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County of Sacramento

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SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

FOR THE COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO

MICHAEL BALZANO, on behalf of the
State of California as the Real Party in
Interest;

Plaintiff,

vs.

VINTAGE DESIGN, LLC, a Delaware
Limited Liability Company; NU WOOD
DESIGN, LLC, a Delaware Limited Liability
Company; ARTISAN DESIGN GROUP,
LLC, a Delaware Limited Liability Company;
and DOES 1 through 20, inclusive;

Defendants.

Case No.: **25CV026043**

**REPRESENTATIVE ACTION
COMPLAINT [Private Attorneys General
Act of 2004 ("PAGA"), Lab. Code § 2698,
et seq.]**

- (1) Failure to Pay Minimum Wages;
- (2) Failure to Pay Overtime Wages;
- (3) Failure to Provide Meal Periods;
- (4) Failure to Provide Rest Breaks;
- (5) Failure to Reimburse Bus. Expenses;
- (6) Failure to Pay Vested Vacation;
- (7) Failure to Timely Pay Final Wages; and
- (8) Failure to Provide Accurate Itemized Wage Statements

1 Plaintiff Michael Balzano (“Plaintiff”) brings this Private Attorneys General Act
2 (“PAGA”) representative action, on behalf of the State of California as the real party in interest,¹
3 against Defendants as follows.

4 **I. INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL ALLEGATIONS**

5 1. Plaintiff brings this action against his former employer(s), Vintage Design, LLC,
6 Nu Wood Design LLC, Artisan Design Group, LLC, and DOES 1 through 20, inclusive,
7 (collectively, “Defendants”) on behalf of the State of California, seeking civil penalties under
8 PAGA for Labor Code violations committed against all current and former nonexempt
9 employees employed by Defendants in California within the last one year and 65-days prior to
10 the filing of this action. Such violations include, but are not limited to, Defendants’ failure to pay
11 all wages owed, including minimum, regular, and overtime wages, failure to provide meal
12 periods, failure to provide rest breaks, failure to reimburse business expenses, failure to pay all
13 vested vacation owed upon separation of employment, failure to timely pay wages each period
14 and upon separation of employment, and failure to provide accurate itemized wage statements.

15 2. Plaintiff has standing to bring these claims because he meets the only two
16 requirements for standing to bring PAGA claims, namely that he: (1) was employed by
17 Defendants during the applicable period, and (2) was subjected to one or more of the violations
18 alleged herein. *See Adolph v. Uber Technologies, Inc.* (2023) 14 Cal.5th 1104, 1120 (these are
19 the only requirements for PAGA standing: “The plaintiff must allege that he or she is (1)
20 someone who was employed by the alleged violator and (2) someone against whom one or more
21 of the alleged violations was committed”) (internal quotations omitted).

22 3. Additionally, Plaintiff brings these claims on behalf of the State of California, as
23 the proxy or agent of the state (*Adolph*, 14 Cal.5th at 1116), and further only pursues the
24 “representative PAGA claims” while explicitly not bringing any “individual” claims, as is
25 permitted under the holding of *Balderas v. Fresh Start Harvesting, Inc.* (2024) 101 Cal.App.5th
26

27 ¹ Because a PAGA action is aimed at deterring and punishing violations of the Labor Code, the
28 State of California “is always the real party in interest in the suit.” *Iskanian v. CLS Transp. of
Los Angeles, LLC* (2014) 59 Cal.4th 348, 360; *ZB, N.A. v. Superior Court* (2019) 8 Cal.5th 175,
185 (all PAGA claims “are brought on the state’s behalf”).

1 533, 536 (“an employee who does not bring an individual claim against her employer may
2 nevertheless bring a PAGA action for herself and other employees of the company”); *see also*
3 *Johnson v. Maxim Healthcare Services, Inc.* (2021) 66 Cal.App.5th 924 (employee need not
4 bring an individual claim against the employer to have standing to pursue a PAGA claim; it is
5 sufficient to allege the employee suffered a Labor Code violation).

6 4. Plaintiff alleges on information and belief that the Aggrieved Employees were
7 subjected to the same policies, working conditions, and corresponding wage and hour violations
8 to which Plaintiff was subjected during employment.

9 5. Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees were not provided all minimum, regular,
10 and overtime wages due to Defendants’ failure to accurately record and compensate for all hours
11 worked. As one specific example, Defendants frequently required Plaintiff and the Aggrieved
12 Employees to perform pre- and post-shift work without recording such time – leading to unpaid
13 wages – such as when being functionally required by the Defendants to work off-the-clock when
14 exceeding 8 hours of work in a day. The practices led to frequent and recurring unpaid
15 compensable time. *Troester v. Starbucks Corporation* (2018) 5 Cal.5th 829 (California law
16 “do[es] not allow employers to require employees to routinely work for minutes off the clock
17 without compensation”); *Frlekin v. Apple Inc.* (2020) 8 Cal.5th 1038 (tasks are compensable
18 when employee is under company’s control and where the tasks served the employer’s interests).

19 6. Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees were not provided all minimum, regular,
20 and overtime wages due to Defendants’ “auto-deduct” policy and practice. Under this “auto-
21 deduct” practice, Defendants automatically deducted 30 minutes from the shift of Aggrieved
22 Employees without inquiry into whether a meal period was taken or for how long. In other
23 words, when an Aggrieved Employee’s timekeeping showed a shift spanning 8.5 hours worked,
24 the Defendants only paid for 8 hours, deducting 30 minutes (0.5 hours) for a meal period despite
25 no verification of a 30-minute meal period occurring on that shift.

26 7. Additionally, Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees often worked more than 8
27 hours per day and/or 40 hours per week yet did not receive all required overtime compensation
28 on such occasions. Also, at all relevant times, Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees were

1 compensated on an hourly basis plus additional earned compensation (including bonuses and
2 shift differentials). However, when the Aggrieved Employees worked overtime hours and
3 received earned additional compensation during the same workweek, Defendants failed to
4 properly include these amounts in the calculations for the regular rate of pay – in violation of
5 California law.

6 8. Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees were also denied 30-minute off-duty meal
7 periods, as mandated by California law. As a result of Defendants' policies and practices, the
8 Aggrieved Employees were subjected to meal period violations when they were: (1) unable to
9 take a meal period due to workload, (2) forced to take an on-duty meal period while under the
10 control of Defendants, (3) forced to take a shortened meal period, (4) forced to take a meal
11 period after the 5th hour of work, and (5) not provided mandated second meal periods for shifts
12 in excess of 10 hours. And, for the instances when Defendants paid meal premiums for such
13 violations, Defendants failed to pay them at the "regular rate" as required by Labor Code §
14 226.7. Moreover, Defendants failed to record or keep accurate information regarding when
15 Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees took mandated meal periods, in violation of the
16 applicable IWC Wage Order § 7(A)(3).

17 9. Defendants also failed to provide Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees with 10
18 minutes of net rest break time for every 4 hours worked, or major fraction thereof, as mandated
19 by California law. Defendants did not schedule rest breaks for Plaintiff and the Aggrieved
20 Employees and the Aggrieved Employees were often not authorized and/or permitted to take
21 mandated rest breaks due to being overwhelmed by their hectic workload. Furthermore, on
22 occasions when Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees worked longer shifts, Defendants failed
23 to authorize and/or permit additional mandated rest breaks.

24 10. Moreover, at all relevant times, Defendants required Plaintiff and the Aggrieved
25 Employees to incur necessary business-related expenses and costs without reimbursement,
26 including, but not limited to, safety equipment and tools necessary to carry out their job duties.

27 11. Also, at all relevant times, Defendants utilized a policy and practice through
28 which Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees accrued vacation and/or paid time off hours

1 (collectively, “vacation hours”). California law, specifically Labor Code § 227.3, requires
2 Defendants to pay all accrued and unused vacation hours upon separation of employment at the
3 final rate of pay. However, Defendants failed to pay all accrued and unused vacation hours to
4 the Aggrieved Employees upon separation of employment. And, for vacation hours that
5 Defendants *did* pay, Defendants failed to calculate and pay for said hours at the “final rate” of
6 pay as required by Labor Code § 227.3.

7 12. Plaintiff further alleges that he and the Aggrieved Employees were not paid all
8 wages due and owing each pay period (Labor Code § 204) and upon separation of employment
9 within the time required by Labor Code §§ 201 – 203. Plaintiff further alleges that Defendants
10 engaged in the practice of failing to pay all wages due and owing to Plaintiff and the Aggrieved
11 Employees at the time their employment ended with Defendants, including, but not limited to
12 minimum, regular, and overtime wages, wage premiums, vacation and sick wages, among others.

13 13. Plaintiff further alleges that Defendants failed to provide accurate itemized wage
14 statements that fully complied with the requirements of Labor Code § 226(a).

15 14. At all material times, Defendants and DOES 1 through 20 were and/or are the
16 Aggrieved Employees’ employers or persons acting on behalf of the Aggrieved Employees’
17 employer, within the meaning of California Labor Code § 558, who violated or caused to be
18 violated, a section of Part 2, Chapter 1 of the California Labor Code or any provision regulating
19 hours and days of work in an IWC Wage Order and, as such, are subject to penalties for each
20 underpaid employee as set forth in Labor Code § 558 and under California law.

21 15. Plaintiff brings this lawsuit on behalf of the State of California, as the real party in
22 interest, to recover all applicable and available PAGA remedies for violations of the California
23 Labor Code committed against the Aggrieved Employees as alleged herein, as well as attorneys’
24 fees, costs, and/or other damages as permitted by PAGA. Plaintiff reserves the right to name
25 additional representatives throughout the State of California.

26 **II. JURISDICTION**

27 16. This Court has jurisdiction over the claims for relief of Plaintiff and the
28 Aggrieved Employees pursuant to the Labor Code and the IWC Wage Orders.

1 **III. VENUE**

2 17. Venue as to each Defendant is proper in this Court pursuant to Code of Civil
3 Procedure § 395(a). Defendants transact business in Sacramento County, the unlawful acts
4 alleged herein have a direct effect on Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees in Sacramento
5 County, and Defendants employ/employed Aggrieved Employees in Sacramento County.

6 **IV. PARTIES**

7 **Plaintiff**

8 18. Plaintiff and PAGA Representative Michael Balzano was employed by
9 Defendants from approximately August 2022 through October 2024.

10 **Defendants**

11 19. Plaintiff is informed and believes and alleges that Defendant Vintage Design,
12 LLC, is a Delaware limited liability company authorized to and doing business in Sacramento
13 County and is or was the legal employer of Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees during the
14 applicable periods.

15 20. Plaintiff is informed and believes and alleges that Defendant Nu Wood Design
16 LLC is a Delaware limited liability company authorized to and doing business in Riverside
17 County and is or was the legal employer of Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees during the
18 applicable periods.

19 21. Plaintiff is informed and believes and alleges that Defendant Artisan Design
20 Group, LLC, is a Delaware limited liability company authorized to and doing business in
21 Riverside County and is or was the legal employer of Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees
22 during the applicable periods.

23 22. Plaintiff is ignorant of the true names, capacities, relationships, and extent of
24 participation in the conduct herein alleged, of Defendants sued herein as DOES 1 through 20,
25 inclusive, but on information and belief alleges that those Defendants are legally responsible for
26 the payment of penalties and damages to Plaintiff and all Aggrieved Employees by virtue of
27 Defendants' unlawful actions and practices and therefore sue these Defendants by such fictitious
28 names. Plaintiff will amend this complaint to allege the true names and capacities of the DOE

Defendants when ascertained.

23. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that he and the Aggrieved Employees worked under the joint direction and control of Defendants and that Defendants, and each of them, acted in all respects pertinent to this action as the agent of the other Defendants, carried out a joint scheme, business plan or policy in all respect pertinent hereto, and the acts of each Defendant are legally attributable to the other Defendants. On information and belief, a unity of interest and ownership between each Defendant exists such that all Defendants acted as a single employer of Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees.

24. Furthermore, Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that Defendants, and each of them, are an integrated enterprise and should be treated as a single employer because these entities share an interrelation of operations, with common human resources and personnel policies and shared common offices and facilities. Additionally, Defendants also have a shared website, common management, a centralized control of labor operations, and common ownership or financial control.

25. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that, in conducting themselves in the manner described herein, Defendants, and each of them, were acting in active concert with one another such that the acts of each were and are fully attributable to the others in all material respects. Plaintiff is further informed and believes that at all relevant times Defendants and each of them are now, and at all material times herein mentioned were, the agents, servants, employees, partners, affiliates, and/or representatives of each of their remaining Co-Defendants, and were, at all times herein mentioned, acting within the course, scope, and purpose of such relationship(s) and with the knowledge, consent and/or ratification of each of their remaining co-Defendants.

26. Plaintiff is further informed and believes that at all relevant times, Defendants have been inadequately capitalized to conduct business, have failed to follow appropriate corporate formalities, and have simply been a shell and instrumentality through which Defendants DOES 11 through 20, inclusive, have conducted their personal affairs. Accordingly, the corporate veil should be pierced, and any liability attached to Defendants should be imposed

1 jointly and severally against Defendants DOES 11 through 20. Adherence to the fiction of the
2 separate existence of these corporate entities would permit abuse of the corporate privilege,
3 thereby sanctioning fraud and promoting injustice.

4 **V. PAGA CAUSES OF ACTION (Labor Code §§ 2698 – 2699.5)**

5 27. Plaintiff incorporates the preceding paragraphs of the Complaint as if fully
6 alleged herein.

7 28. Plaintiff is an “aggrieved employee” under the PAGA as he was employed by
8 Defendants during the applicable statutory period and suffered one or more of the Labor Code
9 violations alleged herein. As such, Plaintiff may recover the remedies described herein in a civil
10 action filed on behalf of the State of California and for violations committed against the
11 Aggrieved Employees.

12 29. Plaintiff seeks to recover all applicable and available PAGA remedies (on a
13 representative, not individual basis) pursuant to Labor Code § 2699, as well as attorneys’ fees,
14 costs, and/or other damages as permitted by PAGA through a representative action pursuant to
15 the PAGA and the California Supreme Court in *Arias v. Superior Court* (2009) 46 Cal. 4th 969.
16 Therefore, Plaintiff is not required to, nor does he, seek class certification of the PAGA claims
17 under Code of Civil Procedure § 382.

18 30. Pursuant to Labor Code § 2699.3(a), Plaintiff gave written notice by online filing
19 to the Labor and Workforce Development Agency (“LWDA”) and by certified mail to
20 Defendants of the specific provisions of the Labor Code alleged to have been violated, including
21 the facts and theories to support the alleged violations. Now that sixty-five (65) days have
22 elapsed since Plaintiff provided notice of the claims alleged herein without the LWDA assuming
23 jurisdiction over the claims alleged, Plaintiff has fully satisfied his administrative prerequisites
24 for bringing suit under the PAGA.

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1 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

2 **PAGA ASSESSMENT FOR FAILURE TO PAY MINIMUM WAGES**

3 (Labor Code §§ 200, 1194, 1194.2, 1197; IWC Wage Order § 4)

4 *Against All Defendants*

5 31. Plaintiff incorporates the preceding paragraphs of the Complaint as if fully
6 alleged herein.

7 32. Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees were not exempt from the requirement to
8 be paid at least the applicable California minimum wage throughout the statutory period for each
9 hour worked.

10 33. Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees were not provided proper minimum and
11 regular wages due to the allegations herein. As a result of these policies and practices, Plaintiff
12 and the Aggrieved Employees were required to perform off-the-clock work that Defendants
13 either knew or should have known they were performing.

14 34. Consequently, Defendants violated California Labor Code laws and minimum
15 wage laws, *inter alia*, Labor Code §§ 200, 221, 222, 223, 1197, IWC Wage Order 9, § 4, and
16 Cal. Code Regs., tit. 8, section 11090, subds. 1 and 4(B).

17 35. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that Defendants
18 intentionally, willfully, and improperly failed to pay wages to Plaintiff and the Aggrieved
19 Employees for each hour worked in violation of Labor Code §§ 221-223, 1194 and 1197.

20 36. Defendants' conduct was willful, as Defendants knew that Plaintiff and the
21 Aggrieved Employees were entitled to be paid wages throughout the statutory period for each
22 hour worked, including proper minimum and regular wages, yet Defendants chose not to pay
23 them in accordance thereto.

24 37. As a result of the unlawful employment practices alleged herein, Plaintiff, on
25 behalf of the State of California, seeks the assessment of all applicable and available PAGA
26 remedies pursuant to Labor Code § 2699, and seeks to recover all attorneys' fees, costs, and/or
27 any other damages permitted under PAGA.

28 ///

PAGA ASSESSMENT FOR FAILURE TO PAY OVERTIME WAGES

PAGA ASSESSMENT FOR FAILURE TO PAY OVERTIME WAGES

(Labor Code §§ 204 and 510; IWC Wage Order § 3(A))

Against All Defendants

38. Plaintiff incorporates the preceding paragraphs of the Complaint as if fully alleged herein.

39. Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees were employees of Defendants who did not receive proper protections and benefits of the laws governing payment of overtime wages.

40. Labor Code § 204 requires that the employer timely pay all overtime wages to its employees. Labor Code § 510(a) and the applicable IWC Wage Order § 3(A) provide that any work performed in excess of eight (8) hours in one workday or in excess of forty (40) hours in any one workweek shall be compensated at the rate of no less than one and one-half times the regular rate of pay for an employee. Furthermore, any work performed in excess of twelve (12) hours in one workday shall be compensated at twice the regular rate of pay for an employee.

41. At all relevant times, Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees were required by Defendants to work hours in excess of 8 and/or 12 per day and/or 40 per week. However, as a result of the policies and practices described in this Complaint, Defendants failed to pay Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees for all overtime hours worked.

42. As a result of these policies and practices, Defendants failed to pay Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees for all overtime hours worked.

43. Defendants violate Labor Code §§ 204 and 510 and the applicable IWC Wage Order § 3(A) every pay period with respect to Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees because Defendants required their employees to work hours in excess of 8 and/or 12 per day and/or 40 per week without proper overtime compensation.

44. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that Defendants intentionally, willfully, and improperly failed to pay proper overtime wages to Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees in violation of Labor Code §§ 204, 221-223, 510, 1194 and 1197.

45. Defendants' conduct was willful, as Defendants knew that Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees were entitled to be paid proper overtime wages throughout the statutory period, yet Defendants chose not to pay them in accordance thereto.

46. As a result of the unlawful employment practices alleged herein, Plaintiff, on behalf of the State of California, seeks the assessment of all applicable and available PAGA remedies pursuant to Labor Code § 2699, and seeks to recover all attorneys' fees, costs, and/or any other damages permitted under PAGA.

THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION

PAGA ASSESSMENT FOR FAILURE TO PROVIDE MEAL PERIODS

(Labor Code §§ 226.7 and 512; IWC Wage Order § 11, 12)

Against All Defendants

47. Plaintiff incorporates the preceding paragraphs of the Complaint as if fully alleged herein.

48. Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees are and/or were employees of Defendants who did not receive proper protections and benefits of laws governing mandatory meal periods.

49. Labor Code § 226.7 requires employers, including Defendants, to provide employees with meal periods as mandated by the Industrial Welfare Commission.

50. Labor Code § 512(a), in part, provides that employers, including Defendants, may not employ an employee for a work period of more than five hours per day without providing an employee the opportunity to take an uninterrupted meal period of not less than 30 minutes, except that if the total work period per day of the employee is no more than six hours, the meal period may be waived by mutual consent of both the employer and the employee. Employers may not employ an employee for a work period of more than 10 hours per day without providing the employee with a second meal period of not less than 30 minutes.

51. Pursuant to Labor Code § 226.7(b) and the applicable IWC Wage Order § 11(B), Defendants shall pay an employee one additional hour of pay at the employee's regular rate of pay for each meal period that is missed.

1 52. At all relevant times, and as a result of the policies and practices described in this
2 Complaint, Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees were denied the 30-minute meal periods to
3 which they were entitled.

4 53. Defendants violated Labor Code §§ 226.7, 512, and the applicable IWC Wage
5 Order every pay period because Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees were not provided with
6 all mandatory meal periods and Defendants failed to pay Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees
7 one additional hour of compensation at the regular rate of pay in lieu thereof.

8 54. On information and belief, Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees did not
9 voluntarily or willfully waive the mandated meal periods. Any expressed or implied waivers
10 obtained from Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees were not willfully obtained, were not
11 voluntarily agreed to, were a condition of employment, or were a part of a contract of unlawful
12 adhesion. Defendants did not permit or authorize Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees to take
13 meal periods in accordance with California law.

14 55. As a result of the unlawful employment practices alleged herein, Plaintiff, on
15 behalf of the State of California, seeks the assessment of all applicable and available PAGA
16 remedies pursuant to Labor Code § 2699, and seeks to recover all attorneys' fees, costs, and/or
17 any other damages permitted under PAGA.

18 **FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

19 **PAGA ASSESSMENT FOR FAILURE TO PROVIDE REST BREAKS**

20 (Labor Code §§ 226.7 and 512; IWC Wage Order § 12)

21 *Against All Defendants*

22 56. Plaintiff incorporates the preceding paragraphs of the Complaint as if fully
23 alleged herein.

24 57. Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees are and/or were employees of Defendants
25 who did not receive proper protections and benefits of the laws governing mandatory rest breaks.

26 58. Labor Code § 226.7 requires employers, including Defendants, to provide rest
27 breaks to their employees as mandated by Order of the Industrial Welfare Commission.
28

1 59. The IWC Wage Order § 12 states, in part, that every employer shall authorize and
2 permit all employees to take rest periods, which insofar as practicable shall be in the middle of
3 each work period. Employees shall receive a 10-minute rest period every four hours or major
4 fraction thereof that they are required to work. Authorized rest period time shall be counted, as
5 hours worked, for which there shall be no deduction from wages.

6 60. Pursuant to Labor Code § 226.7(b) and Section 12(B) of the applicable Wage
7 Order, Defendants shall pay Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees one additional hour of pay at
8 their regular rate of compensation for each day that the rest period is not provided.

9 61. At all relevant times, and as a result of the policies and practices described in this
10 Complaint, Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees were denied mandated rest breaks.

11 62. Defendants violated Labor Code §§ 226.7, 512, and the applicable IWC Wage
12 Order every pay period because Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees were not provided with
13 all mandatory rest periods and Defendants failed to pay Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees
14 one additional hour of compensation in lieu thereof.

15 63. As a result of the unlawful employment practices alleged herein, Plaintiff, on
16 behalf of the State of California, seeks the assessment of all applicable and available PAGA
17 remedies pursuant to Labor Code § 2699, and seeks to recover all attorneys' fees, costs, and/or
18 any other damages permitted under PAGA.

19 **FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

20 **PAGA ASSESSMENT FOR FAILURE TO REIMBURSE BUSINESS EXPENSES**

21 (Labor Code § 2802)

22 *Against All Defendants*

23 64. Plaintiff incorporates the preceding paragraphs of the Complaint as if fully
24 alleged herein.

25 65. Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees are and/or were employees of Defendants
26 who did not receive proper protections and benefits of the laws governing reimbursement of
27 business expenses.
28

66. Labor Code § 2802(a) requires that the employer indemnify its employees for expenses and losses incurred while discharging their duties or in obedience to the directions of their employer.

67. At all relevant times herein mentioned, Defendants violated Labor Code § 2802(a) when they failed to reimburse Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees for expenses incurred as a direct consequence of employment with Defendants and/or under the direction of Defendants.

68. As a result of the unlawful employment practices alleged herein, Plaintiff, on behalf of the State of California, seeks the assessment of all applicable and available PAGA remedies pursuant to Labor Code § 2699, and seeks to recover all attorneys' fees, costs, and/or any other damages permitted under PAGA.

SIXTH CAUSE OF ACTION

PAGA ASSESSMENT FOR FAILURE TO PAY VESTED VACATION

(Labor Code § 227.3)

Against All Defendants

69. Plaintiff incorporates the preceding paragraphs of the Complaint as if fully alleged herein.

70. Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees were employees of Defendants who did not receive proper protections and benefits of the laws governing the payment of vested vacation time and/or paid time off upon separation of employment.

71. Pursuant to Labor Code § 227.3, an employer that has implemented a paid vacation, paid time off, or compensated time off policy must, upon an employee's separation from employment, pay to the employee all vested but unused vacation and/or paid time off at his final rate of pay.

72. At all relevant times, Defendants utilized a policy and practice through which Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees accrued vacation and/or PTO hours (collectively, “vacation hours”). However, Defendants’ policy and practice violated Labor Code § 227.3 because Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees did not receive compensation for all accrued but unused vacation hours and did not receive compensation for the same at the “final rate”, as

1 required by Labor Code § 227.3.

2 73. At all relevant times herein, Defendants failed to pay the Aggrieved Employees,
3 including Plaintiff, all vested but unused vacation time and/or paid time off upon separation from
4 employment, thereby receiving an economic benefit.

5 74. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that Defendants, and each of
6 them, knowingly refused to perform their obligations to compensate the Aggrieved Employees
7 for all vested but unused vacation time and/or paid time off upon separation from employment.

8 75. As a result of Defendants' violations of Labor Code § 227.3, Plaintiff and the
9 Aggrieved Employees seek to recover the unpaid vacation hours, as well as penalties, interest,
10 attorneys' fees, and costs as permitted under California law.

11 **SEVENTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

12 **PAGA ASSESSMENT FOR FAILURE TO TIMELY PAY FINAL WAGES**

13 (Labor Code §§ 201–203)

14 *Against All Defendants*

15 76. Plaintiff incorporates the preceding paragraphs of the Complaint as if fully
16 alleged herein.

17 77. Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees are and/or were employees of Defendants
18 who did not receive proper protections and benefits of the laws governing the timing and
19 payment of wages.

20 78. Labor Code § 201 requires that the employer immediately pay any wages, without
21 abatement or reduction, to any employee who is discharged.

22 79. Labor Code § 202 requires that the employer pay all wages earned and unpaid,
23 without abatement or reduction, no later than 72 hours of receiving an employee's notice of
24 intent to quit or immediately at the time of quitting if at least a 72-hour notice was provided.

25 80. Labor Code §§ 201-203 cause the unpaid wages of the employee to continue as a
26 penalty from the due date thereof at the same rate until paid or until an action therefore is
27 commenced, but the wages shall not continue for more than thirty (30) days.

1 81. At all relevant times, Defendants employed a policy and practice whereby
2 Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees were not paid all wages due and owing upon separation
3 of employment within the time required by Labor Code §§ 201 and 202.

4 82. Also, at all relevant times, Defendants engaged in the practice of failing to pay all
5 wages due and owing to Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees upon separation of employment,
6 including, but not limited to, minimum, regular, and overtime wages, vacation wages, as well as
7 meal and rest period premiums.

8 83. Additionally, at all relevant times, Defendants failed to pay all mandated sick
9 wages owed to the Aggrieved Employees at the proper rate of pay.

10 84. Labor Code § 246(l)(1) provides that paid sick time for non-exempt employees
11 must be “calculated in the same manner as the regular rate of pay for the workweek in which the
12 employee uses paid sick time, whether or not the employee actually works overtime in that
13 workweek.” Additionally, Labor Code § 246(l)(2) states that the paid sick time must be
14 “calculated by dividing the employee’s total wages, not including overtime premium pay, by the
15 employee’s total hours worked in the full pay periods of the prior 90 days of employment.”

16 85. Here, Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees were compensated on an hourly
17 basis plus additional compensation in the form of shift differentials and/or nondiscretionary
18 compensation. However, on the occasions that the Aggrieved Employees took sick time and
19 received paid sick leave, Defendants only paid sick time at the base rate of pay (not factoring in
20 the additional compensation as required by Labor Code §§ 246(l)(1-2)), leading to unpaid wages
21 at the time of separation of employment.

22 86. Plaintiff alleges that, at all times material to this action, Defendants had a planned
23 pattern and practice of failing to timely pay Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees all wages due
24 and owing upon separation of employment as required by Labor Code §§ 201 and 202.

25 87. As a result of the unlawful employment practices alleged herein, Plaintiff, on
26 behalf of the State of California, seeks the assessment of all applicable and available PAGA
27 remedies pursuant to Labor Code § 2699, and seeks to recover all attorneys’ fees, costs, and/or
28 any other damages permitted under PAGA.

1 **EIGHTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

2 **PAGA ASSESSMENT FOR**

3 **FAILURE TO PROVIDE ACCURATE ITEMIZED WAGE STATEMENTS**

4 (Labor Code § 226)

5 *Against All Defendants*

6 88. Plaintiff incorporates the preceding paragraphs of the Complaint as if fully
7 alleged herein.

8 89. Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees are and/or were employees of Defendants
9 who did not receive proper protections and benefits of the laws governing the provision of
10 accurate itemized wage statements.

11 90. Labor Code § 226(a) requires an employer to provide its employees with itemized
12 wage statements accurately stating gross wages earned, all deductions, net wages earned, the
13 inclusive dates of the pay period, the employee's name and the last four digits of his or her
14 Social Security number (or employee identification number), the name and address of the legal
15 entity that is the employer, and all applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay period and the
16 corresponding number of hours worked at each hourly rate by the employee.

17 91. Defendants violate Labor Code § 226(a) every pay period with respect to Plaintiff
18 and the Aggrieved Employees due to violations including: failure to accurately state total hours
19 worked (for example, the wage statements failed to accurately reflect the compensable hours
20 worked); failure to accurately state gross wages earned; failure to accurately state all deductions;
21 failure to accurately state net wages earned; failure to state the applicable hourly rates (including
22 the accurate overtime rate of pay); and failure to accurately state the corresponding number of
23 hours worked at each hourly rate.

24 92. Moreover, Defendants' wage statements directly violated Labor Code § 226(a)
25 each period due to the failure to pay and report premium wages for denied meal periods and rest
26 breaks under § 226.7.

27 93. Therefore, Defendants violate Labor Code § 226(a) every pay period with respect
28 to Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees because Defendants failed to provide a wage statement

1 to Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees that complied with the requirements of § 226(a).

2 94. Unlike class action claims, a PAGA plaintiff need not meet the “injury” and
3 “knowing and intentional” violation requirements of Labor Code § 226(e). See *Lopez v. Friant*
4 & Associates, LLC (2017) 15 Cal.App.5th 773, 788 (“a plaintiff seeking civil penalties under
5 PAGA for a violation of section 226(a) does not have to satisfy the “injury” and “knowing and
6 intentional” requirements of section 226(e)(1)”)”; see also, *Lawson v. ZB, N.A.* (2017) 18
7 Cal.App.5th 705, 722 (“the scienter requirement [of § 226(e)] has no application in a PAGA
8 claim for violation of [§ 226(a)]”).

9 95. As a result of the unlawful employment practices alleged herein, Plaintiff, on
10 behalf of the State of California, seeks the assessment of all applicable and available PAGA
11 remedies pursuant to Labor Code § 2699, and seeks to recover all attorneys’ fees, costs, and/or
12 any other damages permitted under PAGA.

13 **VI. PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

14 WHEREFORE, Plaintiff, on behalf of the State of California as the real party in interest,
15 prays for judgment and relief against Defendants, jointly and severally, as follows:

- 16 1. For the assessment of all remedies and/or penalties available under the PAGA;
17 2. For reasonable attorneys’ fees and costs of suit to the extent permitted by law; and
18 3. For such other and further relief as the Court deems just and proper.

19 Dated: October 30, 2025

LAUBY, MANKIN & LAUBY LLP

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21 BY: 

22 Brian J. Mankin, Esq.
23 Peter J. Carlson, Esq.
24 Luke Wagner, Esq.
25 Attorneys for Plaintiff
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