up to 35% of the Gross Settlement Amount to Class Counsel for attorneys' fees and up to \$35,000.00 for reimbursement of their litigation expenses. To date, Class Counsel have worked and incurred expenses on the Action without payment.
 - ii. Up to \$10,000.00 as a Class Representative Service Payment to each of the Plaintiffs for filing the Action, working with Class Counsel, and representing the Class.
 - iii. Up to \$ [REDACTED] to the Administrator for services administering the Settlement.
 - iv. Up to \$200,000.00 for PAGA Penalties, allocated 75% (or \$150,000) to the LWDA PAGA Payment and 25% (or \$50,000) in Individual PAGA Payments to the Aggrieved Employees based on their pay periods worked during the PAGA Period.

Participating Class Members have the right to object to any of these deductions. The Court will consider all objections.

- C. Net Settlement Distributed to Participating Class Members. After making the above deductions in amounts approved by the Court, the Administrator will distribute the rest of

the Gross Settlement (the “Net Settlement”) by making Individual Class Payments to Participating Class Members based on their Workweeks.

- D. Taxes Owed on Payments to Class Members. Plaintiffs and Defendant are asking the Court to approve an allocation of 20% of each Individual Class Payment to taxable wages (“Wage Portion”) and 80% to interest and penalties. (“Non-Wage Portion”). The Wage Portion is subject to withholdings and will be reported on IRS W-2 Forms. Defendant will separately pay employer payroll taxes it owes on the Wage Portion. The Individual PAGA Payments are counted as penalties rather than wages for tax purposes. The Administrator will report the Individual PAGA Payments and the Non-Wage Portions of the Individual Class Payments on IRS 1099 Forms.
- E. Need to Promptly Cash Payment Checks. The front of every check issued for Individual Class Payments and Individual PAGA Payments will show the date when the check expires (the void date). If you don’t cash it by the void date, your check will be automatically cancelled, and the monies will be deposited with the California Controller’s Unclaimed Property Fund in your name. If the monies represented by your check is sent to the Controller’s Unclaimed Property, you should consult the rules of the Fund for instructions on how to retrieve your money.
- F. Requests for Exclusion from the Class Settlement (Opt-Outs). You will be treated as a Participating Class Member, participating fully in the Class portion of the Settlement, unless you notify the Administrator in writing, not later than [REDACTED], that you wish to opt-out. The easiest way to notify the Administrator is to send a written and signed Request for Exclusion by the [REDACTED] Response Deadline. The Request for Exclusion should be a letter from a Class Member or his/her representative setting forth a Class Member’s name, present address, telephone number, and a simple statement electing to be excluded from the Settlement. Excluded Class Members (i.e., Non-Participating Class Members) will not receive Individual Class Payments, but will preserve their rights to personally pursue wage and hour claims against Defendant.

You cannot opt-out of the PAGA portion of the Settlement. Class Members who exclude themselves from the Class portion of the Settlement (Non-Participating Class Members) remain eligible for Individual PAGA Payments and are required to give up their right to assert the Released PAGA Claims against Defendant.

- G. The Proposed Settlement Will be Void if the Court Denies Final Approval. It is possible the Court will decline to grant Final Approval of the Settlement or decline to enter a Judgment. It is also possible the Court will enter a Judgment that is reversed on appeal. Plaintiffs and Defendant have agreed that, in either case, the Settlement will be void: Defendant will not pay any money and Class Members will not release any claims against Defendant.
- H. Administrator. The Court has appointed a neutral company, [REDACTED] (the “Administrator”) to send this Notice, calculate and make payments, and process Class Members’ Requests for Exclusion. The Administrator will also decide Class

Members' challenges to Workweeks and/or PAGA Pay Periods, mail and re-mail settlement checks and tax forms, and perform other tasks necessary to administer the Settlement. The Administrator's contact information is contained in Section 9 of this Notice.

I. Participating Class Members' Release.

All Participating Class Members, on behalf of themselves and their respective former and present representatives, agents, attorneys, heirs, administrators, successors, and assigns, release Released Parties from all claims arising during the Class Period that were alleged, or reasonably could have been alleged, based on the facts stated in the Operative Complaint. Except as provided by the Aggrieved Employees' PAGA Release, Participating Class Members do not release any other claims, including claims for vested benefits, wrongful termination, violation of the Fair Employment and Housing Act, unemployment insurance, disability, social security, workers' compensation, or claims based on facts occurring outside the Class Period.

J. Aggrieved Employees' PAGA Release.

All Aggrieved Employees are deemed to release, on behalf of themselves and their respective former and present representatives, agents, attorneys, heirs, administrators, successors, and assigns, the Released Parties from all claims for PAGA penalties arising during the PAGA Period that were alleged, or reasonably could have been alleged, based on the facts stated in the Operative Complaint and the PAGA Notice.

4. HOW WILL THE ADMINISTRATOR CALCULATE MY PAYMENT?

- A. Individual Class Payments. The Administrator will calculate Individual Class Payments by (a) dividing the Net Settlement Amount by the total number of Workweeks worked by all Participating Class Members, and (b) multiplying the result by the number of Workweeks worked by each individual Participating Class Member.
- B. Individual PAGA Payments. The Administrator will calculate Individual PAGA Payments by (a) dividing \$50,000.00 by the total number of PAGA Pay Periods worked by all Aggrieved Employees and (b) multiplying the result by the number of PAGA Pay Periods worked by each individual Aggrieved Employee.
- C. Workweek/Pay Period Challenges. The number of Workweeks you worked during the Class Period and the number of PAGA Pay Periods you worked during the PAGA Period, as recorded in Defendant's records, are stated in the first page of this Notice. You have until [REDACTED] to challenge the number of Workweeks and/or PAGA Pay Periods credited to you. You can submit your challenge by signing and sending a letter to the Administrator via mail, email or fax. Section 9 of this Notice has the Administrator's contact information.

You need to support your challenge by sending copies of pay stubs or other records, otherwise the Administrator will accept Defendant's calculation of Workweeks and/or Pay Periods based on Defendant's records as accurate. You should send copies rather

than originals because the documents will not be returned to you. The Administrator will resolve Workweek and/or Pay Period challenges based on your submission and on input from Class Counsel (who will advocate on behalf of Participating Class Members) and Defendant's Counsel. The Court has the power to make the final determination on challenges.

5. HOW WILL I GET PAID?

- A. Participating Class Members. The Administrator will send, by U.S. mail, a single check to every Participating Class Member (i.e., every Class Member who doesn't opt-out) including those who also qualify as Aggrieved Employees. The single check will combine the Individual Class Payment and the Individual PAGA Payment.
- B. Non-Participating Class Members. The Administrator will send, by U.S. mail, a single Individual PAGA Payment check to every Aggrieved Employee, including those who opt out of the Class Settlement (i.e., every Non-Participating Class Member who is also an Aggrieved Employee).

Your check will be sent to the same address as this Notice. If you change your address, be sure to notify the Administrator as soon as possible. Section 9 of this Notice has the Administrator's contact information.

6. HOW DO I OPT-OUT OF THE CLASS SETTLEMENT?

Submit a written and signed letter with your name, present address, telephone number, and a simple statement that you do not want to participate in the Settlement. The Administrator will exclude you based on any writing communicating your request be excluded. Be sure to personally sign your request, identify the Action as *Seilhamer v. Guitar Center Stores, Inc.*, and include your identifying information (full name, address, telephone number, and approximate dates of employment for verification purposes). You must make the request yourself. If someone else makes the request for you, it will not be valid. **The Administrator must be sent your request to be excluded by [REDACTED], or it will be invalid.** Section 9 of the Notice has the Administrator's contact information.

7. HOW DO I OBJECT TO THE SETTLEMENT?

Only Participating Class Members have the right to object to the Class portion of the Settlement. Before deciding whether to object, you may wish to see what Plaintiffs and Defendant are asking the Court to approve. At least 16 business days before the _____ Final Approval Hearing, Plaintiffs will file in Court a Motion for Final Approval that includes, among other things, the reasons why the proposed Settlement is fair, and why the amounts requested for the Class Representative Service Payments, Class Counsel Fee Payment, Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment, and Administration Expenses Payment should be granted. Upon reasonable request, Class Counsel (whose contact information is in Section 9 of this Notice) will send you copies of these documents at no cost to you. You can also view them on the Administrator's Website _____ (url) _____ or the Court's website at <https://ventura.ecourt.com/public->

[portal/?q=Home](#)

A Participating Class Member who disagrees with any aspect of the Agreement or the Motion for Final Approval may wish to object, for example, that the proposed Settlement is unfair, or that the amounts requested by Class Counsel or Plaintiffs are too high or too low.

The deadline for sending written objections to the Administrator is [REDACTED]. Be sure to tell the Administrator what you object to, why you object, and any facts that support your objection. Make sure you identify the Action as *Seilhamer v. Guitar Center Stores, Inc.* and include your name, current address, telephone number, and approximate dates of employment for Defendant and sign the objection. Section 9 of this Notice has the Administrator's contact information.

Alternatively, a Participating Class Member can object (or personally retain a lawyer to object at your own cost) by attending the Final Approval Hearing. You (or your attorney) should be ready to tell the Court what you object to, why you object, and any facts that support your objection. See Section 8 of this Notice (immediately below) for specifics regarding the Final Approval Hearing.

8. CAN I ATTEND THE FINAL APPROVAL HEARING?

You can, but don't have to, attend the Final Approval Hearing on _____ at (time) in Department 6 of the Los Angeles Superior Court, located at 312 North Spring Street, Los Angeles, California 90012. At the Final Approval Hearing, the judge will decide whether to grant Final Approval of the Settlement and how much of the Gross Settlement will be paid to Class Counsel, Plaintiffs, and the Administrator. The Court will invite comment from objectors, Class Counsel and Defense Counsel before making any decisions. You can attend (or hire a lawyer to attend) either personally or virtually via LACourtConnect (<https://www.lacourt.org/lacc/>). Check the Court's website for the most current information.

It's possible the Court will reschedule the Final Approval Hearing. You should check the Administrator's website _____ beforehand or contact Class Counsel to verify the date and time of the Final Approval Hearing.

9. HOW CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

The Agreement sets forth everything Defendant and Plaintiffs have promised to do under the proposed Settlement. The easiest way to read the Agreement, the Judgment or any other Settlement documents is to go to (specify entity)'s website at _____ (url) _____. You can also telephone or send an email to Class Counsel or the Administrator using the contact information listed below, or consult the Superior Court website by going to (<http://www.lacourt.org/casesummary/ui/index.aspx>) and entering the following Case Number for the Action: 23STCV00544. You can also make an appointment to personally review court documents in the Clerk's Office at the Stanley Mosk Courthouse by calling (213) 830-0800.

**DO NOT TELEPHONE THE SUPERIOR COURT TO OBTAIN INFORMATION
ABOUT THE SETTLEMENT.**

Class Counsel:

Name of Attorney: Kashif Haque, Samuel Wong, Jessica L. Campbell, and Kristy Connolly

Email Address: kconnolly@aegislawfirm.com

Name of Firm: Aegis Law Firm, PC

Mailing Address: 9811 Irvine Center Drive, Suite 100, Irvine, CA 92618

Telephone: (949) 379-6250

Settlement Administrator:

Name of Company:

Email Address:

Mailing Address:

Telephone:

Fax Number:

10. WHAT IF I LOSE MY SETTLEMENT CHECK?

If you lose or misplace your settlement check before cashing it, the Administrator will replace it as long as you request a replacement before the void date on the face of the original check. If your check is already void you should consult the Unclaimed Property Fund for instructions on how to retrieve the funds at https://www.sco.ca.gov/Files-UPD/guide_upd_claiming.pdf

11. WHAT IF I CHANGE MY ADDRESS?

To receive your check, you should immediately notify the Administrator if you move or otherwise change your mailing address.

EXHIBIT 2



AEGIS LAW FIRM, PC
9811 Irvine Center Drive, Suite 100
Irvine, California 92618
Telephone: 949.379.6250
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January 11, 2023

VIA ONLINE SUBMISSION

California Labor and Workforce Development Agency
Attn: PAGA Administrator

VIA CERTIFIED MAIL (RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED)

Agent for Service of Process for Guitar Center Stores, Inc.:
CT Corporation System
330 N. Brand Blvd., Ste. 700
Glendale, CA 91203

Re: Edward Seilhamer v. Guitar Center Stores, Inc.

Dear Labor and Workforce Development Agency; Guitar Center Stores, Inc.:

Please allow this correspondence to serve as written notice required by California Labor Code § 2699.3(a)(1) of the specific provisions of the Labor Code allegedly violated by Guitar Center Stores, Inc. and any other employers or person(s) acting on behalf of the employer as such phrase is used under Labor Code sections 558 and 558.1 ("Respondent"), and the facts and theories in support of said allegations. This firm represents Edward Seilhamer ("Claimant"); we hereby notify you that Claimant intends to seek penalties against Respondent under the Private Attorneys General Act of 2004, Cal. Lab. Code §§ 2698 *et seq.*, on Claimant's own behalf and all other aggrieved employees.

Specific Provisions of the Labor Code Allegedly Violated by Respondent

The specific provisions of the Labor Code allegedly violated by Respondent and the provisions under which Claimant submits this correspondence include the following: §§ 201, 202, 203, 204, 210, 226, 226.3, 226.7, 246, 510, 512, 558, 1174, 1174.5, 1182.12, 1194, 1194.2, 1197, 1197.1, 1198, 2800, and 2802.

Facts and Theories Supporting the Allegations Against Respondent

Claimant and other aggrieved employees worked for Respondent in California as non-exempt employees. Claimant was employed by Respondent in California within the past year.

During the past year, Respondent failed to provide 30-minute uninterrupted meal periods within the appropriate time intervals to Claimant and other aggrieved employees as required by Labor Code section 512 and section 11 of the applicable Wage Order. Claimant and other

aggrieved employees frequently worked shifts over five hours and did not receive lawful meal periods because they were discouraged from taking meal periods, were interrupted during their meal periods, were required to remain on call during meal periods, and/or were not scheduled to be relieved at the appropriate intervals to receive all lawful meal periods, among other reasons. As a result, their meal periods were missed, late, short, and/or interrupted.

When Claimant and other aggrieved employees missed meal periods or if the meal periods were late, short, and/or interrupted, Respondent violated Labor Code sections 226.7 and 512, as well as section 11 of the applicable Wage Order, by failing to pay an additional hour of pay at the regular rate of pay to Claimant and other aggrieved employees for every day in which they suffered a meal period violation.

Respondent failed to authorize or permit paid 10-minute rest periods for every four hours or major fraction thereof worked because Claimant and other aggrieved employees were required or incentivized to work through their rest periods, discouraged from taking their rest periods, required to remain on call during rest periods, and/or were not scheduled to be relieved at the appropriate intervals to receive all rest periods.

When Claimant and other aggrieved employees did not receive rest periods, Respondent violated Labor Code section 226.7 and section 12 of the applicable Wage Order by failing to pay an additional hour of pay at the regular rate of pay to Claimant and other aggrieved employees.

Respondent failed to pay Claimant and other aggrieved employees at least the legal minimum wage and overtime wage for all hours worked (in violation of Labor Code sections 246, 510, 558, 1182.12, 1194, 1194.2, 1197, 1197.1, and 1198) due to Respondent's policy and practice of requiring Claimant and aggrieved employees to work off-the-clock (such as while waiting to be allowed to clock in and while completing paperwork), failing to pay sick pay and/or overtime wages using the appropriate regular rate of pay (because incentive payments such as shift differentials were excluded), and/or failing to pay for all recorded time, among other reasons. Respondent failed to pay Claimant and other aggrieved all minimum, regular, and overtime wages for these hours.

Claimant and other aggrieved employees incurred necessary business-related expenses as a direct consequence of the discharge of their job duties for the benefit of Respondent, such as cell phone use, teaching materials, and music books. As such, Respondent violated Labor Code §§ 2800 and 2802 by failing to reimburse Claimant and other aggrieved employees for such expenses.

As a result of, and in addition to, these actions, Respondent violated Labor Code sections 226, and 226.3 by failing to provide itemized wage statements that accurately reported the following: (1) gross wages earned; (2) total hours worked by the employee; (3) the number of piece-rate units earned and any applicable piece rate if the employee is paid on a piece-rate basis; (4) all deductions, provided that all deductions made on written orders of the employee may be aggregated and shown as one item; (5) net wages earned; (6) the inclusive dates of the period for which the employee is paid; (7) the name of the employee and the last four digits of his or her social security number or an employee identification number other than a social security number; (8) the name and address of the legal entity that is the employer; and (9) all applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay period and the corresponding number of hours worked at each hourly rate

by the employee. Specifically, the wage statements failed to list the correct hours, rates, and pay due to the above unpaid wage violations, and the wage statements sometimes fail to list rates and hours for certain types of pay, among other violations.

Respondent violated Labor Code sections 1174 and 1174.5 by failing to maintain accurate and complete records showing the hours worked daily by the aggrieved employees and the wages paid to aggrieved employees (due to the same underpayment of wages referenced above).

Furthermore, Respondent violated the Labor Code by failing to properly pay all these wages owed throughout aggrieved employees' employment and following the end of these workers' employment with Respondent due to the above violations and because final pay was paid late (in violation of Labor Code sections 201, 202, 203, 204).

Based on these violations, Claimant seeks attorneys' fees, interest, and penalties under the Labor Code. Enclosed and incorporated by reference is the class action complaint Claimant intends to file on behalf of herself and all other aggrieved employees against Respondent. Claimant intends to amend the complaint to include a cause of action pursuant to Labor Code §§ 2698, *et seq.*, after the minimum required review period elapses and will file a conformed copy of the complaint after it has been filed with the court.

Thank you for your assistance on this matter. Should you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Very truly yours,
AEGIS LAW FIRM, PC



Jessica L. Campbell

Enclosure: Class Action Complaint

EXHIBIT 3



AEGIS LAW FIRM, PC
9811 Irvine Center Drive, Suite 100
Irvine, California 92618
Telephone: 949.379.6250
Facsimile: 949.379.6251
www.aegislawfirm.com

September 6, 2023

VIA ONLINE SUBMISSION

California Labor and Workforce Development Agency
Attn: PAGA Administrator

VIA CERTIFIED MAIL (RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED)

Agent for Service of Process for Guitar Center Stores, Inc.:
CT Corporation System
330 N. Brand Blvd., Ste. 700
Glendale, CA 91203

Re: Trevor West v. Guitar Center Stores, Inc.

Dear Labor and Workforce Development Agency; Guitar Center Stores, Inc.:

Please allow this correspondence to serve as written notice required by California Labor Code § 2699.3(a)(1) of the specific provisions of the Labor Code allegedly violated by Guitar Center Stores, Inc. and any other employers or person(s) acting on behalf of the employer as such phrase is used under Labor Code sections 558 and 558.1 ("Respondent"), and the facts and theories in support of said allegations. This firm represents Trevor West ("Claimant"); we hereby notify you that Claimant intends to seek penalties against Respondent under the Private Attorneys General Act of 2004, Cal. Lab. Code §§ 2698 *et seq.*, on Claimant's own behalf and all other aggrieved employees.

Specific Provisions of the Labor Code Allegedly Violated by Respondent

The specific provisions of the Labor Code allegedly violated by Respondent and the provisions under which Claimant submits this correspondence include the following: §§ 201, 202, 203, 204, 210, 226, 226.3, 226.7, 246, 510, 512, 558, 1174, 1174.5, 1182.12, 1194, 1194.2, 1197, 1197.1, 1198, 2800, and 2802.

Facts and Theories Supporting the Allegations Against Respondent

Claimant and other aggrieved employees worked for Respondent in California as non-exempt employees. Claimant was employed by Respondent in California within the past year.

During the past year, Respondent failed to provide 30-minute uninterrupted meal periods within the appropriate time intervals to Claimant and other aggrieved employees as required by Labor Code section 512 and section 11 of the applicable Wage Order. Claimant and other aggrieved employees frequently worked shifts over five hours and did not receive lawful meal periods because they were discouraged from taking meal periods, were interrupted during their

meal periods, were required to remain on call during meal periods, and/or were not scheduled to be relieved at the appropriate intervals to receive all lawful meal periods, among other reasons. As a result, their meal periods were missed, late, short, and/or interrupted.

When Claimant and other aggrieved employees missed meal periods or if the meal periods were late, short, and/or interrupted, Respondent violated Labor Code sections 226.7 and 512, as well as section 11 of the applicable Wage Order, by failing to pay an additional hour of pay at the regular rate of pay to Claimant and other aggrieved employees for every day in which they suffered a meal period violation.

Respondent failed to authorize or permit paid 10-minute rest periods for every four hours or major fraction thereof worked because Claimant and other aggrieved employees were required or incentivized to work through their rest periods, discouraged from taking their rest periods, required to remain on call during rest periods, and/or were not scheduled to be relieved at the appropriate intervals to receive all rest periods.

When Claimant and other aggrieved employees did not receive rest periods, Respondent violated Labor Code section 226.7 and section 12 of the applicable Wage Order by failing to pay an additional hour of pay at the regular rate of pay to Claimant and other aggrieved employees.

Respondent failed to pay Claimant and other aggrieved employees at least the legal minimum wage and overtime wage for all hours worked (in violation of Labor Code sections 246, 510, 558, 1182.12, 1194, 1194.2, 1197, 1197.1, and 1198) due to Respondent's policy and practice of requiring Claimant and aggrieved employees to work off-the-clock (such as while waiting to be allowed to clock in and while completing paperwork), failing to pay sick pay and/or overtime wages using the appropriate regular rate of pay (because incentive payments such as bonuses were excluded), and/or failing to pay for all recorded time, among other reasons. Respondent failed to pay Claimant and other aggrieved all minimum, regular, and overtime wages for these hours.

Claimant and other aggrieved employees incurred necessary business-related expenses as a direct consequence of the discharge of their job duties for the benefit of Respondent, such as cell phone use, teaching materials, and music books. As such, Respondent violated Labor Code §§ 2800 and 2802 by failing to reimburse Claimant and other aggrieved employees for such expenses.

As a result of, and in addition to, these actions, Respondent violated Labor Code sections 226, and 226.3 by failing to provide itemized wage statements that accurately reported the following: (1) gross wages earned; (2) total hours worked by the employee; (3) the number of piece-rate units earned and any applicable piece rate if the employee is paid on a piece-rate basis; (4) all deductions, provided that all deductions made on written orders of the employee may be aggregated and shown as one item; (5) net wages earned; (6) the inclusive dates of the period for which the employee is paid; (7) the name of the employee and the last four digits of his or her social security number or an employee identification number other than a social security number; (8) the name and address of the legal entity that is the employer; and (9) all applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay period and the corresponding number of hours worked at each hourly rate by the employee. Specifically, the wage statements failed to list the correct hours, rates, and pay due to the above unpaid wage violations, and the wage statements sometimes fail to list rates and hours for certain types of pay, among other violations.

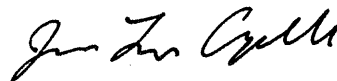
Respondent violated Labor Code sections 1174 and 1174.5 by failing to maintain accurate and complete records showing the hours worked daily by the aggrieved employees and the wages paid to aggrieved employees (due to the same underpayment of wages referenced above).

Furthermore, Respondent violated the Labor Code by failing to properly pay all these wages owed throughout aggrieved employees' employment and following the end of these workers' employment with Respondent due to the above violations and because final pay was paid late (in violation of Labor Code sections 201, 202, 203, 204).

Based on these violations, Claimant seeks attorneys' fees, interest, and penalties under the Labor Code. Enclosed and incorporated by reference is the class action complaint Claimant intends to file on behalf of herself and all other aggrieved employees against Respondent. Claimant intends to amend the complaint to include a cause of action pursuant to Labor Code §§ 2698, *et seq.*, after the minimum required review period elapses and will file a conformed copy of the complaint after it has been filed with the court.

Thank you for your assistance on this matter. Should you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Very truly yours,
AEGIS LAW FIRM, PC

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jessica L. Campbell".

Jessica L. Campbell

Enclosure: Class Action Complaint

EXHIBIT 4

July 23, 2025

VIA ONLINE SUBMISSION

California Labor and Workforce Development Agency
Attn: PAGA Administrator

VIA CERTIFIED MAIL (RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED)

Agent for Service of Process for Guitar Center Stores, Inc.:
CT Corporation System
330 N. Brand Blvd., Ste. 700
Glendale, CA 91203

Re: Benjamin Edward Seilhamer v. Guitar Center Stores, Inc.

Dear Labor and Workforce Development Agency; Guitar Center Stores, Inc.:

Please allow this correspondence to serve as **Amended** written notice required by California Labor Code § 2699.3(a)(1) of the specific provisions of the Labor Code allegedly violated by Guitar Center Stores, Inc. and any other employers or person(s) acting on behalf of the employer as such phrase is used under Labor Code sections 558 and 558.1 (“Respondent”), and the facts and theories in support of said allegations. This firm represents Benjamin Edward Seilhamer and Trevor West (“Claimants”); we hereby notify you that Claimants intend to seek penalties against Respondent under the Private Attorneys General Act of 2004, Cal. Lab. Code §§ 2698 *et seq.*, on Claimants’ own behalf and all other aggrieved employees.

This Amended notice is intended to add additional facts and theories in support of Claimant’s existing claims.

Specific Provisions of the Labor Code Allegedly Violated by Respondent

The specific provisions of the Labor Code allegedly violated by Respondent and the provisions under which Claimants submit this correspondence include the following: §§ 201, 202, 203, 204, 210, 226, 226.3, 226.7, 246, 510, 512, 558, 1174, 1174.5, 1182.12, 1194, 1194.2, 1197, 1197.1, 1198, 2800, and 2802.

Facts and Theories Supporting the Allegations Against Respondent

Claimants and other aggrieved employees worked for Respondent in California as non-exempt employees. Claimants were employed by Respondent in California within the past year.

During the past year, Respondent failed to provide 30-minute uninterrupted meal periods within the appropriate time intervals to Claimants and other aggrieved employees as required by Labor Code section 512 and section 11 of the applicable Wage Order. Claimants and other aggrieved employees frequently worked shifts over five hours and did not receive lawful meal periods because they were discouraged from taking meal periods, were interrupted during their meal periods, were required to remain on call during meal periods, and/or were not scheduled to be relieved at the appropriate intervals to receive all lawful meal periods, among other reasons. As a result, their meal periods were missed, late, short, and/or interrupted.

When Claimants and other aggrieved employees missed meal periods or if the meal periods were late, short, and/or interrupted, Respondent violated Labor Code sections 226.7 and 512, as well as section 11 of the applicable Wage Order, by failing to pay an additional hour of pay at the regular rate of pay to Claimants and other aggrieved employees for every day in which they suffered a meal period violation.

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Respondent failed to pay Claimants and other aggrieved employees at least the legal minimum wage and overtime wage for all hours worked (in violation of Labor Code sections 246, 510, 558, 1182.12, 1194, 1194.2, 1197, 1197.1, and 1198) due to Respondent's policy and practice of requiring Claimants and aggrieved employees to work off-the-clock (including but not limited to: while waiting to be allowed to clock in and while completing paperwork, while responding to text messages after shifts, preparing music studios for lessons, engaging in sales activity, and reviewing emails from management after their shifts or on their off days), failing to pay sick pay and/or overtime wages using the appropriate regular rate of pay (because incentive payments such as shift differentials and bonuses were excluded), and/or failing to pay for all recorded time, among other reasons. Respondent failed to pay Claimants and other aggrieved all minimum, regular, and overtime wages for these hours.

Claimants and other aggrieved employees incurred necessary business-related expenses as a direct consequence of the discharge of their job duties for the benefit of Respondent, such as cell phone use, teaching materials, and music books. For example, Claimant West and other aggrieved employees were required to use their cell phones to upload pictures to Respondent's website as part of the process of buying used products from customers on Respondent's behalf. As such, Respondent violated Labor Code §§ 2800 and 2802 by failing to reimburse Claimants and other aggrieved employees for such expenses.

As a result of, and in addition to, these actions, Respondent violated Labor Code sections 226, and 226.3 by failing to provide itemized wage statements that accurately reported the

following: (1) gross wages earned; (2) total hours worked by the employee; (3) the number of piece-rate units earned and any applicable piece rate if the employee is paid on a piece-rate basis; (4) all deductions, provided that all deductions made on written orders of the employee may be aggregated and shown as one item; (5) net wages earned; (6) the inclusive dates of the period for which the employee is paid; (7) the name of the employee and the last four digits of his or her social security number or an employee identification number other than a social security number; (8) the name and address of the legal entity that is the employer; and (9) all applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay period and the corresponding number of hours worked at each hourly rate by the employee. Specifically, the wage statements failed to list the correct hours, rates, and pay due to the above unpaid wage violations, and the wage statements sometimes fail to list rates and hours for certain types of pay, among other violations.

Respondent violated Labor Code sections 1174 and 1174.5 by failing to maintain accurate and complete records showing the hours worked daily by the aggrieved employees and the wages paid to aggrieved employees (due to the same underpayment of wages referenced above).

Furthermore, Respondent violated the Labor Code by failing to properly pay all these wages owed throughout aggrieved employees' employment and following the end of these workers' employment with Respondent due to the above violations and because final pay was paid late (in violation of Labor Code sections 201, 202, 203, 204).

Based on these violations, Claimants seek attorneys' fees, interest, and penalties under the Labor Code.

Thank you for your assistance on this matter. Should you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Very truly yours,
AEGIS LAW FIRM, PC

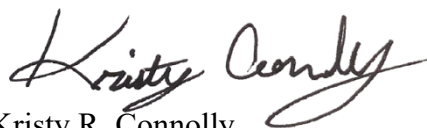

Kristy R. Connolly

EXHIBIT 5