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**SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FOR THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES – CENTRAL DISTRICT**

JOSE HERNANDEZ, an individual,

Plaintiff,

v.

COUNTRY WIDE TOWING, INC., a
California Corporation; WILLIAM
GARDINER, an individual; and DOES 1
THROUGH 20, inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No.: 23STCV21118

Unlimited Jurisdiction

COMPLAINT

- 1. WRONGFUL TERMINATION AND RETALIATION IN VIOLATION OF PUBLIC POLICY;**
- 2. DISCRIMINATION BASED ON PROTECTED STATUS – DISABILITY;**
- 3. FAILURE TO ACCOMMODATE;**
- 4. FAILURE TO ENGAGE IN THE INTERACTIVE PROCESS;**
- 5. FAILURE TO TAKE REASONABLE STEPS TO PREVENT DISCRIMINATION AND/OR RETALIATION;**
- 6. FAILURE TO PROVIDE MEAL BREAKS;**
- 7. FAILURE TO PROVIDE REST PERIODS;**
- 8. FAILURE TO PROVIDE ACCURATE ITEMIZED STATEMENTS [California Labor Code §226(a)];**
- 9. FAILURE TO PROVIDE ACCURATE ITEMIZED STATEMENTS [California Labor Code §226.3];**
- 10. FAILURE TO REIMBURSE EXPENSES;**
- 11. UNTIMELY PAYMENT OF WAGES;**
- 12. UNLAWFUL WITHHOLDING OF**

**WAGES;
13. WAITING TIME PENALTIES;
14. CALIFORNIA PRIVATE ATTORNEY
GENERAL ACT [California Labor
Code §2698];
15. NEGLIGENCE;
16. NEGLIGENT INFLICTION OF
EMOTIONAL DISTRESS;
17. NEGLIGENT HIRING,
SUPERVISION, AND RETENTION;
18. FAILURE TO PROVIDE
EMPLOYMENT RECORDS; AND
19. UNFAIR BUSINESS PRACTICES.**

DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

Plaintiff JOSE HERNANDEZ (“PLAINTIFF”) hereby files this Complaint against Defendants COUNTRY WIDE TOWING, INC. (“CWT”), a California Corporation, WILLIAM GARDINER (“GARDINER”), an individual, and DOES 1 THROUGH 20, inclusive (Collectively, “DEFENDANTS”). PLAINTIFF is informed and believes, and on the basis of that information and belief, alleges as follows:

PARTIES

1. PLAINTIFF is, and at all times material hereto was, an individual residing in the County of Los Angeles in the State of California.

2. PLAINTIFF is informed and believes, and on this basis alleges that Defendant CWT is, and at all times material hereto was, a California corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of California and authorized to conduct business in the County of Los Angeles.

3. PLAINTIFF is informed and believes, and on this basis alleges that Defendant GARDINER is an individual conducting business in California and working in the County of Los Angeles.

4. The true names and capacities of DOES 1 through 20, inclusive, whether individual, corporate, associate, or otherwise, are unknown to PLAINTIFF at this time, who therefore sues said defendants by such fictitious names; when the true names and capacities of such defendants are ascertained, PLAINTIFF will seek leave of court to amend this Complaint to insert same. PLAINTIFF is informed and believes and thereon alleges that each defendant named as a DOE is

1 responsible for each and every act and obligation hereinafter set forth.

2 5. PLAINTIFF is informed and believes and thereon alleges that each defendant
3 named in this Complaint now is, and was at all times herein mentioned, the agent, servant,
4 employee, representative, alter ego, members of and/or engaged in a joint venture, partnership and
5 common enterprise of the other defendants herein, and was at all such times acting within the
6 course and scope of said agency and employment and with the consent and permission of each of
7 the other co-defendants, and each of the defendants herein ratified each of the acts of each of the
8 other co-defendants, and each of them.

9 **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

10 6. Jurisdiction is proper because, upon information and belief, plaintiff worked for
11 defendants in the state of California, and all actions relevant to this Complaint occurred in the State
12 of California.

13 7. Venue is proper in Los Angeles County because, upon information and belief, at
14 least some of the transactions that are the subject matter of this Complaint occurred therein and/or
15 each defendant is found, maintains office, transacts business, and/or has an agent therein.

16 **FACTS COMMON TO ALL CAUSES OF ACTION**

17 8. Starting around 2008, PLAINTIFF was employed by CWT as a Tow Truck Driver.

18 9. CWT is a towing company hiring around 10 employees.

19 10. GARDINER is named as the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer and
20 Director of CWT.

21 11. PLAINTIFF's most recent hourly rate was \$17/hour, and he would receive a 15%
22 commission based on towing calls and an additional \$1 for every mile he drove. On every payday,
23 he would receive two checks, one aligns with his paystub and one regular check.

24 12. While he was scheduled for work from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m., PLAINTIFF, like other
25 similarly situated employees, was typically not given any meal or rest breaks.

26 13. At the beginning of his employment, CWT provided employees with a radio and a
27 work phone with his truck, but later they were taken away and PLAINTIFF had to use his personal
28 cellphone for communications at work and his tablet to clock in for work.

1 14. PLAINTIFF once pulled a muscle in his arm while putting a car on the truck, and
2 on or around February 20, 2023, he got another arm injury when he was taking the wheel off a
3 truck. After he reported his injuries to CWT, PLAINTIFF also filed a workers' compensation
4 claim. However, on or around March 15, 2023, CWT told PLAINTIFF that he was terminated
5 because he was "suing them" and that CWT would need a letter from his workers' compensation
6 attorney stating "we are not being sued" to let him work again.

7 15. On June 26, 2023, PLAINTIFF complied with *Labor Code* §2699.3(a) in that
8 PLAINTIFF gave written notice by certified mail to the Labor and Workforce Development
9 Agency ("LWDA") and DEFENDANTS of the specific provisions of the labor Code alleged to
10 have been violated, including the facts and theories to support the alleged violation. As of the date
11 of filing this complaint, (more than 60 calendar days after PLAINTIFF's LWDA letters were
12 mailed via certified mail), PLAINTIFF has not received any notification that the LWDA intended
13 to investigate the alleged violations.

14 16. On June 26, 2023, PLAINTIFF filed a complaint with the Department of Fair
15 Employment and Housing ("DFEH") and obtained a Right to Sue letter on the same day.
16 PLAINTIFF herein with this Complaint serves DEFENDANTS with the DFEH complaint and
17 Right to Sue notices.

18 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

19 **WRONGFUL TERMINATION**

20 **AND RETALIATION IN VIOLATION OF PUBLIC POLICY**

21 **(PLAINTIFF against CWT and DOE 1 through 10)**

22 17. PLAINTIFF hereby realleges and incorporates all of the previous paragraphs of this
23 Complaint by reference as though fully set forth herein.

24 18. PLAINTIFF was employed by DEFENDANTS.

25 19. PLAINTIFF was wrongfully terminated and retaliated against by DEFENDANTS
26 in violation of public policy and the California Fair Employment and Housing Act ("FEHA") as a
27 result of having a disability and taking legal action.

1 20. DEFENDANTS took adverse employment actions against PLAINTIFF because
2 PLAINTIFF had sustained injuries while on the job, made complaints about the work-related
3 injuries, and sought an accommodation due to the injuries and disability. Even worse,
4 DEFENDANTS threatened that PLAINTIFF would be terminated if PLAINTIFF took legal
5 action. *California Government Code* §12940 provides that it is against the law to discriminate
6 against an employee due to disability and to retaliate against an employee for requesting an
7 accommodation for disability regardless of whether the request was granted. These policies are
8 also enumerated in *Labor Code* §132(a), FEHA, the California and United States Constitutions,
9 among other laws and regulations.

10 21. DEFENDANTS' violations of public policy and FEHA described above were
11 substantial motivating reasons for the adverse employment actions taken against PLAINTIFF by
12 DEFENDANTS.

13 22. As a substantial result of DEFENDANTS' intentional acts in violation of public
14 policy and FEHA, PLAINTIFF was harmed. Specifically, PLAINTIFF lost income, and endured
15 emotional and mental damages, among other related damages. The exact amount of damage to
16 PLAINTIFF shall be proved at trial.

17 23. PLAINTIFF believes that DEFENDANTS' conducts described above were done
18 with malice, fraud and oppression and with conscious disregard for PLAINTIFF's rights and with
19 the intent, design and purpose to cause PLAINTIFF harm. As such, PLAINTIFF is also entitled to
20 punitive and exemplary damages.

21 24. In addition, PLAINTIFF is entitled to interest, penalties, attorney's fees and costs,
22 among other damages against DEFENDANTS.

23 **SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION**

24 **DISCRIMINATION IN VIOLATION**

25 **OF CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT CODE §12940, ET SEQ**

26 **(PLAINTIFF against CWT and DOE 1 through 10)**

27 25. PLAINTIFF hereby realleges and incorporates all of the previous paragraphs of this
28 Complaint by reference as though fully set forth herein.

1 26. PLAINTIFF was an employee of DEFENDANTS.

2 27. During PLAINTIFF's employment with DEFENDANTS, PLAINTIFF was
3 injured, and PLAINTIFF's injury rendered PLAINTIFF disabled within the meaning for disability
4 under FEHA. DEFENDANTS herein were aware of PLAINTIFF's injury and disability. However,
5 DEFENDANTS otherwise expected PLAINTIFF to work through the pain without treatment or
6 accommodation.

7 28. PLAINTIFF's disability was substantial motivating reasons for DEFENDANTS'
8 conduct that caused the wrongful termination against PLAINTIFF.

9 29. As a substantial result of DEFENDANTS' intentional acts, PLAINTIFF was
10 harmed. The exact amount of damage to PLAINTIFF shall be proved at trial.

11 30. PLAINTIFF believes that DEFENDANTS' conducts described above were done
12 with malice, fraud and oppression and with conscious disregard for PLAINTIFF's rights and with
13 the intent, design and purpose to cause PLAINTIFF harm. As such, PLAINTIFF is also entitled to
14 punitive and exemplary damages.

15 31. In addition, PLAINTIFF is entitled to interest, penalties, attorney's fees and costs,
16 among other damages against DEFENDANTS.

17 **THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION**

18 **FAILURE TO ACCOMMODATE – DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION**

19 **IN VIOLATION OF GOVERNMENT CODE §12940(m)**

20 **(PLAINTIFF against CWT and DOE 1 through 10)**

21 32. PLAINTIFF hereby realleges and incorporates all of the previous paragraphs of this
22 Complaint by reference as though fully set forth herein.

23 33. PLAINTIFF was employed as an employee by DEFENDANTS.

24 34. During PLAINTIFF's employment with DEFENDANTS, PLAINTIFF was
25 injured, and PLAINTIFF's injury rendered PLAINTIFF disabled within the meaning for disability
26 under FEHA.

27 35. DEFENDANTS herein were aware of PLAINTIFF's disability that limited
28 PLAINTIFF's work activities.

1 36. PLAINTIFF was able to perform the essential duties of the position or a vacant
2 alternative position to which PLAINTIFF could have been reassigned with reasonable
3 accommodation for PLAINTIFF's disability.

4 37. However, DEFENDANTS failed to provide such reasonable accommodation for
5 PLAINTIFF's disability. DEFENDANTS otherwise expected PLAINTIFF to work through the
6 pain without treatment or accommodation.

7 38. As a substantial result of DEFENDANTS' failure to accommodate, PLAINTIFF
8 was harmed. The exact amount of damage to PLAINTIFF shall be proved at trial.

9 39. In addition, PLAINTIFF is entitled to interest, penalties, attorney's fees and costs,
10 among other damages against DEFENDANTS.

11 **FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

12 **FAILURE TO ENGAGE IN INTERACTIVE PROCESS**

13 **IN VIOLATION OF CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT CODE §12940(n)**

14 **(PLAINTIFF against CWT and DOE 1 through 10)**

15 40. PLAINTIFF hereby realleges and incorporates all of the previous paragraphs of this
16 Complaint by reference as though fully set forth herein.

17 41. PLAINTIFF was an employee of DEFENDANTS.

18 42. PLAINTIFF had a disability that was known to DEFENDANTS, and
19 PLAINTIFF's injury rendered PLAINTIFF disabled within the meaning for disability under
20 FEHA.

21 43. PLAINTIFF requested that DEFENDANTS make reasonable accommodation for
22 PLAINTIFF so that PLAINTIFF would be able to perform the essential job requirements.

23 44. PLAINTIFF was willing to participate in an interactive process to determine
24 whether reasonable accommodation could be made so that PLAINTIFF would be able to perform
25 the essential job requirements.

26 45. However, DEFENDANTS failed to participate in a timely good-faith interactive
27 process with PLAINTIFF to determine whether reasonable accommodation could be made.

28 46. As a substantial result of DEFENDANTS' failure to engage in the interactive

1 process, PLAINTIFF was harmed. The exact amount of damage to PLAINTIFF shall be proved at
2 trial.

3 47. In addition, PLAINTIFF is entitled to interest, penalties, attorney's fees and costs,
4 among other damages against DEFENDANTS.

5 **FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

6 **FAILURE TO TAKE REASONABLE STEPS**
7 **TO PREVENT DISCRIMINATION AND RETALIATION**
8 **IN VIOLATION OF GOVERNMENT CODE §12940 (k)**
9 **(PLAINTIFF against CWT and DOE 1 through 10)**

10 48. PLAINTIFF hereby realleges and incorporates all of the previous paragraphs of this
11 Complaint by reference as though fully set forth herein.

12 49. PLAINTIFF was employed as an employee by DEFENDANTS.

13 50. PLAINTIFF was subject to disability discrimination and retaliation in violation of
14 public policy in the course of employment.

15 51. DEFENDANTS failed to take all reasonable steps to prevent discrimination, and
16 retaliation. DEFENDANTS ignored PLAINTIFF's complaints about disability discrimination and
17 retaliation and as a result by not doing anything, had condoned, ratified and participated in the acts
18 causing PLAINTIFF harm.

19 52. As a substantial result of DEFENDANTS' failure to take reasonable steps to
20 prevent discrimination and retaliation, PLAINTIFF was harmed. The exact amount of damage to
21 PLAINTIFF shall be proved at trial.

22 53. In addition, PLAINTIFF is entitled to interest, penalties, attorney's fees and costs,
23 among other damages against DEFENDANTS.

24 **SIXTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

25 **FAILURE TO PROVIDE MEAL BREAKS**
26 **(PLAINTIFF against all DEFENDANTS)**

27 54. PLAINTIFF hereby realleges and incorporates all of the previous paragraphs of this
28 Complaint by reference as though fully set forth herein.

1 55. *Labor Code* §512(a) provides that employees who work more than five hours in a
2 day are entitled to a meal period of at least 30 minutes; and a second meal period of at least 30
3 minutes if they work for more than 10 hours in a day.

4 56. *Labor Code* §512 further provides that “An employer may not employ an employee
5 for a work period of more than 10 hours per day without providing the employee with a second
6 meal period of not less than 30 minutes, except that if the total hours worked is no more than 12
7 hours, the second meal period may be waived by mutual consent of the employer and the employee
8 only if the first meal period was not waived.”

9 57. *Labor Code* §516 provides that the Industrial Welfare Commission may adopt or
10 amend working condition orders with respect to meal periods for any workers in California
11 consistent with the health and welfare of those workers.

12 58. Section 11(C) of the *IWC Wage Order(s)* provides that “Unless the employee is
13 relieved of all duty during a 30-minute meal period, the meal period shall be considered an “on
14 duty” meal period and counted as time worked. An “on duty” meal period shall be permitted only
15 when the nature of the work prevents an employee from being relieved of all duty and when by
16 written agreement between the parties an on-the-job paid meal period is agreed to. The written
17 agreement shall state that the employee may, in writing, revoke the agreement at any time.”

18 59. Section 11(D) of the *IWC Wage Order(s)* provides that “If an employer fails to
19 provide an employee a meal period in accordance with the applicable provisions of this order, the
20 employer shall pay the employee one (1) hour of pay at the employee’s regular rate of
21 compensation for each workday that the meal period is not provided.”

22 60. Furthermore, an employer may not undermine a formal policy of providing meal
23 breaks by pressuring employees to perform their duties in ways that omit breaks. The wage orders
24 and governing statute do not countenance an employer's exerting coercion against the taking of,
25 creating incentives to forego, or otherwise encouraging the skipping of legally protected breaks.

26 61. At all times relevant herein, PLAINTIFF was employed by DEFENDANTS in a
27 non-exempt position.
28

62. PLAINTIFF's employment with DEFENDANTS entitled PLAINTIFF to meal breaks.

63. PLAINTIFF was at times not given meal breaks and at other times meal breaks which were not compliant with labor laws. Further, at times PLAINTIFF worked more than 10 hours in a shift; however, PLAINTIFF was not given or advised that PLAINTIFF may take a second meal break.

64. PLAINTIFF had been harmed and DEFENDANTS are liable to PLAINTIFF for one (1) hour of additional premium pay at the regular rate of compensation for each day in which the proper meal was not provided. The exact amount of missed meal break wages owed to PLAINTIFF shall be proved at trial, and PLAINTIFF is entitled to recovery of such amounts from DEFENDANTS, plus interest, penalties and attorney's fees and costs.

SEVENTH CAUSE OF ACTION

FAILURE TO PROVIDE REST PERIODS

(PLAINTIFF against all DEFENDANTS)

65. PLAINTIFF hereby realleges and incorporates all of the previous paragraphs of this Complaint by reference as though fully set forth herein.

66. State law requires employers to authorize paid rest periods of a specified minimum duration of 10 minutes for every four hours an employee works. (See, e.g., *8 California Code Regulations* §§11010-11150 ¶2 and §11160 ¶1; Wage order No. 5)

67. At all times relevant herein, PLAINTIFF was employed by DEFENDANTS in a non-exempt position.

68. PLAINTIFF's employment with DEFENDANTS entitled PLAINTIFF to rest breaks. PLAINTIFF's shifts that were over four (4) hours therefore were entitled to a rest period of not less than ten (10) minutes prior to exceeding four (4) hours of employment for each four (4) hours of work.

69. Throughout PLAINTIFF's employment, DEFENDANTS typically did not provide PLAINTIFF with rest breaks and/or compliant breaks for every four hours of work. Further, at

1 times PLAINTIFF worked more than 12 hours in a shift; however, PLAINTIFF was not given or
2 advised that PLAINTIFF may take a third rest break.

3 70. An employer who fails to provide rest periods as required by an applicable Wage
4 Order must pay the employee one (1) additional hour of pay at the employee's regular rate of pay
5 for each workday that a rest period was not provided. The exact amount of missed rest break wages
6 owed to PLAINTIFF shall be proved at trial, and PLAINTIFF is entitled to recovery of such
7 amounts from DEFENDANTS, plus interest, penalties and attorney's fees and costs.

8 **EIGHTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

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

10 **IN VIOLATION OF LABOR CODE § § 226(a)(e)**

11 **(PLAINTIFF against all DEFENDANTS)**

12 71. PLAINTIFF hereby realleges and incorporates all of the previous paragraphs of this
13 Complaint by reference as though fully set forth herein.

14 72. *Labor Code* §226(a) requires employers to provide accurate itemized wage
15 statements for each wage payment. *Labor Code* §226(e) provides for a recovery of the greater of
16 all actual damages or fifty dollars (\$50) for the initial pay period in which a violation occurs and
17 one hundred dollars (\$100) for each violation in a subsequent pay period, not exceeding an
18 aggregate penalty of four thousand dollars (\$4,000) (per employee).

19 73. DEFENDANTS failed to provide PLAINTIFF with complete and accurate wage
20 statements, willfully or intentionally. DEFENDANTS also failed to account for accurate
21 withholdings, hours, wage rates, meal and rest premiums, among other things.

22 74. As a result of DEFENDANTS' aforementioned unlawful act, PLAINTIFF suffered
23 damage. PLAINTIFF is therefore entitled to recover from DEFENDANTS damages and penalties
24 promulgated under *Labor Code* §§226.

25 75. PLAINTIFF is also entitled to injunctive relief to ensure compliance with the
26 aforementioned *Labor Code* provision.

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1 **NINTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

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

3 **IN VIOLATION OF LABOR CODE § 226.3**

4 **(PLAINTIFF against all DEFENDANTS)**

5 76. PLAINTIFF hereby realleges and incorporates all of the previous paragraphs of this
6 Complaint by reference as though fully set forth herein.

7 77. *Labor Code* §§226 and 226.3 provides for civil penalties against anyone who
8 violates *Labor Code* §226. *Labor Code* §226(a) requires employers to provide accurate itemized
9 wage statements for each wage payment. Specifically, *Labor Code* §226.3 provides a penalty of
10 two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) per employee per violation in an initial citation and one thousand
11 dollars (\$1,000) per employee for each violation in a subsequent citation, for which the employer
12 fails to provide the employee a wage statement in compliance with *Labor Code* §226.

13 78. DEFENDANTS failed to provide PLAINTIFF with complete and accurate wage
14 statements, willfully or intentionally. DEFENDANTS also failed to account for accurate
15 withholdings, hours, wage rates, meal and rest premiums, among other things.

16 79. As a result of DEFENDANTS' aforementioned unlawful act, PLAINTIFF suffered
17 damage. PLAINTIFF is therefore entitled to recover from DEFENDANTS damages and penalties
18 promulgated under *Labor Code* §§226 and 226.3.

19 **TENTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

20 **FAILURE TO REIMBURSE EXPENSES**

21 **(PLAINTIFF against all DEFENDANTS)**

22 80. PLAINTIFF hereby realleges and incorporates all of the previous paragraphs of this
23 Complaint by reference as though fully set forth herein.

24 81. In California, employers must cover employees' expenses. Pursuant to *Labor Code*
25 §2802(a) an employer is required to "indemnify him or her employee for all necessary expenditures
26 and losses incurred by the employee in direct consequence of the discharge of his or her duties, or
27 of his or her obedience to the directions of the employer..." This includes, "all reasonable costs"
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as defined in *Labor Code* §2802(c). Further, *Labor Code* §2804 states the employee may not waive these rights.

82. PLAINTIFF was required to purchase equipment out-of-pocket necessary to perform job, and PLAINTIFF did make such purchases for the benefit of DEFENDANTS.

83. DEFENDANTS did not reimburse PLAINTIFF for such expenses.

84. Therefore, DEFENDANTS are liable and PLAINTIFF is entitled to reimbursement of expenses and other costs pursuant to *Labor Code* §2802(a).

ELEVENTH CAUSE OF ACTION

UNTIMELY PAYMENT OF WAGES

(PLAINTIFF against all DEFENDANTS)

85. PLAINTIFF hereby realleges and incorporates all of the previous paragraphs of this Complaint by reference as though fully set forth herein.

86. *Labor Code* §210(a) provides that any employer who fails to timely pay the wages of each employee shall be subject to a penalty in the amount of one hundred dollars (\$100) per employee per violation in an initial citation, and two hundred dollars per employee per employee for each violation in a subsequent citation, or any willful and intentional violation, plus 25 percent of the amount unlawfully withheld.

87. DEFENDANTS failed to timely pay PLAINTIFF all meal and rest break premiums that are due and payable for each pay period.

88. As a result of DEFENDANTS' aforementioned unlawful act, PLAINTIFF suffered damage. PLAINTIFF is therefore entitled to recover from DEFENDANTS damages and penalties.

TWELFTH CAUSE OF ACTION

UNLAWFUL WITHHOLDING OF WAGES

(PLAINTIFF against all DEFENDANTS)

89. PLAINTIFF hereby realleges and incorporates all of the previous paragraphs of this Complaint by reference as though fully set forth herein.

1 90. *Labor Code* §216 provides that it is a misdemeanor for an employer to “willfully
2 refuse to pay wages due and payable after demand has been made” or “falsely deny the amount or
3 validity thereof.”

4 91. *Labor Code* §225.5 provides a penalty of \$100 for an initial violation and \$200 for
5 any subsequent violation of §216 plus 25% of the withheld amount.

6 92. Upon termination by DEFENDANTS, PLAINTIFF was entitled by law to receive
7 all of PLAINTIFF’s wages and paycheck(s) immediately. DEFENDANTS also unlawfully
8 withheld the balance of earned wages, missed meal and rest break wages, and expense
9 reimbursements. Moreover, these wages were demanded thereafter.

10 93. As a result of DEFENDANTS’ aforementioned unlawful acts, PLAINTIFF
11 suffered damage. DEFENDANTS are subject to the penalty under *Labor Code* §225.5. The exact
12 amount of penalties will be proved at trial, and PLAINTIFF is entitled to such penalties plus
13 interest as required by law in addition to restitution of all wages earned but not paid.

14 **THIRTEENTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

15 **WAITING TIME PENALTIES**

16 **(PLAINTIFF against all DEFENDANTS)**

17 94. PLAINTIFF hereby realleges and incorporates all of the previous paragraphs of this
18 Complaint by reference as though fully set forth herein.

19 95. *Labor Code* §203 provides that “if an employer willfully fails to pay, without
20 abatement or reduction, in accordance with Sections 201, 201.3, 201.5, 202, and 205.5, any wages
21 of an employee who is discharged or who quits, the wages of the employee shall continue as a
22 penalty from the due date thereof at the same rate until paid or until an action therefor is
23 commenced; but the wages shall not continue for more than 30 days.”

24 96. PLAINTIFF’s employment with DEFENDANTS ended.

25 97. DEFENDANTS failed to pay PLAINTIFF all wages when due since PLAINTIFF’s
26 termination until the date of filing this Complaint.

27 98. DEFENDANTS willfully failed to pay PLAINTIFF final wages in full.

1 99. As a result of DEFENDANTS' aforementioned unlawful act, PLAINTIFF suffered
2 damage. PLAINTIFF is entitled to recover from DEFENDANTS the statutory penalty wages for
3 each day they were not paid, at their regular hourly rate of pay, up to a thirty (30) day maximum
4 pursuant to *Labor Code* sections 203, plus interest and attorney's fees in the amount to be proven
5 at trial.

6 **FOURTEENTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

7 **CALIFORNIA PRIVATE ATTORNEY GENERAL ACT**

8 **LABOR CODE § 2698**

9 **(PLAINTIFF against all DEFENDANTS)**

10 100. PLAINTIFF hereby realleges and incorporates all of the previous paragraphs of this
11 Complaint by reference as though fully set forth herein.

12 101. PLAINTIFF and the other non-exempt employees are "aggrieved employees" as
13 defined by *Labor Code* §2699(c) in that they are all current or former employees of
14 DEFENDANTS, and one or more of the causes of action in this complaint was committed against
15 PLAINTIFF and the aggrieved employees.

16 102. PLAINTIFF is a proper representative to bring a civil action on behalf of
17 PLAINTIFF and other current and former employees of DEFENDANTS pursuant to the
18 procedures specified in *Labor Code* §2699.3.

19 103. As such, PLAINTIFF and the aggrieved employees are entitled to civil penalties
20 pursuant to *Labor Code* §558 and §2699(a), (f) and (g), cost, expenses, and attorneys' fees for
21 violation of *Labor Code* Sections listed in this complaint.

22 **FIFTEENTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

23 **NEGLIGENCE**

24 **(PLAINTIFF against all DEFENDANTS)**

25 104. PLAINTIFF hereby realleges and incorporates all of the previous paragraphs of this
26 Complaint by reference as though fully set forth herein.

27 105. DEFENDANTS owe, and at all times relevant owed, a duty to their employees to
28 provide a safe, non-discriminating and non-retaliatory work environment, to make sure that its

1 supervisors take action against employees practicing workplace discrimination and retaliation, to
2 make sure supervisors and managers look after the safety of employees during their watch, to pay
3 employees proper wages when due, and to provide them with proper wage statements.

4 106. DEFENDANTS breached this duty to PLAINTIFF as highlighted above.

5 107. DEFENDANTS' breach was and is the actual and proximate cause of
6 PLAINTIFF's harm.

7 108. As a substantial result of DEFENDANTS' negligent acts, PLAINTIFF was harmed.
8 The exact amount of damage to PLAINTIFF shall be proved at trial.

9 **SIXTEENTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

10 **NEGLIGENT INFLICTION OF EMOTIONAL DISTRESS**

11 **(PLAINTIFF against all DEFENDANTS)**

12 109. PLAINTIFF hereby realleges and incorporates all of the previous paragraphs of this
13 Complaint by reference as though fully set forth herein.

14 110. DEFENDANTS owe, and at all times relevant owed, a duty to their employees to
15 provide a safe, non-discriminating and non-retaliatory work environment, to make sure that its
16 supervisors take action against employees practicing workplace discrimination and retaliation, to
17 make sure supervisors and managers look after the safety of employees during their watch, to pay
18 employees proper wages when due, and to provide them with proper wage statements.

19 111. DEFENDANTS breached this duty to PLAINTIFF as highlighted above.

20 112. DEFENDANTS' breach was and is the actual and proximate cause of
21 PLAINTIFF's harm.

22 113. As a result of this negligence, PLAINTIFF suffered and continues to suffer serious
23 emotional distress in the form of suffering, anguish, fright, horror, nervousness, grief, anxiety,
24 worry, shock, humiliation, shame, embarrassment, and depression. This was a foreseeable result
25 of DEFENDANTS' negligence.

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1 **SEVENTEENTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

2 **NEGLIGENT HIRING, SUPERVISION, AND RETENTION**

3 **(PLAINTIFF against all DEFENDANTS)**

4 114. PLAINTIFF hereby realleges and incorporates all of the previous paragraphs of this
5 Complaint by reference as though fully set forth herein.

6 115. DEFENDANTS hired PLAINTIFF's supervisors.

7 116. PLAINTIFF's supervisors became unfit and incompetent to perform the work for
8 which PLAINTIFF's supervisors were hired.

9 117. DEFENDANTS knew or should have known of PLAINTIFF's supervisors became
10 unfit and incompetent to perform the work, and PLAINTIFF's supervisors created a particular risk
11 to others.

12 118. PLAINTIFF's supervisors' unfitness and incompetence harmed PLAINTIFF.

13 119. DEFENDANTS' negligence in hiring, supervising and retaining of PLAINTIFF's
14 supervisors was a substantial factor in causing PLAINTIFF's harm. The exact amount of damage
15 to PLAINTIFF shall be proved at trial.

16 **EIGHTEENTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

17 **FAILURE TO PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT DOCUMENTS**

18 **(PLAINTIFF against all DEFENDANTS)**

19 120. PLAINTIFF hereby realleges and incorporates all of the previous paragraphs of this
20 Complaint by reference as though fully set forth herein.

21 121. *Labor Code* §226(b) states that "(b) An employer that is required by this code or
22 any regulation adopted pursuant to this code to keep the information required by subdivision (a)
23 shall afford current and former employees the right to inspect or receive a copy of records
24 pertaining to their employment, upon reasonable request to the employer. The employer may take
25 reasonable steps to ensure the identity of a current or former employee. If the employer provides
26 copies of the records, the actual cost of reproduction may be charged to the current or former
27 employee."

1 122. *Labor Code* §432 provides that “If an employee or applicant signs any instrument
2 relating to the obtaining or holding of employment, he shall be given a copy of the instrument upon
3 request.”

4 123. *Labor Code* §1198.5 provides that “The employer shall make the contents of those
5 personnel records available for inspection to the current or former employee, or his or her
6 representative, at reasonable intervals and at reasonable times, but not later than 30 calendar days
7 from the date the employer receives a written request, unless the current or former employee, or
8 his or her representative, and the employer agree in writing to a date beyond 30 calendar days to
9 inspect the records, and the agreed-upon date does not exceed 35 calendar days from the
10 employer’s receipt of the written request. Upon a written request from a current or former
11 employee, or his or her representative, the employer shall also provide a copy of the personnel
12 records, at a charge not to exceed the actual cost of reproduction, not later than 30 calendar days
13 from the date the employer receives the request, unless the current or former employee, or his or
14 her representative, and the employer agree in writing to a date beyond 30 calendar days to produce
15 a copy of the records, as long as the agreed-upon date does not exceed 35 calendar days from the
16 employer’s receipt of the written request.”

17 124. On June 26, 2023, PLAINTIFF requested DEFENDANTS to produce
18 PLAINTIFF’s personnel file, all W2 information, all wage related documents, and all signed
19 documents.

20 125. DEFENDANTS failed to provide PLAINTIFF with complete employment records,
21 among other things.

22 126. As a result of DEFENDANTS’ aforementioned unlawful act, PLAINTIFF suffered
23 damage.

24 127. PLAINTIFF is therefore entitled to recover from DEFENDANTS damages and
25 penalties promulgated under *Labor Code*.

26 128. PLAINTIFF is also entitled to injunctive relief to ensure compliance with the
27 aforementioned *Labor Code* provision.

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1 **NINETEENTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

2 **UNFAIR BUSINESS PRACTICES**

3 **IN VIOLATION OF CAL. BUS. & PROF. CODE § § 17200 ET. SEQ.**

4 **(PLAINTIFF against all DEFENDANTS)**

5 129. PLAINTIFF hereby realleges and incorporates all of the previous paragraphs of this
6 Complaint by reference as though fully set forth herein.

7 130. DEFENDANTS, themselves or through their supervisors, in an effort to exploit,
8 harass, and discriminate against their employees for profit or otherwise, have engaged in the
9 following unlawful, unfair, deceptive, and misleading business practices, amongst others outlined
10 in this complaint:

- 11 a. Wrongfully terminating and retaliating against employees with disability-
12 based reasons;
- 13 b. Discriminating against employees based on disability;
- 14 c. Failing to accommodate;
- 15 d. Failing to properly supervise and train its employees;
- 16 e. Failing to provide proper meal breaks and rest periods, or to pay premium
17 wages for missed meal and rest periods to PLAINTIFF;
- 18 f. Failing to provide reimbursement for business expenses; and,
- 19 g. The foregoing wrongful activities have caused harm, fear, pressure, and
20 humiliation to the employee(s) at DEFENDANTS.

21 131. PLAINTIFF is entitled to enforce all applicable penalty provisions of the California
22 Business and Professions Code §17202.

23 132. Pursuant to the provisions of §17203 of the California Business and Professions
24 Code, PLAINTIFF is entitled to restoration of lost wages, meal breaks and rest periods premium
25 wages, business expense reimbursement, interests, and profits DEFENDANTS have collected by
26 the use of the unfair, deceptive, and misleading business practices described in this Complaint.

27 133. Pursuant to provisions of §17203 et seq. of the California Business and Professions
28 Code, DEFENDANTS must be ordered to disgorge all the unlawful profits in the relevant statutory

1 to PLAINTIFF, which DEFENDANTS have received from improperly billing clients and cheating
2 of employees in terms of their hours reported as having been worked but not paid.

3 134. Pursuant to the provisions of §17203 of the California Business and Professions
4 Code, this Court should issue an injunction prohibiting DEFENDANTS from engaging in the
5 foregoing unfair, deceptive, and misleading business practices.

6 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

7 WHEREFORE, PLAINTIFF prays for judgment against DEFENDANTS, and DOES 1
8 through 20 inclusive, as follows:

9 1. General and compensatory damages in an amount to be subject to proof at trial to
10 the extent permitted by law;

11 2. Liquidated damages (if applicable);

12 3. Special damages;

13 4. Emotional distress damages;

14 5. Civil and statutory penalties (including under PAGA where applicable);

15 6. Restoration of all money PLAINTIFF lost that DEFENDANTS have collected by
16 the use of the unfair, deceptive, and misleading business practices described as in unfair business
17 practices cause of action;

18 7. Injunctive relief prohibiting DEFENDANTS from engaging in the unfair,
19 deceptive, and misleading business practices described as in unfair business practices cause of
20 action;

21 8. Declaration that DEFENDANTS' business practices are unfair within the meaning
22 described as in unfair business practices cause of action;

23 9. Punitive and exemplary damages;

24 10. Pre-judgment interest;

25 11. Costs of lawsuit herein incurred;

26 12. Attorneys' fees; and

27 13. For an award of such other and further equitable and legal relief as this Court may
28 deem appropriate.

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4 Dated: August 31, 2023

BITTON & ASSOCIATES

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8 Ophir J. Bitton, Esq.
9 Lei Wei, Esq.
Attorneys for Plaintiff,
Jose Hernandez

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Dated: August 31, 2023



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