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Attorneys for Plaintiff TARA TROTTER
individually and on behalf of similarly situated employees

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN JOAQUIN

TARA TROTTER, individually and on behalf
of all other similarly situated employees,

Plaintiff,

vs.

SEC TRANSPORTATION, INC., a California
Corporation; STOCKTON EDUCATIONAL
CENTER, INC., an unknown association; and
DOES 1 to 100, inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No. STK-CV-UOE-2023-0003641

*Assigned for All Purposes to Hon. Jayne Lee,
Department 10C*

CLASS ACTION

**DECLARATION OF TARA TROTTER IN
SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFF'S MOTION FOR
PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF CLASS
ACTION AND PAGA SETTLEMENT**

Date: _____
Time: 9:00 am.
Dept.: 10C
Judge: Hon. Jayne Lee

Filed: April 11, 2023
FAC Filed: July 7, 2023
Trial Date: None Set

1 I, Tara Trotter, declare:

2 1. I am a competent adult, I have personal knowledge of the facts set forth in this
3 declaration, and I am making this declaration on behalf of myself, as a named plaintiff, and in support
4 of Plaintiff's Motion for Preliminary Approval of Class Action and PAGA Settlement.

5 2. I started working for Defendants SEC Transportation, Inc., and Stockton Educational
6 Center, Inc. ("Defendants") in approximately 2018 as a non-exempt employee. Although there were
7 several months in 2020 that I did not work due to Covid-19, I continued working for Defendants until
8 approximately November 2020. I worked for Defendants again from approximately July 2022 to
9 November 4, 2022. I was subject to all of Defendants' policies and practices that have been alleged as
10 unlawful in the Complaint and the notice sent to the Labor and Workforce Development Agency,
11 including the following: failure to pay overtime, failure to pay minimum wages, failure to provide
12 accurate wage statements, failure to timely pay final wages, failure to provide meal and rest periods or
13 pay premiums in lieu thereof, and engaging in unlawful inquiry into criminal history.

14 3. I have actively participated in the litigation of the wage and hour claims for the benefit
15 of all Class Members. Prior to obtaining an attorney, I performed several hours of research trying to
16 find a quality attorney to handle the claims. I also performed several hours of research on the potential
17 claims, so I could be sure I could have an informed discussion with the attorneys about the claims and
18 have a better idea of what to expect in litigation and how to help the case proceed. After securing
19 Shimoda & Rodriguez Law, PC, I continued to be actively involved in the case to help ensure a positive
20 outcome.

21 4. My attorneys explained to me the risks and benefits of bringing a wage and hour class
22 action and a claim under the Private Attorneys General Act ("PAGA"). I understood that pursuing the
23 wage and hour claims as a class and PAGA action meant that it would take substantially longer than
24 pursuing these claims individually, whether in Court or with the California Labor Commissioner, and
25 that I risked getting nothing in the end, but I believed it was important to make sure that Defendants
26 followed the law for everyone. I understood that I took on the risk, both professionally and financially,
27 in pursuing the wage and hour claims as a class and PAGA action rather than pursuing these claims
28

1 individually, including the risk of having to pay Defendants' costs if we were unsuccessful in bringing
2 these claims.

3 5. During the course of this litigation, I have given detailed accounts of all the facts related
4 to my employment. I provided my attorneys with extensive documentation that I believe supported the
5 claims brought against Defendants. I met with and assisted my attorneys in understanding these
6 documents and providing context for Defendants' payroll process as it applied to me and how I
7 believed it applied to Defendants' other employees. I worked for Defendants at two different time
8 periods and for a considerable amount of time, so I was able to discuss the similarities of the wage and
9 hour policies and practices among all Class Members.

10 6. The work I performed for this case included an extensive review of documents and
11 payroll practices to show and explain to my attorneys what was happening and why I thought it was
12 unlawful. I provided my attorneys with timesheets, paystubs, policies, and emails related to the wage
13 and hour claims of this case. I also explained the job duties of the various positions held by class
14 members, the type of tasks and work performed, how these raised wage and hour issues, estimates of
15 the total number of class members for each position, typical schedules, and the policies of the
16 Defendant and how they affected myself and class members. I helped review and explain to my
17 attorney's different documents such as payroll documents, paystubs and payroll records, payroll
18 polices, meal and rest period policies, criminal history policies, vehicle use policies, timecards, and
19 Defendants' practices of such policies. I believe this was very important as it helped not only the
20 claims of failure to pay minimum wages, failure to pay overtime, and failure to provide meal and rest
21 periods, but also claims related to waiting time penalties and failure to provide accurate wage
22 statements. The review became even more detailed when my attorneys asked me questions about the
23 payroll data sample that was produced as part of informal discovery to engage in mediation. I also
24 spent time finding witnesses for this case. Overall, I have spent an enormous amount of time assisting
25 in the prosecution of this case.

26 7. I participated in the negotiations and settlement discussions in this case, including
27 participating in mediation by zoom, speaking with my attorneys to answer questions, provide any
28 additional information needed to assist the negotiations, and discussing the potential terms of the

1 Agreement to evaluate its adequacy. Throughout the course of this litigation, I have asked questions
2 when I needed clarification about various aspects of this case to make sure there were continually steps
3 taken to advance the interests of Class Members.

4 8. Although I have already spent a substantial amount of time on this case and assisting my
5 attorneys, I expect the amount of time I spend on this case will increase if preliminary approval is
6 granted because Class Members will likely reach out to me about the Settlement and the process for
7 receiving payment.

8 9. I have experienced substantial burdens as a result of filing the wage and hour class
9 claims that other Class Members were not subject to. For example, in bringing the lawsuit, I assumed
10 the risk of having to pay Defendants' costs if the Court or jury rules against us on the claims. My
11 understanding is that this is a substantial risk because the costs associated with litigation, in general, are
12 very high and this cost is multiplied many times over in complex litigation like class actions. I have
13 spent a substantial amount of time in this case, securing a monetary benefit for many individuals who
14 have not had to do anything whatsoever to have the opportunity to receive it. I have been employed
15 part-time during the majority of the time this case has been pending. As a result, the time I have spent
16 on this case has to occur during my lunch and/or break times, after hours, and on my days off. Rather
17 than spend this time with friends and family, I have spent this time for the benefit of Class Members. I
18 have also experienced a great amount of stress and anxiety, arising because of litigation in this case.

19 10. I have entered into a settlement agreement with Defendant to resolve the individual
20 claims I brought in this matter. The individual settlement was for \$35,000 in exchange for a release of
21 all claims except for the class and PAGA wage and hour claims. My individual settlement was not
22 contingent on my approval of the class and PAGA settlement in any way. Given what I experienced, I
23 believe the \$35,000 is a reasonable compromise to resolve my individual claims.

24 11. I have reviewed the final Joint Stipulation of Class Action and PAGA Settlement and
25 Release, discussed the terms with my attorney, and asked my attorney any questions I had. I believe
26 the terms of the Settlement and allocations are fair and reasonable given the facts of the case.
27
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I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on 2/1/2024 in Galt, California.

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PLTF DECL. ISO MOTION FOR PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF CLASS ACTION AND PAGA SETTLEMENT