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Assigned for All Purposes

Judge David A. Hoffer

CX-103

Attorneys for Plaintiff ANGEL MARTINEZ CORTES,
on behalf of himself and current and former aggrieved employees

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

FOR THE COUNTY OF ORANGE

ANGEL MARTINEZ CORTES, on behalf of
himself and current and former aggrieved
employees

Plaintiff,

vs.

PREFERENCE LM, INC.; and DOES 1 to 100,
inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No.: 30-2025-01535332-CU-OE-CXC

PAGA ACTION

**PLAINTIFF ANGEL MARTINEZ
CORTES' COMPLAINT FOR:**

- CIVIL PENALTIES PURSUANT
TO THE PRIVATE ATTORNEYS
GENERAL ACT OF 2004
("PAGA"), LABOR CODE
SECTIONS 2698, ET SEQ.**

COMES NOW Plaintiff ANGEL MARTINEZ CORTES ("Plaintiff"), who alleges and
complains against Defendants PREFERENCE LM, INC.; and DOES 1 to 100, inclusive
(collectively "Defendants") as follows:

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This is a Private Attorneys General Act of 2004, Labor Code §§ 2698, *et seq.*
("PAGA") representative action brought by Plaintiff on behalf of the State of California, himself
and other current and former aggrieved employees of Defendants who worked as hourly non-exempt
employees in California during the relevant time period seeking civil penalties associated with

1 Defendants' violation of the Labor Code based on Defendants' seeking declaratory relief; unpaid
2 wages and interest thereon and other relief for willful misclassification of Plaintiff and all other
3 current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees; failure to pay wages
4 for all hours worked at minimum wage and all overtime hours worked at the overtime rate of pay;
5 failure to authorize or permit all legally required and/or compliant meal periods or pay meal period
6 premium wages; failure to authorize or permit all legally required and/or compliant rest periods or
7 pay rest period premium wages; indemnification for all necessary expenditures or losses incurred
8 by employees in direct consequence of discharging their duties; statutory penalties for failure to
9 timely pay earned wages during employment; statutory penalties for failure to provide accurate wage
10 statements; statutory waiting time penalties in the form of continuation wages for failure to timely
11 pay employees all wages due upon separation of employment. Plaintiff experienced these violations
12 personally, as well as is informed and believes other aggrieved employees did as well. Plaintiff
13 seeks on a representative basis, following notice to the Labor and Workforce Development Agency,
14 civil penalties, reasonable attorneys' fees pursuant to Labor Code section 2699(g)(1) and costs
15 brought on behalf of Plaintiff, the State of California, and others aggrieved.

16 **II. JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

17 2. This Court has jurisdiction over the claims of Plaintiff and all other current and
18 former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees because Plaintiff's lawsuit seeks
19 civil penalties on behalf of himself, all other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly
20 non-exempt employees, and the State of California in excess of thirty-five thousand dollars
21 (\$35,000); Defendants employed Plaintiff and all other current and former aggrieved California-
22 based hourly non-exempt employees; and the injuries to all other current and former aggrieved
23 California-based hourly non-exempt employees occurred in locations throughout California,
24 including but not limited to Orange County, at Anaheim, CA.

25 **III. PARTIES**

26 1. Plaintiff brings this action as a representative of the Labor and Workforce
27 Development Agency on behalf of himself and other current and former employees subject to
28 violations of the Labor Code. The named Plaintiff and the persons on whose behalf this action is

1 filed include current, former and/or future employees of Defendants who work, worked, or will work
2 for Defendants as direct employees as well as temporary employees employed through temp
3 agencies as hourly non-exempt employees in California. At all times mentioned herein, the currently
4 named Plaintiff is and was domiciled and a resident and citizen of California and was employed by
5 Defendants in an hourly position from in or around 2023, until on or about June 9, 2025.

6 2. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that Defendant PREFERENCE
7 LM, INC. is authorized to do business within the State of California and is doing business in the
8 State of California and/or that Defendants DOES 1-50 are, and at all times relevant hereto were
9 persons acting on behalf of Defendant PREFERENCE LM, INC. in the establishment of, or
10 ratification of, the aforementioned illegal wage and hour practices or policies. Defendant
11 PREFERENCE LM, INC. operates in Orange County and employed aggrieved employees in Orange
12 County, including but not limited to, at Anaheim, CA.

13 3. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that Defendants DOES 1
14 through 50 are corporations, or are other business entities or organizations of a nature unknown to
15 Plaintiff that employed Plaintiff and aggrieved California non-exempt employees, permitted
16 Plaintiff and aggrieved employees to work, and exercised control over the wages, hours and working
17 conditions of employment of Plaintiff and aggrieved employees.

18 4. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that Defendants DOES 51
19 through 100 are individuals unknown to Plaintiff. Each of the individual defendants is sued
20 individually and in his or her capacity as an agent, shareholder, owner, representative, manager,
21 supervisor, independent contractor and/or employee of each defendant who violated or caused to be
22 violated the minimum wage and overtime provisions of the Labor Code and/or any provision of the
23 Industrial Welfare Commission's wage orders regulating hours and days of work.

24 5. Plaintiff is unaware of the true names of Defendants DOES 1 through 100. Plaintiff
25 sues said defendants by said fictitious names, and will amend this complaint when the true names
26 and capacities are ascertained or when such facts pertaining to liability are ascertained, or as
27 permitted by law or by the Court. Plaintiff is informed and believes that each of the fictitiously
28 named defendants is in some manner responsible for the events and allegations set forth in this

1 complaint.

2 6. Plaintiff makes the allegations in this complaint without any admission that, as to
3 any particular allegation, Plaintiff bears the burden of pleading, proving, or persuading and Plaintiff
4 reserves all of Plaintiff's right to plead in the alternative.

5 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

6 **CIVIL PENALTIES PURSUANT TO THE PRIVATE ATTORNEYS GENERAL ACT OF**
7 **2004, LABOR CODE SECTIONS 2698, ET SEQ.**

8 **(Against all Defendants by Plaintiff on behalf of Themselves, the State of California, and**
9 **Other Current and Former Aggrieved Employees)**

10 7. Plaintiff incorporates all paragraphs above as though fully set forth herein.

11 8. During Plaintiff's employment and continuing through the present, Plaintiff alleges
12 Defendants violated Labor Code sections 201, 202, 203, 204, 223, 226, 226.7, 226.8, 510, 512,
13 1194, 1197, 1198, 2753, 2802, and the applicable Wage Orders.

14 9. Specifically, Defendants have committed the following violations of California
15 Labor Code:

16 10. **Defendants Misclassified Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved**
17 **California-based hourly non-exempt employees as Independent Contractors:** Plaintiff began
18 working for Defendants on or around 2023 as a cleaner.

19 11. Plaintiff alleges that during his employment, Defendant willfully misclassified
20 Plaintiff and similarly situated aggrieved employees. Defendant employed many positions that were
21 misclassified as "independent contractors," including but not limited to cleaners.

22 12. Labor Code section 226.8 provides that it is unlawful for any person or employer to
23 willfully misclassify an individual as an independent contractor. In relevant part: "If the Labor and
24 Workforce Development Agency or a court issues a determination that a person or employer has
25 engaged in any of the enumerated violations of subdivision (a), the person or employer shall be
26 subject to a civil penalty of not less than five thousand (\$5,000) and not more than fifteen thousand
27 dollars (\$15,000) for each violation, in addition to any other penalties or fines permitted by law.
28 Subdivision (b)."

1 13. Section 226.8 continues on to state that: “If the Labor and Workforce Development
2 Agency or a court issues a determination that a person or employer has engaged in any of the
3 enumerated violations of subdivision (a) and the person or employer has engaged in or is engaging
4 in a pattern or practice of these violations, the person or employer shall be subject to a civil penalty
5 of not less than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) and not more than twenty-five thousand dollars
6 (\$25,000) for each violation, in addition to any other penalties or fines permitted by law.”

7 14. The statute defines “willful misclassification” as meaning “avoiding employee status
8 for an individual by voluntarily and knowingly misclassifying that individual as an independent
9 contractor.” Labor Code § 226.8(h)(4).

10 15. Here, Plaintiff and similarly situated aggrieved employees were subject to
11 disciplinary actions and control by Defendants. Furthermore, Defendants controlled Plaintiff and
12 the similarly situated aggrieved employees’ schedules, including but not limited to, shift times, and
13 lunch and rest break times. Plaintiff and the similarly situated aggrieved employees were also under
14 the direct supervision of Defendants while performing core functions of the business.

15 16. At all times relevant herein, Labor Code section 2753 was in full force and effect and
16 was binding on Defendants. Section 2753 provides extends liability to third parties who knowingly
17 advise an employer to misclassify a worker as an independent contractor. Defendants are liable
18 under Labor Code section 2753 to the extent they knowingly advised Defendants to misclassify
19 Plaintiff and similarly situated aggrieved employees as independent contractors.

20 17. Plaintiff and similarly situated aggrieved employees are informed and believe and
21 thereon allege that Defendant engaged in a pattern or practice of such a violation.

22 18. Defendants willful misclassification of Plaintiff and similarly situated aggrieved
23 employees as “independent contractors” when, in fact, they were employees of Defendants, has
24 resulted in damage to Plaintiff and similarly situated aggrieved employees in as follows: Plaintiff
25 and similarly situated aggrieved employees were not paid for all hours worked, Plaintiff and
26 similarly situated aggrieved employees were not provided with required meal periods or paid meal
27 period premium wages, Plaintiff and similarly situated aggrieved employees were not provided with
28 required rest periods or paid rest period premium wages, Plaintiff and similarly situated aggrieved

1 employees were not reimbursed for employment-related expenses, Plaintiff and similarly situated
2 aggrieved employees were not provided with evidence of all wages earned, all hours worked, all
3 applicable rates, missed meal period premium wages, and missed rest period premium wages
4 through accurate wage statements in an amount to be determined at trial, and Plaintiff and similarly
5 situated aggrieved employees were not paid all wages due upon cessation of employment.

6 19. Based on these violations, Plaintiff will seek civil penalties pursuant to PAGA, Labor
7 Code sections 2698, et seq., under Labor Code section 226.3 and/or Labor Code section 2699(f)(2)
8 on behalf of LWDA, against Employer.

9 20. **Failure to pay wages for all hours worked at the legal minimum wage:**
10 Defendants employed many of their employees, including Plaintiff, as hourly non-exempt
11 employees. In California, an employer is required to pay hourly employees for all “hours worked,”
12 which includes all time that an employee is under control of the employer and all time the employee
13 is suffered and permitted to work. This includes the time an employee spends, either directly or
14 indirectly, performing services which inure to the benefit of the employer.

15 21. Labor Code sections 1194 and 1197 require an employer to compensate employees
16 for all “hours worked” at least at a minimum wage rate of pay as established by the IWC and the
17 Wage Orders.

18 22. In this case, Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly
19 non-exempt employees worked more minutes per shift than Defendants credited them with having
20 worked. Specifically, Defendants failed to pay Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved
21 California-based hourly non-exempt employees all wages at the applicable minimum wage for all
22 hours worked due to Defendants’ policies, practices, and/or procedures including, but not limited
23 to:

24 (a) Requiring Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly
25 non-exempt employees to clock out for their meal breaks and continue to work through their off-
26 the-clock meal breaks.

27 (b) Requiring Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly
28 non-exempt employees to clock out for the end of their shift and continue to work, without being

1 paid for all time worked while off the clock.

2 23. Therefore, Defendants suffered, permitted, and required Plaintiff and other current
3 and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees to be subject to Defendants'
4 control without paying wages for that time. This resulted in Plaintiff and other current and former
5 aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees working time for which they were not
6 compensated any wages, in violation of Labor Code sections 1194 and 1197 and the applicable
7 Wage Order.

8 24. Employee is further informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that
9 Employer's conduct above that gave rise to such violations was malicious, fraudulent, or oppressive.
10 Employer would further be liable for civil penalties pursuant to Labor Code section
11 2699(f)(2)(B)(ii).

12 25. **Failure to pay wages for overtime hours worked at the overtime rate of pay**
13 **and/or failure to pay overtime wages at the proper rate of pay:** Defendants employed many of
14 their employees, including Plaintiff, as hourly non-exempt employees. In California, an employer
15 is required to pay hourly employees for all "hours worked," which includes all time that an employee
16 is under control of the employer and all time the employee is suffered and permitted to work. This
17 includes the time an employee spends, either directly or indirectly, performing services that inure to
18 the benefit of the employer.'

19 26. Labor Code sections 510 and 1194 require an employer to compensate employees a
20 higher rate of pay for hours worked in excess of eight (8) hours in a workday, in excess of forty (40)
21 hours in a workweek, and on any seventh consecutive day of work in a workweek:

22 Any work in excess of eight (8) hours in one workday, any work in excess of forty (40) hours
23 in any one (1) workweek, and the first eight (8) hours worked on the seventh day of work in
24 any one (1) workweek, shall be compensated at the rate of no less than one-and-one-half
25 (1.5) times the regular rate of pay for an employee. Any work in excess of twelve (12) hours
26 in one (1) day shall be compensated at the rate of no less than twice the regular rate of pay
for an employee. In addition, any work in excess of eight (8) hours on any seventh day of a
workweek shall be compensated at the rate of no less than twice the regular rate of pay of an
employee.

27 Labor Code section 510.

28 27. In this case, Defendants failed to pay Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved

1 California-based hourly non-exempt employees overtime wages for all overtime hours worked due
2 to Defendants' policies, practices, and/or procedures including, but not limited to:

3 (a) Requiring Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly
4 non-exempt employees to clock out for their meal breaks and continue to work through their off-
5 the-clock meal breaks.

6 (b) Requiring Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly
7 non-exempt employees to clock out for the end of their shift and continue to work, without being
8 paid for all time worked while off the clock.

9 28. Employee is further informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that
10 Employer's conduct above that gave rise to such violations was malicious, fraudulent, or oppressive.
11 Employer would further be liable for civil penalties pursuant to Labor Code section
12 2699(f)(2)(B)(ii).

13 29. The foregoing policies, practices, and/or procedures resulted in time during each
14 workday that Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt
15 employees were under the control of Defendants but were not compensated. To the extent that the
16 foregoing uncompensated time occurred when Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved
17 California-based hourly non-exempt employees worked more than eight (8) hours in a workday,
18 more than forty (40) hours in a workweek, and/or seven (7) days in a workweek, Defendants failed
19 to pay them at their overtime rate of pay for overtime hours worked, in violation of Labor Code
20 sections 510, 1194 and 1198, and the applicable Wage Order.

21 30. **Failure to pay wages to hourly non-exempt employees for workdays that**
22 **Defendants failed to provide legally required and compliant meal periods and/or failure to**
23 **pay period premium wages:** Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved California-based
24 hourly non-exempt employees regularly worked shifts of more than five (5) hours in length and
25 shifts of more than ten (10) hours in length.

26 31. California law requires an employer to authorize or permit an employee an
27 uninterrupted meal period of no less than thirty (30) minutes in which the employee is relieved of
28 all duties and the employer relinquishes control over the employee's activities prior to the

1 employee's sixth hour of work. Labor Code sections 226.7, 512, and 1198; Wage Order 5 at §11;
2 *Brinker Rest. Corp. v. Super Ct. (Hohnbaum)* (2012) 53 Cal.4th 1004. An employer may not employ
3 an employee for a work period of more than ten (10) hours per day without providing the employee
4 with a second such meal period of not less than thirty (30) minutes prior to the start of the eleventh
5 hour of work. *Id.* If the employee is not relieved of all duty during a meal period, the meal period
6 shall be considered an "on duty" meal period and counted as time worked. A paid "on duty" meal
7 period is only permitted when: (1) the nature of the work prevents an employee from being relieved
8 of all duty; and (2) the parties have a written agreement agreeing to on-duty meal periods.

9 32. If an employer fails to provide an employee a meal period in accordance with the
10 law, the employer must pay the employee one (1) hour of pay at the employee's regular rate of pay
11 for each workday that a legally required and compliant meal period was not provided. Labor Code
12 sections 226.7 and 1198; Wage Order 5 at §11.

13 33. In this case, Defendants failed to authorize or permit legally required and compliant
14 meal periods to Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-
15 exempt employees due to Defendants' policies, practices, and/or procedures, including but not
16 limited to:

17 (a) Requiring Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly
18 non-exempt employees to clock out for their meal breaks and continue to work through their off-
19 the-clock meal breaks.

20 (b) Failing to provide Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved California-based
21 hourly non-exempt employees timely, uninterrupted, duty-free meal breaks of at least 30 minutes
22 for every five hours worked, as a result of late meal breaks beyond the fifth hour of work.

23 (c) Failing to provide Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved California-based
24 hourly non-exempt employees with a second uninterrupted duty-free meal period of no less than
25 thirty (30) minutes for each workday that Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved
26 California-based hourly non-exempt employees work shifts over ten (10) hours.

27 34. Additionally, Plaintiff alleges that Defendants maintained a policy, practice, and/or
28 procedure of failing to compensate Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved California-based

1 hourly non-exempt employees one (1) hour of pay at their regular rate of pay for each workday that
2 Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees did
3 not receive legally required and compliant meal periods, in violation of Labor Code section 226.7.

4 35. Defendants' foregoing policies, practices, and/or procedures resulted in Plaintiff and
5 other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees not receiving
6 wages to compensate them for workdays during which Defendants did not provide them with meal
7 periods in compliance with California law.

8 36. Employee is further informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that
9 Employer's conduct above that gave rise to such violations was malicious, fraudulent, or oppressive.
10 Employer would further be liable for civil penalties pursuant to Labor Code section
11 2699(f)(2)(B)(ii).

12 37. **Failure to pay wages to hourly non-exempt employees for workdays that**
13 **Defendants failed to provide legally required and compliant rest periods and/or failure to pay**
14 **rest period premium:** Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly
15 non-exempt employees regularly worked shifts of more than three-and-a-half (3.5) hours.

16 38. California law requires every employer to authorize and permit an employee a rest
17 period of ten (10) net minutes for every four (4) hours worked or major fraction thereof. Labor Code
18 section 226.7; Wage Order 5 at §12. Under California law, "[e]mployees are entitled to 10 minutes'
19 rest for shifts from three and one-half to six hours in length, 20 minutes for shifts of more than six
20 hours up to 10 hours, 30 minutes for shifts of more than 10 hours up to 14 hours, and so on." *Brinker*
21 *Restaurant Corp. v. Sup. Ct. (Hohnbaum)* (2012) 53 Cal.4th 1004, 1029; Labor Code section 226.7;
22 Wage Order 5 at §12. Rest periods, insofar as practicable, shall be in the middle of each work period.
23 Wage Order 5 at §12. Additionally, the rest period requirement "'obligates employers to permit –
24 and authorizes employees to take – off-duty rest periods.'" *Augustus v. ABM Security Services, Inc.*
25 (2016) 2 Cal.5th 257, 269. That is, during rest periods employers must relieve employees of all
26 duties and relinquish control over how employees spend their time. *Id.*

27 39. If the employer fails to authorize or permit a required rest period, the employer must
28 pay the employee one (1) hour of pay at the employee's regular rate of pay for each workday the

1 employer did not authorize or permit a legally required rest period. Labor Code section 226.7; Wage
2 Order 5 at § 12.

3 40. In this case, Defendants failed to authorize or permit all legally required and
4 compliant rest periods to Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly
5 non-exempt employees due to Defendants' policies, practices, and/or procedures including, but not
6 limited to:

7 (a) Failing to provide Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved California-based
8 hourly non-exempt employees with net ten (10) minute rest breaks for every four (4) hours worked
9 or major fraction thereof.

10 (b) Failing to provide Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved California-based
11 hourly non-exempt employees a third uninterrupted duty-free rest period of no less than ten (10) net
12 minutes on each workday that Plaintiff and similarly situated employees work shifts over ten (10)
13 hours.

14 41. Additionally, Plaintiff alleges that Defendants maintained a policy, practice, and/or
15 procedure of failing to compensate Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved California-based
16 hourly non-exempt employees with one (1) hour of pay at their regular rate of pay for each workday
17 they did not receive legally required and compliant rest periods, in violation of Labor Code section
18 226.7.

19 42. Defendants' foregoing policies, practices, and/or procedures resulted in Plaintiff and
20 other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees not receiving
21 wages to compensate them for workdays in which Defendants did not provide them with rest periods
22 in compliance with California law.

23 43. Employee is further informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that
24 Employer's conduct above that gave rise to such violations was malicious, fraudulent, or oppressive.
25 Employer would further be liable for civil penalties pursuant to Labor Code section
26 2699(f)(2)(B)(ii).

27 44. **Failure to Indemnify for Losses and Expenditures Incurred as Part of**
28 **Employment:** California law requires that every employer must indemnify its employees for all

1 necessary expenditures or losses incurred by the employee in discharge of his or her duties or at the
2 obedience of the directions of the employer. Moreover, an employer is prohibited from passing the
3 ordinary business expenses and losses of the employer onto the employee. (Lab. Code, § 2802.)

4 45. Defendants have violated Labor Code Section 2802 by failing to indemnify Plaintiff
5 and other current and former aggrieved California-based non-exempt hourly employees' necessary
6 expenditures they incurred in the discharge of their duties. Specifically, Defendants employed
7 policies, practices, and/or procedures included, but not limited to:

8 (a) Requiring Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved California-based non-
9 exempt hourly employees to use or purchase their own tools and/or resources in order to work for
10 Defendants, including but not limited to personal cellphone usage and uniform maintenance for
11 work-related purposes - without reimbursing Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved
12 California-based non-exempt hourly employees for such use.

13 46. Moreover, Defendants employed policies and procedures which ensured Plaintiff and
14 aggrieved employees would not receive indemnification for their employment related expenses.
15 This practice resulted in Plaintiff and aggrieved employees not receiving such indemnification in
16 compliance with California law.

17 47. Therefore, Defendants are liable to Plaintiff and aggrieved employees for their
18 employment related expenses, including but not limited to costs related to use of their personal cell
19 phones and costs associated with their uniforms pursuant to Labor Code section 2802.

20 48. Employee is further informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that
21 Employer's conduct above that gave rise to such violations was malicious, fraudulent, or oppressive.
22 Employer would further be liable for civil penalties pursuant to Labor Code section
23 2699(f)(2)(B)(ii).

24 49. **Failure to timely pay earned wages during employment:** In California, wages
25 must be paid at least twice during each calendar month on days designated in advance by the
26 employer as regular paydays, subject to some exceptions. Labor Code section 204(a). Wages earned
27 between the 1st and 15th days, inclusive, of any calendar month must be paid between the 16th and
28 the 26th day of that month and wages earned between the 16th and the last day, inclusive, of any

1 calendar month must be paid between the 1st and 10th day of the following month. *Id.* Other payroll
2 periods such as those that are weekly, biweekly, or semimonthly, must be paid within seven (7)
3 calendar days following the close of the payroll period in which wages were earned. Labor Code
4 section 204(d).

5 50. As a derivative of Plaintiff's claims above, Plaintiff alleges that Defendants failed to
6 timely pay Plaintiff's and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt
7 employees' earned wages (including minimum wages, overtime wages, meal period premium wages
8 and/or rest period premium wages), in violation of Labor Code section 204. Defendants'
9 aforementioned policies, practices, and/or procedures resulted in their failure to pay Plaintiff's and
10 other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees' their earned
11 wages within the applicable time frames outlined in Labor Code section 204.

12 51. Plaintiff also believes these failures were malicious, fraudulent, or oppressive.
13 Employer would further be liable for civil penalties pursuant to Labor Code section
14 2699(f)(2)(B)(ii).

15 52. **Secret payment of lower wages than designated by statute:** Labor Code section
16 223 provides that, where any statute or contract requires an employer to maintain the designated
17 wage scale, it shall be unlawful to secretly pay a lower wage while purporting to pay the wage
18 designated by statute or contract. By engaging in the unlawful conduct alleged herein, including by
19 failing to: pay overtime wages at the applicable legal overtime rate, meal break premiums and lawful
20 sick pay at the employees' regular rate of pay, as established by Labor Code sections 226.7, 246,
21 510, 1194 and sections 11 and 12 of the applicable IWC Wage Orders, as incorporated by Labor
22 Code section 1198, the Defendant secretly paid a lower wage than designated by statute while
23 purporting to pay the wages designated by statute, in violation of Labor Code section 223.

24 53. Plaintiff also believes these failures were malicious, fraudulent, or oppressive.
25 Employer would further be liable for civil penalties pursuant to Labor Code section
26 2699(f)(2)(B)(ii).

27 54. **Failure to provide complete and accurate wage statements:** Labor Code section
28 226, subdivision (a). Labor Code section 226(a) provides, *inter alia*, that, upon paying an employee

1 his or her wages, the employer must “furnish each of his or her employees ... an itemized statement
2 in writing showing (1) gross wages earned, (2) total hours worked by the employee, except for any
3 employee whose compensation is solely based on a salary and who is exempt from payment of
4 overtime under subdivision (a) of Section 515 or any applicable order of the Industrial Welfare
5 Commission, (3) the number of piece-rate units earned and any applicable piece rate if the employee
6 is paid on a piece-rate basis, (4) all deductions, provided, that all deductions made on written orders
7 of the employee may be aggregated and shown as one item, (5) net wages earned, (6) the inclusive
8 dates of the pay period for which the employee is paid, (7) the name of the employee and his or her
9 social security number, (8) the name and address of the legal entity that is the employer, and (9) all
10 applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay period and the corresponding number of hours
11 worked at each hourly rate by the employee.”

12 55. As a derivative of Plaintiff’s allegations above, Defendants’ failure to pay Plaintiff
13 and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees all wages
14 earned (including minimum wages, overtime wages, meal period premium wages, and/or rest period
15 premium wages) rendered Plaintiff’s and other current and former aggrieved California-based
16 hourly non-exempt employees’ wage statements inaccurate, in violation of Labor Code section
17 226(a)(1, 2, 5 & 9).

18 56. Plaintiff believes these failures were willful and intentional.

19 57. Plaintiff also believes these failures were malicious, fraudulent, or oppressive.
20 Employer would further be liable for civil penalties pursuant to Labor Code section
21 2699(f)(2)(B)(ii).

22 58. **Failure to pay employees all wages due at time of termination/resignation:** An
23 employer is required to pay all unpaid wages timely after an employee’s employment ends. The
24 wages are due immediately upon termination (Labor Code section 201) or within seventy-two (72)
25 hours of resignation (Labor Code section 202).

26 59. As a derivative of Plaintiff’s allegations above, because Defendants failed to pay
27 Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees all
28 their earned wages (including minimum wages, overtime wages, meal period premium wages,

1 and/or rest period premium wages), Defendants failed to pay those employees timely after each
2 employee's termination and/or resignation, in violation of Labor Code sections 201, 202, and 203.

3 60. Plaintiff believes these failures were willful and intentional.

4 61. Plaintiff also believes these failures were malicious, fraudulent, or oppressive.
5 Employer would further be liable for civil penalties pursuant to Labor Code section
6 2699(f)(2)(B)(ii).

7 62. Labor Code sections 2699, subdivisions (a) and (g) authorize an aggrieved employee,
8 on behalf of himself or herself and other current or former employees, to bring a civil action to
9 recover civil penalties against all Defendants pursuant to the procedures specified in Labor Code
10 section 2699.3.

11 63. Plaintiff has complied with the procedures for bringing suit specified in Labor Code
12 section 2699.3. On September 25, 2025, Plaintiff filed a PAGA Claim Notice with the LWDA and
13 provided notice to Defendants by certified mail which provided notice of the specific provisions of
14 the Labor Code alleged to have been violated, including the facts and theories to support the
15 violations alleged.

16 64. Pursuant to Labor Code section 2699.3, the LWDA must give written notice by
17 certified mail to the parties that it intends to investigate the alleged violations of the Labor Code
18 within 60 days of the date of the complainant's written notice. The LWDA failed to provide the
19 parties notice within 60 days of the date of Plaintiff's PAGA Claim Notice that the LWDA intends
20 to investigate Plaintiff's claims.

21 65. Pursuant to Labor Code sections 2699(a) and (f), Plaintiff is entitled to recover civil
22 penalties for Defendants' violations of Labor Code sections 226.8, 2753, 201, 202, 203, 204, 223,
23 226(a), 226.7, 246, 510, 512, 1194, and 1198, 2802 During Plaintiff's employment and continuing
24 through the present, preceding Plaintiff sending the initial PAGA Claim Notice to the LWDA to the
25 present, in the following amounts:

26 a. For violations of Labor Code sections 226.8 and 2753; not less than ten
27 thousand dollars (\$10,000) and not more than twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) for each
28 violation [penalty amounts established by Labor Code section 226.8(b)]

b. For violations of Labor Code sections 201, 202, 203, 226(a), 226.7, 1198, and 2802; one hundred dollars (\$100) for each aggrieved employee per pay period for the initial violation and two hundred dollars (\$200) for each aggrieved employee per pay period for each subsequent violation [penalty amounts established by Labor Code section 2699(f)(2)].

c. For violations of Labor Code section 226(a), alternatively, two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) for each employee for each pay period for the initial violation, and for each subsequent violation, one thousand dollars (\$1000) for each underpaid employee for each pay period [penalty amounts established by Labor Code section 226.3].

d. For violations of Labor Code section 510 and 512, fifty dollars (\$50) for each employee for each pay period for the initial violation, and for each subsequent violation, one hundred dollars (\$100) for each underpaid employee for each pay period [penalty amounts established by Labor Code section 558].

e. For violations of Labor Code section 204, one hundred dollars (\$100) for each failure to pay each employee in any initial violation, and for each subsequent violation, or any willful or intentional violation, two hundred dollars (\$200) for each failure to pay each employee, plus 25 percent of the amount unlawfully withheld [penalty amounts established by Labor Code section 210].

f. For violations of Labor Code section 223, one hundred dollars (\$100) for each failure to pay each employee in any initial violation, and for each subsequent violation, or any willful or intentional violation, two hundred dollars (\$200) for each failure to pay each employee, plus 25 percent of the amount unlawfully withheld [penalty amounts established by Labor Code section 225.5].

66. Pursuant to Labor Code section 2699(g), Plaintiff is entitled to an award of reasonable attorneys' fees and costs in connection with his claims for civil penalties.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, PLAINTIFF, ON BEHALF OF HIMSELF AND ON OTHER AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES, PRAYS AS FOLLOWS:

ON THE FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION:

1 1. That Defendants be found to have violated the provisions of the Labor Code and the
2 IWC Wages Orders as to the Plaintiff and aggrieved employees;

3 2. For any and all legally applicable penalties during the relevant statute of limitations
4 subject to any permissible tolling, including but not limited to those recoverable under the California
5 Labor Code, including but not limited to sections 210, 225.5, 226.3, 558, 2699(f);

6 3. For attorneys' fees and costs of suit, including but not limited to those recoverable
7 under California Labor Code section 2699(g); and

8 4. For such and other further relief, in law and/or equity, as the Court deems just or
9 appropriate.

10
11 Dated: December 19, 2025

Respectfully submitted,
LAVI & EBRAHIMIAN, LLP

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13 By: /s/ Urepanny Morales
14 Joseph Lavi, Esq.
15 Vincent C. Granberry, Esq.
16 Jeffrey D. Klein, Esq.
17 Urepanny Morales, Esq.
18 Attorneys for Plaintiff
19 ANGEL MARTINEZ CORTES
20 on behalf of himself and current and former
21 aggrieved employees
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