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SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

CARLOS BALLINA, an individual; on behalf
of himself and all others similarly situated and
the general public,

Plaintiffs,

v.

ALEXANDRA SERVICES, INC., a California
corporation; ALEXANDRA INVESTMENTS,
INC., a California corporation; NASHWAN
HABIB, an individual; and DOES 1 to 100,
inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No.: 37-2023-00044627-CU-OE-CTL

CLASS ACTION

COMPLAINT FOR:

1. Violation of B&PC §17200, et seq.
2. Violation of Labor Code §§ 204, 510, 1194 and 1198;
3. Violation of Labor Code §§ 200, et seq.;
4. Failure to Pay Meal and Rest Break Premiums at the Proper Regular Rate of Pay (Labor Code §226.7)
5. Failure to Provide & Maintain Accurate Wage Statements Pursuant to Labor Code §226;
6. Failure to Provide Meal Periods (Lab. Code §226.7);
7. Failure to Provide Rest Breaks (Lab. Code §226.7);
8. Failure to Reimburse Expenses (Lab. Code §2802);
9. Violation of Labor Code §§2698-2699 (PAGA).

DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

1 Plaintiff CARLOS BALLINA, on behalf of himself and all other persons similarly
2 situated, and the general public (hereinafter, “Plaintiffs”), hereby complains against
3 Defendants, ALEXANDRA SERVICES, INC., a California corporation; ALEXANDRA
4 INVESTMENTS, INC., a California corporation; NASHWAN HABIB, an individual; and
5 DOES 1 to 100, inclusive (hereinafter collectively referred to herein as “Defendants”), and on
6 information and belief allege as follows:

7 **GENERAL ALLEGATIONS**

8 **JURISDICTION**

9 1. This is a civil action seeking recovery of unpaid wages, waiting time penalties,
10 pay stub penalties and meal and rest period premiums under California Labor Code §§ 510,
11 1194 et seq., 201 et seq., 226 and 226.7. Plaintiffs bring an action for monetary damages for
12 failure to pay wages as well as for restitution for Defendants’ violations of Business and
13 Professions Code (B&PC) §17200, et seq., including full restitution of all compensation
14 retained by Defendants as a result of their unlawful, fraudulent and unfair business practices.
15 Plaintiffs seek all available relief, including full restitution of all compensation retained by
16 Defendants as a result of their unlawful and unfair business practices. Further, Plaintiffs seek
17 injunctive relief under B&PC §17200, et seq.

18 **VENUE**

19 2. Venue as to each of the Defendants is proper in this judicial district pursuant to
20 California Code of Civil Procedure (CCP) §§ 395(a) and 395.5, as at least some of the acts
21 complained of herein occurred in the County of San Diego. Each defendant either owns,
22 maintains offices, transacts business, has an agent or agents within the County of San Diego,
23 or otherwise is found within the County of San Diego, and each defendant is within the
24 jurisdiction of this Court for purposes of service of process.

25 **PARTIES**

26 3. Carlos Ballina (“Ballina”) is an individual over the age of eighteen (18). At all
27 relevant times herein, Plaintiff Ballina worked for Defendants within the State of California.
28

1 4. Plaintiffs are informed and believe and thereon allege that at all times
2 mentioned herein, defendant Alexandra Services, Inc. is a California corporation, Alexandra
3 Investments, Inc. is a California corporation, and Nashwan Habib is an individual residing
4 within California.

5 5. Plaintiffs are informed and believe and thereon allege that at all times
6 mentioned herein, Defendants were authorized to do business in the State of California,
7 County of San Diego, and offering towing and related services. Thus, each named defendant
8 and DOES 1 to 100 are subject to B&PC §17200, et seq. (Unfair Competition Law) and the
9 Labor Code, as hereinafter alleged.

10 6. Plaintiffs do not know the true names or capacities, whether individual,
11 partner, or corporate, of defendants sued herein as DOES 1 to 100, inclusive, and for that
12 reason, those defendants are sued under such fictitious names, and Plaintiffs will seek from
13 this Court leave to amend this Complaint when such true names and capacities are discovered.
14 Plaintiffs are informed and believe and thereon allege that each of the Defendants and each
15 fictitious defendant, whether individual, partners, or corporate, was responsible in some
16 manner for the circumstances alleged herein, and proximately caused Plaintiffs and all others
17 similarly situated hereinafter alleged and the general public to be subjected to the unlawful
18 employment practices, wrongs, injuries and damages complained of herein.

19 7. At all times herein mentioned, each of the Defendants participated in the doing
20 of the acts hereinafter alleged to have been done by the named Defendants; and furthermore,
21 Defendants, and each of them, were the agents, servants, and employees of each and every
22 one of the other Defendants, as well as the agents of all Defendants, and at all times herein
23 mentioned were acting within the course and scope of said agency and employment. Plaintiffs
24 herein allege that Defendants and each of them is the joint employer of Plaintiffs and the
25 classes.

26 8. At all times mentioned herein, Defendants, and each of them, were members of
27 and engaged in a joint venture, partnership, and common enterprise, and acting within the
28

1 course and scope of and in pursuance of said joint venture, partnership, and common
2 enterprise.

3 9. At all times herein mentioned, the acts and omissions of various Defendants,
4 and each of them, concurred and contributed to the various acts and omissions of each and
5 every one of the other Defendants in proximately causing the complaints, injuries and
6 damages alleged herein.

7 10. At all times herein mentioned, Defendants, and each of them, approved of,
8 condoned, and/or otherwise ratified each and every one of the acts or omissions complained of
9 herein. At all times herein mentioned, Defendants, and each of them, aided and abetted the
10 acts and omissions of each and every one of the other Defendants, thereby proximately
11 causing the damages, as herein alleged.

12 11. The California Superior Court also has jurisdiction in this matter because both
13 the individual and aggregate monetary damages and restitution sought herein exceed the
14 minimal jurisdictional limits of the Superior Court and will be established at trial, according to
15 proof. The California Superior Court also has jurisdiction in this matter because Plaintiffs and
16 the putative classes herein worked within the State of California, and were subject to
17 California's wage and hour laws.

18 **PLAINTIFF CLASSES**

19 12. The class representative Plaintiff who worked in the position of an hourly non-
20 exempt employees or other similar title while employed by Defendants within the State of
21 California, is as follows:

22 a. Carlos Ballina

23 Plaintiff Ballina worked within California as a non-exempt hourly employee for
24 Defendants between 2022 and July 2023.

25 13. At all times mentioned herein, Plaintiffs and the entirety of the hourly Class
26 identified herein are current and former employees of Defendants who were not properly paid
27 all their wages, including but not limited to, proper premium overtime, and/or double time due
28 to Defendants' failure to properly calculate the regular rate and/or include all hours worked in

1 a week to determine hours over eight (8) in a given day, or forty (40) in a week.

2 **CLASS ACTION ALLEGATIONS**

3 14. Plaintiffs bring this action on behalf of themselves and all others similarly
4 situated as a class action pursuant to CCP §382. The Classes which Plaintiffs seek to
5 represent are composed of and defined as follows:

6 **Class 1:**

7 All non-exempt hourly employees who worked for Defendants in California from
8 2019 through the date of judgment, who were not paid premium overtime and/or double time
9 at the employee's regular rate of pay.

10 **Subclass 1:**

11 All non-exempt hourly employees who worked for Defendants in California who were
12 paid for a missed meal or rest period at an allegedly "reduced" rate of pay from 2019 through
13 the date of judgment (Meal and Rest Reduced Rate Subclass);

14 **Class 2:**

15 All non-exempt hourly employees who worked for Defendants in California from
16 2019 through the date of judgment, who were not paid the minimum wage for all hours
17 worked (Minimum Wage Class);

18 **Class 3:**

19 All non-exempt hourly employees who worked for Defendants in California and who
20 worked at some point from 2020 through the present, who are no longer employed with
21 Defendants and to whom Defendants willfully failed to pay all wages due upon separation
22 from Defendants (Waiting Time Penalty Class);

23 **Class 4:**

24 All non-exempt hourly employees who worked for Defendants in California from
25 2019 to the present who were not provided legally compliant meal periods (Meal Break
26 Class);
27
28

Class 5:

All non-exempt hourly employees who worked for Defendants in California from 2019 through the present who were not provided legally-compliant rest breaks (Rest Break Class);

Class 6:

All non-exempt hourly employees who worked for Defendants in California from 2022 through the present who were provided a paystub (a.k.a. wage statement) which failed to list all hours actually worked and wages owed (Pay Stub Class).

Class 7:

All non-exempt hourly employees who worked for Defendants in California from 2019 through the present who were not reimbursed for their necessary and reasonable business expenses (Reimbursement Class).

The members of the classes are so numerous that joinder of all members would be unfeasible and not practicable. The membership of the classes are unknown to Plaintiffs at this time; however, it is estimated that the classes number greater than 100 individuals. The identity of such membership is readily ascertainable via inspection of Defendants' employment records.

15. There are common questions of law and fact as to Plaintiffs and all others similarly situated which predominate over questions affecting only individual members including, without limitation to:

- i. Whether Defendants paid their employees proper premium overtime and/or double time at the employees' regular rate for hours over eight (8) in a day and/or forty (40) hours in a week, in paying their hourly non-exempt employees;
- ii. Whether Defendants violated the applicable Labor Code provisions including §510, 1194, and 203 by requiring substantial overtime work and not paying for said work according to the overtime laws of the State of California;

- 1 iii. Whether Defendants failed to pay the appropriate premium overtime
2 compensation to the hourly employees;
- 3 iv. Whether Defendants improperly retained, appropriated or deprived
4 Plaintiffs and the class members of the use of monies or sums to which
5 Plaintiffs and the class were legally entitled;
- 6 v. Whether Defendants engaged in unfair business practices;
- 7 vi. Whether Defendants, and each of them, were participants in the alleged
8 unlawful conduct;
- 9 vii. Whether Defendants’ conduct was willful or reckless;
- 10 viii. The effect upon and the extent of injuries suffered by Plaintiffs and all
11 others similarly situated and the appropriate amount of compensation;
- 12 ix. The appropriate amount of monetary penalties allowed by Labor Code
13 §201, et. seq.;
- 14 x. Whether Defendants pay and continue to pay for missed meal and rest
15 period premiums at an allegedly “reduced” rate of pay in violation of
16 Section 11 of the applicable Wage Orders;
- 17 xi. Whether Defendants violated Labor Code §226 and relevant IWC
18 Wage Orders by failing to, among other violations, accurately report
19 total hours worked, all applicable hourly rates in effect during each pay
20 period and the corresponding number of hours worked at each hourly
21 work, by Plaintiffs and the members of the Class;
- 22 xii. Whether Defendants knowingly and intentionally failed to maintain
23 records for Plaintiffs and members of the Class as required by Labor
24 Code § 1174 and the applicable IWC Wage Orders;
- 25 xiii. Whether Defendants failed to reimburse Plaintiffs and the
26 class members for necessary expenditures incurred in the performance
27 of their work for Defendants;
- 28

1 16. Plaintiffs' claims are typical of the claims of all members of the classes and
2 subclasses mentioned herein. Plaintiffs, as representative parties, will fairly and adequately
3 protect the interest of the classes by vigorously pursuing this suit through their attorneys who
4 are skilled and experienced in handling matters of this type. Plaintiffs have no claim or
5 interest that is antagonistic to any class member.

6 17. The nature of this action and the nature of laws available to the members of the
7 classes and subclasses identified herein make use of the class action format a particularly
8 efficient and appropriate procedure to afford relief to Plaintiffs for the wrongs alleged herein.
9 Further, this claim involves large corporate employers, and a large number of individual
10 employees (Plaintiffs and all others similarly situated) with many relatively small claims with
11 common issues of law and fact. If each employee were required to file an individual lawsuit,
12 the corporate defendants would necessarily gain an unconscionable advantage since they
13 would be able to exploit and overwhelm the limited resources of each individual plaintiff with
14 their vastly superior financial and legal resources. Requiring each class member to pursue an
15 individual remedy would also discourage the assertion of lawful claims by employees who
16 would be disinclined to pursue an action against their present and/or former employer for an
17 appreciable and justifiable fear of retaliation and permanent damage to their careers at present
18 and/or subsequent employment. Proof of a common business practice or factual pattern, of
19 which the Plaintiffs experienced, is representative of the class mentioned herein and will
20 establish the right of each of the members of the named class to recovery on the causes of
21 action alleged herein.

22 18. The prosecution of separate actions by the individual class members, even if
23 possible, would create a substantial risk of inconsistent or varying verdicts or adjudications
24 with respect to the individual class members against Defendants herein; and which would
25 establish potentially incompatible standards of conduct for Defendants; and/or (b) legal
26 determinations with respect to individual class members which would, as a practical matter,
27 be dispositive of the interest of the other class members not parties to adjudications or which
28 would substantially impair or impede the ability of the class members to protect their interests.

1 Further, the claims of the individual members of the class are not sufficiently large to warrant
2 vigorous individual prosecution considering all of the concomitant costs and expenses
3 attending thereto.

4 19. Plaintiffs and all others similarly situated are entitled to the wages and other
5 monies unlawfully withheld. This action is brought for the benefit of the public.

6 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

7 **(Violation of B&PC §17200, et seq.)**

8 20. Plaintiffs re-allege and incorporate by reference herein the allegations of all
9 preceding paragraphs as though fully set forth herein.

10 21. Beginning on an exact date unknown to Plaintiffs but believed to have
11 occurred from 2019 on, Defendants have engaged in a pattern and practice of acts of unfair
12 competition in violation of B&PC §17200, including the practices alleged herein.

13 22. Defendants, and each of them, provide towing and related services within
14 California, and have engaged in the practice of paying their non-exempt employees, in a
15 fashion that circumvents California's wage and hour laws.

16 **FAILURE TO PAY PROPER WAGES AND OVERTIME COMPENSATION**

17 23. Plaintiffs are informed and believe and thereon allege that as part of
18 Defendants' ongoing unfair business practices, Defendants' hourly employees worked in
19 excess of eight (8) hours per day, and in excess of forty (40) hours per week without receiving
20 the proper regular rate of pay and/or minimum wage rate because Defendants fail to account
21 for all compensation due Plaintiffs, including the fact that Plaintiffs regularly work off-the-
22 clock and on-call hours prior to and after completing their shifts. Defendants are therefore in
23 violation of Labor Code §§ 510 and 1194, and the relevant California Industrial Welfare
24 Commission Orders.

25 24. Defendants, and each of them, consistently administered a corporate policy
26 regarding off-the-clock and on-call time, which required that employees work overtime
27 without proper premium overtime pay, the regular rate of pay, and/or minimum wage. This
28 corporate policy and pattern of conduct is accomplished with the advanced knowledge and

1 designed intent to avoid paying non-exempt employees for all hours worked. Accordingly,
2 Plaintiffs and the class members are entitled to all unpaid wages due under California law.
3 Further, Plaintiffs and the class are entitled to restitution of these wages obtained by
4 Defendants, and each of them.

5 **VIOLATION OF LABOR CODE § 200, ET SEQ.**

6 25. Plaintiffs are informed and believe and thereon allege that as part of
7 Defendants' ongoing unfair business practices, Defendants failed to provide all employees all
8 wages at the time of their separation in violation of Labor Code § 200, et. seq., including but
9 not limited to, §§201, 202, 203 & 204.

10 26. Labor Code § 200, et seq. provides that an employer is required to pay an
11 employee all wages (including accrued vacation) immediately upon the employee's
12 involuntary separation from employment; immediately upon his or her voluntary separation if
13 the employee gave at least seventy-two (72) hours notice, and within seventy-two (72) hours,
14 if the employee voluntarily separated, but did not give at least seventy-two (72) hours notice.

15 27. Plaintiffs are informed and believe and thereon allege that all employees who
16 have been separated from Defendants did not timely receive a final paycheck detailing the
17 proper amount of pay from Defendants in violation of Labor Code § 200, et. seq.

18 28. Pursuant to Labor Code § 200, et seq. employees that no longer work for
19 Defendants, and who were not timely paid, are entitled to one (1) day of pay in penalties for
20 each day that he or she was paid late, until payment was made, up to a maximum of thirty (30)
21 days.

22 **VIOLATION OF MEAL AND REST PERIOD PROVISIONS**

23 29. Defendants' improper meal and rest period policies are in violation of
24 California law including, but not limited to Labor Code § 226.7, 512, and the applicable IWC
25 Wage Orders. Plaintiffs and the class were entitled to 1 hour of pay for each meal and rest
26 break violation at their regular rate of pay. Defendants failed and continue to fail to pay for
27 meal and rest period violations at the employees' regular rate of pay in violation of Section 11
28 of the applicable Wage Orders.

1 30. Plaintiffs seek restitution and injunctive relief for said violations.

2 31. Plaintiffs are informed and believe and thereon allege that at all times herein
3 mentioned, Defendants have engaged in unlawful, deceptive, and unfair business practices
4 prohibited by California B&PC §17200, thereby depriving their employees and the putative
5 class the minimum working standards and conditions due to them under the California labor
6 laws and Industrial Welfare Commission wage orders as specifically described herein.
7 Plaintiffs seek an injunction preventing Defendants from continuing their unfair business
8 practice of improperly depriving their employees of overtime pay, and payment of their
9 regular rate of pay for meal and rest period premiums. Plaintiffs further seek an order
10 requiring Defendants to identify by full name, telephone number, and last known address
11 employees who worked or still work for Defendants between 2019 through the date of
12 judgment; Plaintiffs further seek an order requiring Defendants to timely pay restitution to all
13 current and former employees, including back wages, premium payments, and interest.

14 **FAILURE TO PROVIDE ITEMIZED WAGE STATEMENTS**

15 32. Plaintiffs are informed and believe and thereon allege that as part of
16 Defendants' ongoing unfair business practices, Defendants, and each of them, fail to provide
17 their employees with proper and understandable itemized wage statement, as required by Labor
18 Code § 226.

19 33. Plaintiffs are informed and believe, and thereon allege, that Defendants, and
20 each of them, fail to provide each employee with an itemized statement which states the actual
21 regular rate paid, the total hours worked by the employee, the gross and net wages earned, and
22 all applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay period and the corresponding number of
23 hours worked at each hourly rate by the employee.

24 **FAILURE TO REIMBURSE EXPENSES**

25 34. Defendants have adopted and implemented an illegal reimbursement policy
26 that fails to compensate Plaintiffs for all of their necessary business expenses incurred in
27 discharging their duties for Defendants.
28

1 35. Defendants' conduct in failing to reimburse Plaintiffs and the class for their
2 necessary business expenses is also unfair within the meaning of Business and Professions
3 Code §17200 because it is against established public policy and has been pursued to attain an
4 unjustified monetary advantage for Defendants by unfairly and unlawfully reducing Plaintiffs'
5 and the other class members' compensation, as Plaintiffs and the class are required to come
6 out of pocket for such expenses. As such, Defendants' business practices, including their
7 illegal reimbursement policy and practice, is unfair, illegal and fraudulent, in that such policy
8 and practice was intended to reduce Plaintiffs' and the class' due and owing compensation.

9 **SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION**

10 **RECOVERY OF UNPAID WAGES & PENALTIES**

11 **(Violation of Labor Code §§ 204, 510, 1194 and 1198)**

12 36. Plaintiffs re-allege and incorporate by reference herein the allegations of all
13 preceding paragraphs as though fully set forth herein.

14 37. Plaintiffs and all others similarly situated identified herein were and are
15 employed and scheduled as a matter of established company policy to work and in fact
16 worked as non-exempt hourly employees in excess of eight (8) hours per day and/or in excess
17 of forty (40) hours per week. Defendants employed and scheduled all employees without
18 providing overtime compensation for such excess hours worked in violation of Labor Code §§
19 510 and 1194 and the relevant California Industrial Welfare Commission (IWC) orders.
20 Labor Code § 204 establishes the fundamental right of all employees in the State of California
21 to be paid the proper amount of wages in a timely fashion for their work, including overtime.
22 Defendants always had a written and verbal agreement to pay overtime and double time based
23 on the Plaintiffs' and classes' regular rate of pay.

24 38. Pursuant to Labor Code §§ 218 and 1194(a), Plaintiffs may bring a civil action
25 for overtime wages directly against the employer without first filing a claim with the Division
26 of Labor Standards Enforcement (hereinafter "DLSE") and may recover such wages, together
27 with interest thereon, penalties, attorneys' fees and costs.

1 39. At all times relevant hereto, Defendants have failed to pay to Plaintiffs and all
2 persons similarly situated wages when due as required by Labor Code § 204.

3 40. Pursuant to Labor Code § 1198, it is unlawful to employ persons for longer
4 than the hours set by the IWC or under conditions prohibited by the applicable IWC Wage
5 Orders.

6 41. At all times relevant hereto, Plaintiffs are informed and believe and thereon
7 allege that Defendants have treated Plaintiffs as hourly non-exempt employees. Despite this
8 classification, Defendants have willfully violated the Labor Code with respect to meeting the
9 requirements of paying one (1) regular rate of pay and calculating overtime and double time
10 based on that regular rate, as herein before alleged. Defendants have failed to properly pay
11 premium overtime for hours worked in a week, and as such, Defendants are able to reduce
12 their overhead and operating expenses and gain an unfair advantage over competing
13 companies complying with state law. Furthermore, Defendants have failed to include all
14 items of remuneration when determining the employees' regular rate of pay, as described
15 above.

16 42. Plaintiffs are informed and believe and thereon allege that Defendants
17 consistently administered a corporate policy regarding both staffing levels and duties and
18 responsibilities of the members of the classes which required the entirety of all classes to work
19 overtime without proper premium pay, and to fail all wages for hours worked. This corporate
20 policy and pattern of conduct was/is accomplished with the advance knowledge and design of
21 all Defendants herein. Thus, Plaintiffs and all others similarly situated routinely, regularly
22 and customarily performed overtime work and/or work that they failed to be compensated at
23 the appropriate hourly wage.

24 43. Plaintiffs are informed and believe and thereon allege that the obligations and
25 responsibilities of the class employees are irrelevant because Plaintiffs and all others similarly
26 situated merely allege wrongdoing with Defendants' pay plans, policies and practices.
27 Further, the duties of Plaintiffs and all others similarly situated are not relevant in certifying
28 any of the classes.

1 44. Defendants, and each of them, had a consistent and uniform policy, practice
2 and procedure of willfully failing to pay the earned and unpaid wages of all such non-exempt
3 employees. Defendants have willfully failed to pay the earned and unpaid wages of such
4 individuals, including, but not limited to regular pay, premium pay, and other wages earned
5 and remaining uncompensated according to amendment, or proof.

6 45. The pattern, practice and uniform administration of corporate policy regarding
7 illegal employee compensation as described herein is unlawful and creates an entitlement to
8 recovery by Plaintiffs and all others similarly situated, in a civil action, for the unpaid balance
9 of the full amount of all wages owing, including the proper calculation of the regular rate and
10 the proper overtime premiums calculated at 1.5 or 2 times the legal regular rate which are
11 owing, including interest thereon, willful penalties, reasonable attorneys' fees, and costs of
12 suit according to the mandate of Labor Code § 1194, et. seq.

13 46. Likewise, Defendants have a pattern, practice and uniform administration of
14 corporate policy regarding failure to comply with the required provisions of Labor Code §
15 226.7, in failing to pay Plaintiffs and the class the meal and rest period premium payments at
16 the regular rate.

17 **THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION**

18 **(Violation of Labor Code §§ 200, et. seq.)**

19 47. Plaintiffs re-allege and incorporate by reference herein the allegations of all
20 preceding paragraphs as though fully set forth herein.

21 48. Labor Code §§ 200, et. seq., provides that an employer is required to pay an
22 employee all wages (including accrued vacation) immediately upon an employee's
23 involuntary separation from employment; immediately upon her voluntary separation if the
24 employee gave at least seventy-two (72) hours notice, and within seventy-two (72) hours, if
25 the employee voluntarily separated, but did not give at least seventy two (72) hours notice.

26 49. Plaintiff Ballina and other former employees of Defendants employed in the
27 State of California separated from employment with Defendants, and did not timely receive a
28 final pay check with all of their wages due from Defendants in violation of Labor Code §§

200, et seq. Plaintiffs are informed and believe and thereon allege that Defendants also violated the mandates of Labor Code §§ 200, et seq., as to other employees whose employment ended during the period of time covered by this action.

50. Pursuant to Labor Code §§ 200, et. seq., each member of the class that no longer works for Defendants, and who was not timely paid all of his or her wages due is entitled to one (1) day of pay in penalties for each day that he or she was paid late, until payment was made, up to a maximum of thirty (30) days.

FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION

FAILURE TO PAY MEAL AND REST PERIOD PREMIUMS AT THE PROPER REGULAR RATE OF PAY

(Violation of Labor Code §§ 226.7 & 512, et seq.)

51. Plaintiffs re-allege and incorporate by reference herein the allegations of all preceding paragraphs as though fully set forth herein.

52. Plaintiffs believe and thereon allege that Labor Code §226.7 requires an employer to pay an additional hour of compensation at the employee's regular rate of pay for each meal period and rest period violation. During the class period, Plaintiffs are informed and believe, and based thereon allege that Defendants have failed to pay Plaintiffs and the class members meal period and rest period premium pay at their regular rate of pay. Defendants' improper meal and rest period practices and policies are in violation of California law including, but not limited to Labor Code § § 226.7, 512, and the IWC Wage Orders.

53. Pursuant to Labor Code §226.7, Plaintiffs are entitled to damages in an amount equal to one (1) hour of the employee's regular rate of pay per each meal and rest period violation, in a sum to be proven at trial.

FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION

FAILURE TO PROVIDE ACCURATE ITEMIZED WAGE STATEMENTS

(Violation of Labor Code § 226)

54. Plaintiffs re-allege and incorporate by reference herein the allegations of all preceding paragraphs as though fully set forth herein.

1 55. Labor Code §226(a) provides, in pertinent part:

2 An employer, semimonthly or at the time of each payment of wages, shall
3 furnish to his or her employee, either as a detachable part of the check, draft, or
4 voucher paying the employee's wages, or separately if wages are paid by
5 personal check or cash, an accurate itemized statement in writing showing (1)
6 gross wages earned, (2) total hours worked by the employee, except as
7 provided in subdivision (j), (3) the number of piece-rate units earned and any
8 applicable piece rate if the employee is paid on a piece-rate basis, (4) all
9 deductions, provided that all deductions made on written orders of the
10 employee may be aggregated and shown as one item, (5) net wages earned, (6)
11 the inclusive dates of the period for which the employee is paid, (7) the name
12 of the employee and only the last four digits of his or her social security
13 number or an employee identification number other than a social security
14 number, (8) the name and address of the legal entity that is the employer and, if
15 the employer is a farm labor contractor, as defined in subdivision (b) of Section
16 1682, the name and address of the legal entity that secured the services of the
17 employer, and (9) all applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay period and
18 the corresponding number of hours worked at each hourly rate by the
19 employee. . . .

20 56. During the Class Period, Defendants knowingly and intentionally failed to
21 provide the Class Members, including Plaintiff Ballina, with timely and accurate wage and
22 hour statements showing gross wages earned, total hours worked, all deductions made, net
23 wages earned, the name and address of the legal entity employing that Class Member, and all
24 applicable hourly rates in effect during each pay period and the corresponding number of
25 hours worked at each hourly rate by that Class Member.

26 57. The Class Members, including Plaintiffs, suffered injury as a result of
27 Defendants' knowing and intentional failure to provide the Class Members, with the wage and
28 hour statements required by law.

 58. Based on Defendants' conduct as alleged herein, Defendants are liable for actual
damages, statutory damages and/or statutory penalties pursuant to California Labor Code §
226, attorney's fees and costs and other applicable provisions of the Labor Code and
applicable Wage Order.

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1 considered “on duty;” however, Defendants failed to count as time worked any “on duty”
2 meal period taken by Plaintiffs and the members of the Class.

3 63. Pursuant to California Labor Code § 226.7(c) and IWC Wage Orders, if an
4 employer fails to provide an employee a meal period in accordance with the applicable
5 provisions of the IWC Wage Orders, the employer shall pay the employee one (1) hour of pay
6 at the employee’s regular rate of pay for each workday that the meal period is not provided.
7 As such, Plaintiffs and members of the Class are entitled to an additional one hour’s pay for
8 each day in which Plaintiffs and members of the Class were not provided a proper meal break
9 under the above-described authorities.

10 64. Plaintiffs and the members of the Class request that the Court award interest on
11 all unpaid wages at the legal rate specified by California Civil Code § 3289(b), accruing from
12 the date the wages were due and payable pursuant to Labor Code § 218.6.

13 **SEVENTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

14 **FAILURE TO AUTHORIZE OR PERMIT REST PERIODS**

15 **(Violation of Labor Code § 226.7)**

16 65. Plaintiffs re-allege and incorporate by reference as if fully set forth herein, the
17 allegations of the preceding paragraphs.

18 66. The applicable IWC Wage Orders state that every employer shall authorize and
19 permit all employees to take rest periods. The authorized rest period time shall be based on
20 the total hours worked daily at the rate of ten (10) minutes net rest time per four hours of
21 work, or major fraction thereof. An employer must provide employees with 10 minutes’ rest
22 for shifts from three and one-half to six hours in length, 20 minutes for shifts of more than six
23 hours up to 10 hours, 30 minutes for shifts of more than 10 hours up to 14 hours, and so on.

24 67. Plaintiffs and Class Members were not permitted to take rest periods, were
25 required to work during their rest periods, and/or were disciplined and/or were advised that
26 they would be disciplined if they took rest periods during work hours, in contravention of
27 California law.

1 68. Pursuant to California Labor Code § 226.7(c) and the applicable IWC Wage
2 Orders, if an employer fails to provide an employee a rest period in accordance with the
3 applicable IWC Wage Orders, the employer shall pay the employee one (1) hour of pay at the
4 employee's regular rate of compensation for each workday that the rest period is not provided.

5 69. As such, Plaintiffs and the Class members are entitled to an additional one
6 hour's pay for each day in which they were not provided a proper rest period under the above-
7 described authorities.

8 70. Plaintiffs and the members of the Class request that the Court award interest on
9 all unpaid wages at the legal rate specified by California Civil Code § 3289(b), accruing from
10 the date the wages were due and payable pursuant to Labor Code § 218.6.

11 **EIGHTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

12 **FAILURE TO REIMBURSE EXPENSES**

13 **(Violation of (Labor Code § 2802)**

14 71. Plaintiffs re-allege and incorporate by reference as if fully set forth herein, the
15 allegations of the preceding paragraphs.

16 72. California Labor Code § 2802 provides that "[a]n employer shall indemnify his
17 or her employee for all necessary expenditures or losses incurred by the employee in direct
18 consequence of the discharge of his or her duties."

19 73. Plaintiffs are informed and believe, and based thereon allege, that at all
20 relevant times Plaintiffs and the class members incurred certain expenses for their jobs with
21 Defendants, including but not limited to using their own personal cell phones for company
22 business, including responding to work calls and text messages on their personal cell phones
23 for their work, and Plaintiffs were required to purchase specialized work clothing including
24 gloves, vests and boots for their jobs, without reimbursement. Despite this, Defendants failed
25 and refused to indemnify Plaintiffs and the class for all of their expenditures in carrying out
26 their duties for Defendants.

1 74. As a result of Defendants' failure to indemnify Plaintiff and the class members,
2 they have suffered losses according to proof, including prejudgment interest, costs, and
3 attorneys' fees in prosecuting this case.

4 **NINTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

5 **PRIVATE ATTORNEYS GENERAL ACT**

6 **(Violation of Labor Code §§ 2698 and 2699)**

7 75. Plaintiffs re-allege and incorporate by reference as if fully set forth herein, the
8 allegations of the preceding paragraphs.

9 76. On or about July 27, 2023, Plaintiff Ballina provided written notice to the
10 Labor and Workforce Development Agency ("LWDA") and Defendants of the specific
11 provisions of the Labor Code alleged to have been violated, including the facts and theories to
12 support the alleged violations.

13 77. The LWDA failed to respond to Plaintiffs' counsel's correspondence and failed
14 to notify Plaintiffs' counsel as to whether it would investigate the allegations contained
15 therein, within the time period requirements of the Private Attorneys General Act (PAGA),
16 under Labor Code §2699.3. Plaintiffs have fully complied with the notice requirements set
17 forth in Labor Code §2699.3 in order to commence a civil action against an employer
18 pursuant to Labor Code §2699.

19 78. Defendants' failure to pay Plaintiffs for all hours worked, minimum wages,
20 overtime compensation, failure to provide meal periods, failure to authorize and permit rest
21 periods, failure to pay all wages upon termination or resignation, and failure to provide
22 accurate itemized wage statements, and failure to reimburse expenses, will subject Defendants
23 to civil penalties pursuant to, without limitation, Labor Code §§ 201, 202, 203, 204, 226, 510,
24 512, 551, 552, 1174, 1194, 1198, 2802 and IWC Wage Orders.

25 79. Plaintiffs are aggrieved employees as defined in Labor Code §§2699(a) and
26 (c), and related Labor Code provisions. Plaintiffs bring this cause of action on behalf of
27 themselves, as private attorneys general, and in a representative capacity on behalf of other
28 aggrieved employees, affected by the labor law violations alleged herein.

1 80. Defendants committed numerous violations of the California Labor Code and
2 IWC Wage Orders against the Plaintiffs, and on information and belief, against members of
3 the Class and other current and former employees while they were employed by Defendants,
4 including but not limited to:

5 a. Defendants violated Labor Code §§ 510, 511, 1194 and/or IWC Wage Orders
6 by failing to pay Plaintiffs and the members of the Class, and on information and belief, other
7 current and former employees of Defendants, all minimum, straight time and overtime wages
8 owed in compliance with California law;

9 b. Defendants violated Labor Code §§ 226.7, 510, 1194, 1197 and/or IWC Wage
10 Orders by failing to pay Plaintiffs and the members of the Class by failing to pay for a missed
11 meal or rest period at the regular rate of pay;

12 c. Defendants violated Labor Code §§ 1194, 1197 and/or IWC Wage Orders by
13 failing to pay Plaintiffs and the members of the Class, and on information and belief, other
14 current and former employees of Defendants, all minimum wages owed in compliance with
15 California law;

16 d. Defendants violated Labor Code §§ 1194, 204, 510, 511 and/or IWC Wage
17 Orders by failing to pay Plaintiffs and the members of the Class, and on information and
18 belief, other current and former employees of Defendants, all wages owed in a timely manner
19 in compliance with California law;

20 e. Defendants violated Labor Code § 226.7, 512, and /or IWC Wage Orders by
21 failing to provide Plaintiffs and the members of the Class, and on information and belief, other
22 current and former employees of Defendants, the opportunity to take the requisite meal
23 periods in compliance with California law;

24 f. Defendants violated Labor Code § 226.7 and/or IWC Wage Orders by
25 failing to authorize and permit Plaintiffs and the members of the Class, and on information
26 and belief, other current and former employees of Defendants, the opportunity to take the
27 requisite rest periods in compliance with California law;

28 g. Defendants violated Labor Code §§ 226, 1174 and/or IWC Wage Orders by
failing to properly maintain accurate employment time and records, maintain and/or submit
accurate itemized wage statements on behalf of Plaintiffs, members of the Class, and on

1 information and belief, on behalf of other current and former employees of Defendants as
2 described herein; and

3 h. Defendants violated Labor Code §§ 201, 202 and/or IWC Wage Orders by
4 failing to pay Plaintiffs, the Class, and on information and belief, other current and former
5 employees of Defendants as described herein; and

6 i. Defendants violated Labor Code § 2802 by failing to indemnify Plaintiffs and
7 members of the Class and on information and belief, other current and former employees of
8 Defendants as described herein;

9 81. Pursuant to Labor Code § 2699, Plaintiffs, members of the Class, and all other
10 aggrieved current and former employees seek to recover civil penalties, as otherwise provided
11 by statute and wage order, for which Defendants are liable as a result of their violations of the
12 California Labor Code and applicable wage order(s) in an amount to be proven at trial. These
13 penalties include, but are not limited to, those provided by Labor Code §§ 201, 202, 203, 204,
14 210, 226, 226.3, 226.7, 256, 510, 512, 558, 1174, 1194, 1197, 2699, 2802 and IWC Wage
15 Orders. Plaintiffs and aggrieved current and former employees further seek and award of
16 reasonable attorneys' fees and costs pursuant to Labor Code § 2698 and 2699.

17 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

18 WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs pray:

19 1. That the Court determine this action may be maintained as a class action;

20 **As to the First Cause of Action:**

21 2. For an order preliminarily and permanently enjoining Defendants from
22 engaging in the practices challenged herein;

23 3. An order for full restitution of all monies, as necessary and according to proof,
24 to restore any and all monies withheld by the Defendants by means of the unfair practices
25 complained of herein. Plaintiffs seek, on behalf of the putative class, the appointment of a
26 receiver, as necessary. The restitution includes all monies retained as wages, as defined in
27 Labor Code §§ 201, 202, 510 and 1194, and interest, and attorneys' fees as a result of the
28 unfair business practices;

1 4. For an order finding and declaring that Defendants' acts and practices as
2 challenged herein are unlawful, and unfair and/or fraudulent;

3 5. For an accounting, under administration of Plaintiffs and subject to court
4 supervision, to determine the amount to be returned by Defendants and the amounts to be
5 refunded to members who are or were not paid all their wages due to Defendants' unfair
6 business practices;

7 6. For the creation of an administrative process wherein each injured current and
8 former employee receives his or her back wages in the form of overtime pay or alternatively
9 that each current or former eligible employee may submit a claim in order to receive his/her
10 money;

11 7. For an order requiring Defendants to make full restitution and payment
12 pursuant to B&PC §§ 17200, et seq.;

13 8. For all other appropriate declaratory and equitable relief;

14 9. For pre-judgment interest to the extent permitted by law;

15 10. For an order requiring Defendants to identify, by name, address and telephone
16 number of each person who worked in California as an hourly non-exempt employee for
17 Defendants between 2018 through the time of judgment;

18 11. For an order imposing all civil and statutory penalties provided by law.

19 **As to the Second and Fourth Cause of Action:**

20 12. For damages according to proof, as set forth in Labor Code §§ 510, 226.7 and
21 1194, et seq., (and the applicable California Industrial Welfare Commission wage orders)
22 regarding wages due and owing;

23 13. For pre-judgment interest as allowed by Labor Code § 1194 and California
24 Civil Code § 3287(b), for waiting time penalties as authorized by Labor Code § 203, and for
25 reasonable attorneys' fees;

26 14. For an order imposing all civil and statutory penalties provided by law.
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As to the Third Cause of Action:

15. For waiting time penalties for all former employees not timely paid their last pay check, including vacation pay;

16. For reasonable attorneys' fees and costs;

17. For an order imposing all civil and statutory penalties provided by law.

As to the Fifth Cause of Action:

18. For recovery as authorized by Labor Code §226(e);

19. For injunctive relief to ensure Defendants' compliance with Labor Code §226 and the IWC Wage Orders §7(A) pursuant to Labor Code §226(h);

20. For an award of costs and reasonable attorneys' fees pursuant to Labor Code §226(e) and/or §226(h);

21. For an order imposing all civil and statutory penalties provided by law.

As to the Sixth Cause of Action:

22. One (1) hour of pay at each of the employees' regular rate of compensation for each workday that a meal period was not provided, impeded, discouraged and/or dissuaded;

23. For an order imposing all civil and statutory penalties provided by law.

As to the Seventh Cause of Action:

24. One (1) hour of pay at each of the employees' regular rate of compensation for each workday that a rest period was not authorized or permitted, or impeded, interrupted, discouraged and/or dissuaded;

25. For an order imposing all civil and statutory penalties provided by law.

As to the Eighth Cause of Action:

26. For recovery of all necessary expenditures or losses incurred by Plaintiffs and the class members, according to proof;

27. For pre-judgment interest as allowed by Labor Code §§ 218.6, 1194(a), and Civil Code § 3287;

28. For an award of reasonable attorneys' fees and costs pursuant to Labor Code § 2802(c);

As to the Ninth Cause of Action:

29. That the Court declare, adjudge and decree that Defendants violated California Private Attorneys General Act, Labor Code § 2698 and 2699;

30. For an order imposing all civil and statutory penalties provided by law;

31. For reasonable attorneys' fees and for costs of suit incurred herein pursuant to California Labor Code § 2699(g); and

32. For such other and further relief as the Court may deem equitable and appropriate.

As to All Causes of Action:

33. For reasonable costs incurred;

34. For such other and further relief as this Court may deem just and proper.

Dated: October 13, 2023

BARTZ LAW GROUP, APC

By: /s/ Aaron A. Bartz
AARON A. BARTZ
Attorneys for Plaintiff Carlos Ballina and all
others similarly situated

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Dated: October 13, 2023

By: /s/ Aaron A. Bartz
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