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Attorneys for Plaintiff Emma Romero

**SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO**

EMMA ROMERO, individually and on
behalf of other members similarly situated and
on behalf of other aggrieved employees,

Plaintiff,

vs.

CHARLES ABBOTT ASSOCIATES, INC., a
California corporation; ROBERT HALF INC.
(formerly doing business as ROBERT HALF
INTERNATIONAL INC.), a Delaware
corporation; ROBERT HALF
INTERNATIONAL INC., a Delaware
corporation; and DOES 1 through 25,
inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No.: CIVSB2322374

Honorable Charlie L. Hill
Department S30

**DECLARATION OF PLAINTIFF
EMMA ROMERO IN SUPPORT OF
MOTION FOR PRELIMINARY
APPROVAL OF CLASS ACTION AND
PAGA SETTLEMENT**

Date: August 11, 2025
Time: 8:30 a.m.
Dept: S30

Complaint Filed: September 15, 2023
FAC Filed: November 14, 2023
Trial Date: Not Set

1 **DECLARATION OF EMMA ROMERO**

2 I, Emma Romero, declare and state as follows:

3 1. I am over the age of eighteen (18) and a resident of the State of California. I am the
4 named plaintiff in the above-captioned case. I have personal knowledge of the facts and statements
5 set forth in this declaration, and if called upon to testify, I could and would competently testify thereto.

6 2. I was employed by Defendant Charles Abbott Associates, Inc. ("Charles Abbott") as
7 an hourly-paid, non-exempt Administrative Assistant and as a Permit Technician from approximately
8 April 2021 to approximately February 2023.

9 3. Because I thought the practices at Charles Abbott may not be lawful, I decided to seek
10 legal advice about my work experiences at Charles Abbott and about filing a lawsuit to obtain relief
11 for my grievances. I contacted Blackstone Law, APC and spoke with their attorneys. I wanted to take
12 steps to make sure Charles Abbott was held accountable for not properly compensating its employees
13 for all hours worked and for non-compliant meal and rest breaks. After speaking with the attorneys, I
14 also investigated class and representative action lawsuits on my own. Thereafter, I further consulted
15 with the attorneys at Blackstone Law, APC about my situation, class actions, representative action
16 lawsuits under the Private Attorneys General Act ("PAGA"), and what it meant to bring a class and
17 PAGA action so that I understood what I was considering doing.

18 4. I have regularly conferred with my attorneys regarding the case as part of my
19 responsibilities as a class and PAGA representative. This process included searching for and providing
20 documents concerning my employment with Charles Abbott, answering any questions my attorneys
21 had about the documents, providing information regarding the company's practices and the duties of
22 other hourly-paid and/or non-exempt employees, and helping my attorneys develop a strategy as to
23 what additional documents and information they could seek to obtain from Charles Abbott.

24 5. I routinely checked in with my attorneys and their staff to make sure that they had all
25 of my most current information and any additional information that I had obtained. I made myself
26 available to answer any questions my attorneys had about Charles Abbott's practices and treatment of
27 its employees whenever they needed me. I responded to them as quickly as possible and gave them
28 as much information as I could.

1 6. I understood that in the event this matter did not settle and proceeded with trial, I would
2 need to be in court to participate in the trial. I was ready to perform that role, as well as fulfill any
3 responsibilities that are necessary for this lawsuit.

4 7. I know that I took a sizeable risk by bringing and pursuing this lawsuit for several
5 reasons. First, I understood that if I lost, I would potentially have to pay the costs in the lawsuit. I
6 also understood there was a risk of losing any job and/or income due to the time that I would have to
7 spend fulfilling my responsibilities in this matter, including having to attend the trial, if needed. Most
8 importantly, I believe that by pursuing this case, I have taken a significant risk because future
9 employers can easily find out that I sued my prior employer, and that may negatively impact my ability
10 to find employment within this industry – and even outside of it – in the future. In contrast, the other
11 employees who will be receiving money from this lawsuit did not have to file a claim or take the risk
12 that I took in bringing this action.

13 8. I reviewed the settlement agreement, discussed the settlement agreement with my
14 attorneys, and asked them questions before signing it.

15 9. I believe that I have done everything that my attorneys have asked of me and tried, to
16 the best of my ability, to seek relief for the Class, the PAGA Employees, and the State of California.
17 I have spent approximately 40-45 hours participating in this case as described above. I believe my
18 efforts helped get the result obtained in this case.

19 10. I understand that any resolution of this lawsuit on a class wide basis is subject to court
20 approval, and any settlement must be designed in the best interest of the Class as a whole. At all times
21 throughout the course of this litigation I have considered the interests of the Class and put them before
22 my own personal interests.

23 11. I understand that incentive or enhancement awards are discretionary and intended to
24 compensate named plaintiffs for: the quality and quantity of the work done on behalf of the class and
25 other employees, the financial and/or reputational risk undertaken in bringing the class and/or PAGA
26 action, and an acknowledgment of the benefits resulting from the representative's actions. I believe
27 my work in this matter is meritorious on these points for the reasons set forth above.

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1 12. I respectfully request that the Court approve and award me an Enhancement Payment
2 in the amount of \$10,000.00 for my efforts and active participation in the case and for the broader,
3 general release of all claims that I have or may have against Charles Abbott in connection with the
4 settlement. Taking into consideration the time that I dedicated to this case, I believe that this amount
5 is reasonable.

6 13. I am not related to anyone associated with Blackstone Law, APC.

7 I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing
8 is true and correct. Executed on 03/06/2025, at Yucaipa, California.

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