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ELECTRONICALLY
FILED
Superior Court of California,
County of San Francisco
07/29/2026
Clerk of the Court
BY: BENJAMIN YUST
Deputy Clerk

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

UNLIMITED JURISDICTION

WILLIAM GUTZMAN, on behalf of himself and all other aggrieved employees, and the general public,

Plaintiff,

v.

NORTHWOOD AUTO PLAZA, INC., a California Corporation; and DOES 1 through 50, inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No. **CGC-26-639182**

REPRESENTATIVE ACTION

COMPLAINT

1. Civil Penalties (Lab. Code § 2698, *et seq.*)

Plaintiff WILLIAM GUTZMAN ("Plaintiff"), on behalf of himself and all other aggrieved employees, and the general public, complains and alleges as follows:

INTRODUCTION

1. Plaintiff brings this representative action against defendants NORTHWOOD AUTO PLAZA, INC., a California Corporation; and DOES 1 through 50, inclusive, (collectively referred to as "Defendants") for alleged violations of the Labor Code. As set forth below, Plaintiff alleges that Defendants have

(1) failed to provide Plaintiff and all other similarly situated individuals with meal periods;

(2) failed to provide them with rest periods;

(3) failed to pay them premium wages for missed meal and/or rest periods;

(4) failed to pay them premium wages for missed meal and/or rest periods at the regular rate of pay;

(5) failed to pay them at least minimum wage for all hours worked;

(6) failed to pay them overtime wages at the correct rate;

(7) failed to pay them double time wages at the correct rate;

(8) failed to pay them overtime and/or double time wages by failing to include all applicable remuneration in calculating the regular rate of pay;

(9) failed to reimburse them for all necessary business expenses;

(10) failed to provide them with accurate written wage statements; and

(11) failed to pay them all of their final wages following separation of employment.

Based on these alleged violations, Plaintiff now brings this representative action to recover unpaid wages, restitution, civil penalties, and related relief on behalf of himself and all others similarly situated, all other aggrieved employees, and the State of California.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

2. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction to hear this case because the unpaid wages, actual damages, liquidated damages, restitution, and penalties sought by Plaintiff from Defendants exceeds the minimal jurisdictional limits of the Superior Court of the State of California.

3. Venue is proper in COUNTY of SAN FRANCISCO pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure §§ 395(a) and 395.5 in that liability arose there, because at least some of the transactions that are the subject matter of this Complaint occurred therein and/or each defendant is found, maintains offices, transacts business, and/or has an agent therein.

PARTIES

4. Plaintiff is and was, and at all relevant times mentioned herein, an individual residing in the State of California.

5. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereupon alleges, that Defendant NORTHWOOD AUTO PLAZA, INC. is, and at all relevant times mentioned herein, California Corporation doing business in the State of California.

6. Plaintiff is ignorant of the true names and capacities of the defendants sued herein as DOES 1 through 50, inclusive, and therefore sues these defendants by such fictitious names. Plaintiff will amend this Complaint to allege the true names and capacities of the DOE defendants when ascertained. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereupon alleges, that each of the fictitiously named defendants are responsible in some manner for the occurrences, acts and omissions alleged herein and that Plaintiff's alleged damages were proximately caused by these defendants, and each of them. Plaintiff will amend this complaint to allege both the true names and capacities of the DOE defendants when ascertained.

7. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereupon alleges that, at all relevant times mentioned herein, some or all of the defendants were the representatives, agents, employees, partners, directors, associates, joint venturers, joint employers, principals, or co-participants of some or all of the other defendants, and, in doing the things alleged herein, were acting within the course and scope of such relationship and with the full knowledge, consent, and ratification by such other defendants.

GENERAL ALLEGATIONS COMMON TO ALL CAUSES OF ACTION

8. Plaintiff worked for Defendants as an hourly, non-exempt employee from approximately June 2024 through July 2025.

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Off-the-Clock Work

9. Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees were not paid all wages earned as Defendants directed, permitted, or otherwise encouraged Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees to perform off-the-clock work.

10. At all relevant times, Defendants maintained policies, practices, and expectations that required Plaintiff and aggrieved employees to perform substantial work off the clock without compensation. Due to the nature of the sales environment and management's expectations, Plaintiff was regularly required to continue assisting customers, answering questions, negotiating sales, preparing and completing sales paperwork, processing transactions, coordinating vehicle deliveries, and performing other job-related duties before clocking in, after clocking out, and during unpaid meal periods.

11. Management created an environment where employees understood that they were expected to prioritize customer service and complete sales regardless of whether they were on the clock. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges, that employees who consistently took uninterrupted meal periods or refused to work off the clock were viewed unfavorably by management, and there were instances in which employees were terminated after regularly taking their legally compliant meal periods.

12. As a result of performing off-the-clock work that was directed, permitted, or otherwise encouraged by Defendants, Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees should have been paid for this time. Instead, Defendants only paid Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees based on the time they were clocked in for their shifts and did not pay Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees for any of the time spent working off-the-clock.

13. Defendants knew or should have known that Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees were performing work before and after their scheduled work shifts and failed to pay Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees for these hours. As a result of Defendants' policies and practices, Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees were not paid for all hours worked.

Missed Meal Periods

14. Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees were not provided with meal periods of at

least thirty (30) minutes for each five (5) hour work period due to (1) Defendants' policy of not scheduling each meal period as part of each work shift; (2) chronically understaffing each work shift with not enough workers; (3) imposing so much work on each employee such that it made it unlikely that an employee would be able to take their breaks if they wanted to finish their work on time; and (4) no formal written meal and rest period policy that encouraged employees to take their meal and rest periods.

15. As a result of Defendants' policy, Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees were regularly not provided with uninterrupted meal periods of at least thirty (30) minutes for each five (5) hours worked due to complying with Defendants' productivity requirements that required Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees to work through their meal periods in order to complete their assignments on time.

Missed Rest Periods

16. Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees were not provided with rest periods of at least ten (10) minutes for each four (4) hour work period, or major fraction thereof, due to (1) Defendants' policy of not scheduling each rest period as part of each work shift; (2) chronically understaffing each work shift with not enough workers; (3) imposing so much work on each employee such that it made it unlikely that an employee would be able to take their breaks if they wanted to finish their work on time; and (4) no formal written meal and rest period policy that encouraged employees to take their meal and rest periods.

17. As a result of Defendants' policy, Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees were regularly not provided with uninterrupted rest periods of at least ten (10) minutes for each four (4) hours worked due to complying with Defendants' productivity requirements that required Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees to work through their rest periods.

Regular Rate of Pay

18. The regular rate of pay under California law includes all remuneration for employment paid, on behalf of the employer, to the employee. This requirement includes, but is not limited to commissions and non-discretionary bonuses.

19. During the applicable limitations period, Defendants violated the rights of Plaintiff

and the aggrieved employees under the above-referenced Labor Code sections by failing to pay them overtime wages for all overtime hours worked in violation of Labor Code §§ 510, 1194, and 1198 as a result of not correctly calculating their regular rate of pay to include all applicable remuneration, including, but not limited to, non-discretionary bonuses and/or shift-differential pay.

Expense Reimbursement

20. Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees were required to utilize their own personal cellphones to perform their job duties.

21. Plaintiff was expected to communicate with customers before, during, and after scheduled work hours through phone calls, text messages, and other electronic communications to answer customer inquiries, coordinate vehicle sales and deliveries, schedule appointments, provide sales updates, and maintain customer relationships.

22. Defendants failed to reimburse Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees for such necessary business expenses incurred by them.

Wage Statements

23. Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees were not provided with accurate wage statements as mandated by law pursuant to Labor Code § 226.

24. Defendants failed to comply with Labor Code 0167 226(a)(1) as "gross wages earned" were not accurately reflected in that all hours worked, including overtime and "off-the-clock" work were not included.

25. Defendants failed to comply with Labor Code section 226(a)(2) as "total hours worked by the employee" were not accurately reflected in that all hours worked, including overtime and "off-the-clock" work were not included.

26. Defendants failed to comply with Labor Code section 226(a)(5) as "net wages earned" were not accurately reflected in that all hours worked, including overtime and "off-the-clock" work were not included.

27. Defendants failed to comply with Labor Code section 226(a)(6) as "the inclusive dates of the period for which the employee is paid" were not included.

28. Defendants failed to comply with Labor Code section 226(a)(9) as "all applicable

hourly rates in effect during the pay period and the corresponding number of hours worked at each hourly rate by the employee" were not accurately reflected in that all hours worked, including overtime and "off-the-clock" work were not included.

FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION

CIVIL PENALTIES

(Lab. Code §§ 2698 *et seq*.)

29. Plaintiff incorporates the preceding paragraphs as if fully alleged herein.

30. During the applicable limitations period, Defendants have violated Labor Code §§ 201, 202, 203, 204, 223, 226(a), 226.7, 510, 512, 1194, 1197, 1198, and 2802.

31. Labor Code §§ 2699(a) and (g) authorize an aggrieved employee, on behalf of himself and other current and former employees, to bring a representative civil action to recover civil penalties pursuant to the procedures set forth in Labor Code § 2699.3 that may, but need not, be brought or maintained as a class action pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure section 382.

32. Plaintiff, a former employee against whom Defendants committed one or more of the alleged Labor Code violations during the applicable limitations period, is an aggrieved employee within the meaning of Labor Code § 2699(c).

33. Plaintiff has complied with the procedures for bringing suit specified in Labor Code § 2699.3. Notice was provided to the California Labor & Workforce Development Agency ("LWDA") and 65 days have elapsed without the LWDA providing Plaintiff with any notice of an intent to investigate.

34. Pursuant to Labor Code sections 2699(a) and (f), Plaintiff seeks the following civil penalties for Defendants' violations of Labor Code §§ 201, 202, 203, 204, 223, 226(a), 226.7, 510, 512, 1194, 1197, 1198 and 2802:

i. For violations of Labor Code §§ 201, 202, 203, 212, 226.7, 227.3, 1194, 1198 and 2802, one hundred dollars ($100) for each employee per pay period for each initial violation and two hundred dollars ($200) for each employee per pay period for each subsequent violation (penalties set by Labor Code § 2699(f)(2));

ii. For violations of Labor Code § 203, a penalty in an amount not exceeding thirty (30) days' pay as waiting time (penalties set by Labor Code § 256);

iii. For violations of Labor Code § 204, one hundred dollars ($100) for each employee for each initial violation that was neither willful nor intentional, two hundred dollars ($200) for each employee, plus 25% of the amount unlawfully withheld from each employee, for each initial violation that was either willful or intentional, and two hundred dollars ($200) for each employee, plus twenty-five percent (25%) of the amount unlawfully withheld from each employee, for each subsequent violation, regardless of whether the subsequent violation was either willful or intentional (penalties set by Labor Code § 210);

iv. For violations of Labor Code § 223, one hundred dollars ($100) for each employee for each initial violation that was neither willful nor intentional, two hundred dollars ($200) for each employee, plus twenty-five percent (25%) of the amount unlawfully withheld from each employee, for each initial violation that was either willful or intentional, and two hundred dollars ($200) for each employee, plus twenty-five percent (25%) of the amount unlawfully withheld from each employee, for each subsequent violation, regardless of whether the subsequent violation was either willful or intentional (penalties set by Labor Code § 225.5);

v. For violations of Labor Code § 226(a), if this action is deemed to be an initial citation, two hundred and fifty dollars ($250) for each employee for each violation. Alternatively, if an initial citation or its equivalent occurred before the filing of this action, one thousand dollars ($1,000) for each employee for each violation (penalties set by Labor Code § 226.3);

vi. For violation of Labor Code §§ 510 and 512, fifty dollars ($50) for each employee for each initial pay period for which the employee was underpaid, and one hundred dollars ($100) for each employee for each subsequent pay

period for which the employee was underpaid (penalties set by Labor Code § 558);

vii. For violations of Labor Code § 1197, one hundred dollars ($100) for each aggrieved employee for each initial violation of Labor Code § 1197 that was intentional and two hundred and fifty dollars ($250) for each aggrieved employee per pay period for each subsequent violation of Labor Code § 1197, regardless of whether the initial violation was intentional (penalties set by Labor Code § 1197.1);

viii. Pursuant to Labor Code § 2699(g), Plaintiff seeks an award of reasonable attorneys' fees and costs in connection with Plaintiff's claims for civil penalties.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff, on behalf of himself, all other current and former non-exempt employees, and the general public, prays for relief and judgment against Defendants as follows:

(1) Declaratory relief;

(2) Pre-judgment interest;

(3) Civil penalties;

(4) Costs of suit;

(5) Reasonable attorneys' fees; and

(6) Such other relief as the Court deems just and proper.

Dated: July 28, 2026

SETAREH LAW GROUP

/s/ Shaun Setareh
SHAUN SETAREH
Attorney for Plaintiff
WILLIAM GUTZMAN