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**SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES**

MARLIN MEJIA, BASILIA KONDE, and
GULALAY OMARZAY, individuals, on
behalf of themselves and on behalf of all
persons similarly situated,

Plaintiffs,

vs.

CHICO'S FAS, INC., a Corporation; and
DOES 1 through 50, inclusive,

Defendants.

CASE NO.: **23TRCV03862**

**MEMORANDUM OF POINTS AND
AUTHORITIES IN SUPPORT OF MOTION
FOR PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF
CLASS SETTLEMENT**

Hearing Date: August 11, 2025
Hearing Time: 8:30 a.m.
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Judge: Hon. Patricia A. Young
Dept: B

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1 **I. INTRODUCTION**

2 Plaintiffs Marlin Mejia, Basilia Konde, and Gulalay Omarzay (“Plaintiffs”) respectfully submit
3 this memorandum in support of the unopposed motion for preliminary approval of the proposed class
4 action settlement with Defendant Chico’s FAS, Inc. (“Defendant”) which seeks entry of an order:
5 (1) preliminarily approving the proposed settlement of this class action with Defendant; (2) for
6 settlement purposes only, conditionally certifying the Class, which is comprised of “all individuals who
7 are or were previously employed by Defendant and any of its subsidiaries in California and classified
8 as a non-exempt employee at any time during the Class Period”, which is January 1, 2022 through
9 December 31, 2024; (3) provisionally appointing Plaintiffs as the representatives of the Class; (4)
10 provisionally appointing Blumenthal Nordrehaug Bhowmik De Blouw LLP as Class Counsel; (5)
11 approving the form and method for providing class-wide notice; (6) directing that notice of the proposed
12 settlement be given to the class; (7) appointing ILYM Group, Inc. as the Administrator, and
13 (8) scheduling a final approval hearing date that is 120 days from preliminary approval, to consider
14 Plaintiffs’ motion for final approval of the settlement and for approval of attorneys’ fees, expenses and
15 service awards. Plaintiffs and Defendant (collectively the “Parties”) have reached a full and final
16 settlement of the above-captioned action, which is embodied in the Class Action and PAGA Settlement
17 Agreement (“Agreement”) filed concurrently with the Court.¹ A copy of the fully executed Agreement
18 is attached as Exhibit #1 to the Declaration of Kyle Nordrehaug (“Decl. Nordrehaug”), served and filed
19 herewith.

20 As consideration for this Settlement, the non-reversionary Gross Settlement Amount of Seven
21 Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$750,000) (the “Gross Settlement Amount”) is to be paid by
22 Defendant, as set forth in the Agreement. The Gross Settlement Amount will settle all issues pending
23 in the Action between the Parties and will be made in full and final settlement of the Released Class
24 Claims in exchange for the payments to Participating Class Members from the Net Settlement Amount,
25 and includes (a) the costs of administration of the settlement, (b) all attorneys' fees and costs, (c) the
26 Class Representative Service Payments, and (d) the PAGA Penalties payment allocated 75% to the
27

28 ¹ Capitalized terms shall have the same meaning as defined in the Agreement.

1 LWDA and 25% to the Aggrieved Employees. (Agreement at ¶ 1.22.) Decl. Nordrehaug at ¶3. The
2 following is a table of the key financial terms of the Settlement and the proposed deductions:

3 **\$750,000** (Gross Settlement Amount)

- 4 - \$30,000 (Plaintiffs' proposed service awards - not to exceed \$10,000 each)
5 - \$35,000 (Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment - not to exceed amount)
6 - \$250,000 (Class Counsel Fees Payment - not to exceed 1/3 of settlement)
7 - \$30,000 (PAGA Payment - 75% to LWDA / 25% to Aggrieved Employees)
8 - \$21,000 (Administration Expenses Payment - not to exceed amount)

9 **\$384,000** (Net Settlement Amount)

10 Based upon 2,535 Class Members who collectively worked 75,000 full time equivalent workweeks
11 (Agreement at ¶ 4.1), the Gross Settlement Amount provides an average value of \$295 per Class
12 Member and \$10 per workweek and after deductions, the Net Settlement Amount provides an average
13 recovery of \$151.47 per Class Member and a recovery of \$5.12 per workweek. Decl. Nordrehaug at
14 ¶6.

15 On October 16, 2024, the Parties participated in an all-day mediation session presided over by
16 Tripper Ortman, Esq., a respected and experienced mediator of wage and hour class actions. Following
17 this mediation, the Parties agreed on the basic terms of a settlement pursuant to a mediator's proposal
18 which was memorialized in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding. Decl. Nordrehaug at ¶5.
19 The Settlement is fair, reasonable, and adequate, and should be preliminarily approved because there
20 is a substantial monetary payment, and there are significant litigation and class-certification risks.
21 Therefore, Plaintiffs respectfully request that this Court grant preliminary approval of the Agreement
22 and enter the proposed order submitted herewith.

23 **II. DESCRIPTION OF THE SETTLEMENT**

24 The Gross Settlement Amount is Seven Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$750,000).
25 (Agreement at ¶ 1.22.) Under the Settlement, the Gross Settlement Amount consists of the following
26 elements: (1) payment of the Individual Class Payments to the Participating Class Members; (2) Class
27 Counsel Fees Payment and Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment; (3) Administration Expenses
28 Payment; (4) the Class Representative Service Payments to the Plaintiffs; and (5) the PAGA Penalties
payment allocated 75% to the LWDA PAGA Payment and 25% to the Individual PAGA Payments.
(Agreement at ¶ 1.22.) The Gross Settlement Amount does not include Defendant's share of payroll
taxes. (Agreement at ¶ 3.1.) The Gross Settlement Amount shall be all-in with no reversion to

1 Defendant. (Agreement at ¶ 3.1.) Decl. Nordrehaug at ¶15.

2 Defendant shall fund the Gross Settlement Amount and the amount necessary to pay payroll
3 taxes thereon no later than 14 days after the Effective Date. (Agreement at ¶ 4.3.) The distribution of
4 Individual Class Payments to Participating Class Members will be made within 14 days after Defendant
5 funds the Gross Settlement Amount. (Agreement at ¶ 5.1.) Decl. Nordrehaug at ¶16.

6 The amount remaining in the Gross Settlement Amount after the deduction of Court-approved
7 amounts for Individual PAGA Payments, the LWDA PAGA Payment, the Class Representative Service
8 Payments, the Class Counsel Fees Payment, the Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment, and the
9 Administration Expenses Payment (called the “Net Settlement Amount”) shall be allocated to Class
10 Members as their Individual Class Payments. (Agreement at ¶¶ 1.28 and 3.2.) The Administrator will
11 calculate each Individual Class Payment by (a) dividing the Net Settlement Amount by the total number
12 of shifts worked by all Participating Class Members during the Class Period and (b) multiplying the
13 result by each Participating Class Member's shifts during the Class Period. (Agreement at ¶ 3.2(e).)
14 Shifts will initially be based on Defendant’s records, however, Class Members will have the right to
15 challenge the number of shifts worked. Decl. Nordrehaug at ¶17.

16 Class Members may choose to opt-out of the Settlement by following the directions in the Class
17 Notice. (Agreement at ¶ 8.5, Ex. A.) All Class Members who do not “opt out” will be deemed
18 Participating Class Members who will be bound by the Settlement and will be entitled to receive an
19 Individual Class Payment. (Agreement at ¶ 8.5(c).) All Aggrieved Employees, including those who
20 submit an opt-out request, will still be paid their allocation of the PAGA Penalties and will remain
21 subject to the release of the Released PAGA Claims regardless of their request for exclusion from the
22 Class. (Agreement at ¶¶ 6.3 and 8.5(d).) Finally, the Class Notice will advise the Class Members of
23 their right to object to the Settlement and/or dispute their Workweeks. (Agreement at ¶¶ 8.6 and 8.7,
24 and Ex. A.) Decl. Nordrehaug at ¶18.

25 Participating Class Members must cash their Individual Class Payment check within 180 days
26 after it is mailed. (Agreement at ¶ 5.2.) Any settlement checks not cashed within 180 days will be
27 voided and any funds represented by such checks sent to the California Controller's Unclaimed Property
28 Fund in the name of the Class Member thereby leaving no "unpaid residue" subject to the requirements

1 of California Code of Civil Procedure Section 384, subd. (b). (Agreement at ¶ 5.4.) Decl. Nordrehaug
2 at ¶19.

3 Subject to Court approval, the Parties have agreed on ILYM Group, Inc. to administer the
4 settlement in this action (“Administrator”). (Agreement at ¶ 1.2.) The Administrator will be paid for
5 settlement administration in an amount not to exceed \$21,000. (Agreement at ¶ 3.2(c).) ILYM Group
6 provided an estimate of \$18,950 for administration expenses. Decl. Nordrehaug at ¶20.

7 Subject to Court approval, the Agreement provides for Class Counsel to be awarded a sum not
8 to exceed one-third of the Gross Settlement Amount, as the Class Counsel Fees Payment. (Agreement
9 at ¶ 3.2(b).) Class Counsel will also be allowed to apply separately for an award of Class Counsel
10 Litigation Expenses Payment in an amount not to exceed \$35,000. (Agreement at ¶ 3.2(b).) Subject
11 to Court approval, the Agreement provides for a payment of no more than \$10,000 to each Plaintiff as
12 their Class Representative Service Payments. (Agreement at ¶ 3.2(a).) Decl. Nordrehaug at ¶21.

13 Subject to Court approval, the PAGA Penalties will be paid from the Gross Settlement Amount
14 for PAGA penalties under the California Private Attorneys General Act, Cal. Labor Code Section 2698,
15 *et seq.* (“PAGA”). The PAGA Penalties are \$30,000. (Agreement at ¶¶ 1.34 and 3.2(d).) Pursuant to
16 the express requirements of Labor Code § 2699(i), the PAGA Payment shall be allocated as follows:
17 75% shall be allocated to the Labor Workforce Development Agency (“LWDA”) as its share of the civil
18 penalties and 25% allocated to the Individual PAGA Payments to be distributed to the Aggrieved
19 Employees based on the number of their respective PAGA Pay Periods.² (Agreement at ¶ 3.2(d).) As
20 set forth in the accompanying proof of service, the LWDA has been served with this motion and the
21 Agreement. Decl. Nordrehaug at ¶22.

22 **III. CASE BACKGROUND**

23 The description of the case and claims, along with the procedural history is set forth in the
24 Declaration of Kyle Nordrehaug at ¶¶ 7-14. The Parties engaged in thorough investigation and the
25 exchange of documents and information in connection with the Action over more than one year which
26

27 ² The PAGA claim was initiated prior to June 2024, and therefore the prior version of Labor Code
28 ¶2699 applies to the 75/25 allocation.

permitted Class Counsel to perform a thorough analysis of the claims. Decl. Nordrehaug, ¶¶ 10 and 14. The Parties participated in mediation on October 16, 2024 with Tripper Ortman, Esq., which after arms' length negotiations during the mediation, resulted in this Settlement. Decl. Nordrehaug, ¶12.

IV. THE SETTLEMENT MEETS THE CRITERIA NECESSARY FOR THIS COURT TO GRANT PRELIMINARY APPROVAL

California "[p]ublic policy generally favors the compromise of complex class action litigation." *Nordstrom Comm'n Cases*, 186 Cal. App. 4th 576, 581 (2010) quoting *Cellphone Termination Fee Cases*, 180 Cal.App.4th 1110, 1117-18 (2009). Class action settlements are approved where the proposed settlement is "fair, adequate and reasonable." *Dunk v. Ford Motor Co.*, 48 Cal.App.4th 1794, 1801 (1996) (citing *Officers for Justice v. Civil Serv. Comm'n*, 688 F.2d 615, 625 (9th Cir. 1982), cert. denied, 459 U.S. 1217 (1983)).

Preliminary approval is the first of three steps that comprise the approval procedure for settlements of class actions. The second step is the dissemination of notice of the settlement to all class members. The third step is a final settlement approval hearing, at which evidence and argument concerning the fairness, adequacy, and reasonableness of the settlement may be presented, and class members may be heard regarding the settlement. *See Dunk v. Ford Motor Co.*, 48 Cal.App.4th 1794, 1801 (1996); *Manual for Complex Litigation, Second* §30.44 (1993); Cal. Rules of Court, rule 3.769.

The primary question presented on an application for preliminary approval of a proposed class action settlement is whether the proposed settlement is "within the range of possible approval." *Manual for Complex Litigation, Second* §30.44 at 229; *Gautreaux v. Pierce*, 690 F.2d 616, 621 n.3 (7th Cir. 1982).³ Preliminary approval is merely the prerequisite to giving notice so that "the proposed settlement... may be submitted to members of the prospective Class for their acceptance or rejection." *Sayaman v. Baxter Healthcare Corp.*, 2010 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 151997, *3 (C.D. Cal. 2010). There is "a presumption of fairness . . . where . . . [a] settlement is reached through arms-length bargaining."

³ California courts look to federal authority on class actions. *Vasquez v. Superior Court*, 4 Cal.3d 800, 821 (1971). "It is well established that in the absence of relevant state precedents trial courts are urged to follow the procedures prescribed in Rule 23 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure for conducting class actions." *Frazier v. City of Richmond*, 184 Cal. App.3d 1491, 1499 (1986), citing *Green v. Obledo*, 29 Cal.3d 126, 145-146 (1981).

1 *Wershba v. Apple Computer, Inc.*, 91 Cal.App.4th 224, 245 (2001) (citation omitted); see also *Cho v.*
2 *Seagate Tech. Holdings, Inc.*, 177 Cal. App. 4th 734, 742-45 (2009) (upholding trial court's
3 determination that settlement was "fair, reasonable and adequate" where the settlement "provided
4 valuable benefits to the class ... that were 'particularly valuable in light of the risks plaintiff would have
5 faced if she proceeded to litigate her case.'"); *Newberg*, 3d Ed., §11.41, p.11-88. However, the ultimate
6 question of whether the proposed settlement is fair, reasonable, and adequate is made after notice of the
7 settlement is given to the class members and a final settlement hearing is held by the Court.

8 **A. The Role Of The Court In Preliminary Approval Of A Class Action Settlement**

9 The approval of a proposed settlement of a class action suit is a matter within the broad
10 discretion of the trial court. *Wershba, supra*, 91 Cal.App.4th at 234-235; *Dunk*, 48 Cal.App.4th 1794.
11 In considering a potential settlement for preliminary approval purposes, the trial court does not have
12 to reach any ultimate conclusions on the issues of fact and law which underlie the merits of the dispute,
13 and need not engage in a trial on the merits. *Wershba, supra*, 91 Cal.App.4th at 239-40; *Dunk, supra*,
14 48 Cal.App. 4th at 1807. The Ninth Circuit explains, "the very essence of a settlement is compromise,
15 'a yielding of absolutes and an abandoning of highest hopes.'" *Officers for Justice*, 688 F.2d at 624.
16 Thus, when analyzing the settlement, the amount is "not to be judged against a hypothetical or
17 speculative measure of what might have been achieved by the negotiators." *Officers for Justice*, 688
18 F.2d at 625, 628.

19 With regard to class action settlements, the opinions of counsel should be given considerable
20 weight both because of counsel's familiarity with this litigation and previous experience with cases such
21 as these. *Officers for Justice*, 688 F.2d at 625. As a result, courts hold that the recommendation of
22 counsel is entitled to significant weight. *Nat'l Rural Telecomms. Coop. v. DIRECTV, Inc.*, 221 F.R.D.
23 523, 528 (C.D. Cal. 2004).

24 **B. Factors To Be Considered In Granting Preliminary Approval**

25 A number of factors are to be considered in evaluating a settlement for purposes of preliminary
26 approval. In determining whether to grant preliminary approval, the court considers whether the "(1)
27 the proposed settlement appears to be the product of serious, informed, non-collusive negotiations, (2)
28 has no obvious deficiencies, (3) does not improperly grant preferential treatment to class representatives

1 or segments of the class, and (4) falls within the range of possible approval.” *In re Tableware Antitrust*
2 *Litig.*, 484 F.Supp. 2d 1078, 1079 (N.D. Cal. 2007). Courts hold that “a presumption of fairness exists
3 where: (1) the settlement is reached through arm's-length bargaining; (2) investigation and discovery
4 are sufficient to allow counsel and the court to act intelligently; (3) counsel is experienced in similar
5 litigation; and (4) the percentage of objectors is small.” *Kullar v. Foot Locker Retail, Inc.*, 168 Cal.
6 App. 4th 116, 128 (2008). Here, the Settlement meets all of these criteria for preliminary approval and
7 therefore the presumption applies.

8 **1. The Settlement is the Product of Serious, Informed and**
9 **Arm’s Length Negotiations by Experienced Counsel**

10 This settlement is the result of extensive and hard-fought litigation as well as negotiations before
11 an experienced and well-respected mediator. Defendant has expressly denied and continues to deny any
12 wrongdoing or legal liability arising out of the conduct alleged in the Action. Plaintiff and Class
13 Counsel have determined that it is desirable and beneficial to the Class to resolve the Released Class
14 Claims of the Class in accordance with this Settlement. The release applicable to the Class is
15 appropriately tethered to allegations in the Action. (Agreement at ¶ 6.2.)

16 Class Counsel are experienced and qualified to evaluate the class claims, the defenses asserted,
17 and the risks and benefits of trial and settlement, and Class Counsel are particularly experienced in wage
18 and hour employment class actions, as Class Counsel has previously litigated and certified similar
19 claims against other employers. Decl. Nordrehaug at ¶31. The view of qualified and well-informed
20 counsel that a class action settlement is fair, adequate, and reasonable is entitled to significant weight.
21 *See Kullar v. Foot Locker*, 168 Cal. App. 4th 116, 133 (2008) (the trial court "undoubtedly should
22 continue to place reliance on the competence and integrity of counsel, the involvement of a qualified
23 mediator, and the paucity of objectors to the settlement."); *Dunk*, 48 Cal. App. 4th at 1802.

24 The Parties attended an arms-length mediation session with Tripper Ortman, Esq., a respected
25 and experienced mediator of wage and hour class actions, in order to reach this Settlement. In
26 preparation for the mediation, Defendant provided Class Counsel with timekeeping and employment
27 data and other information regarding the Class Members, various internal documents, and other
28 compensation and employment-related materials. Class Counsel analyzed the data with the assistance

1 of damages expert Berger Consulting and prepared and submitted a mediation brief to the mediator. The
2 final settlement terms were negotiated and set forth in the Agreement now presented for this Court's
3 approval. Decl. Nordrehaug at ¶ 5. Importantly, Plaintiffs and Class Counsel believe that this
4 Settlement is fair, reasonable, and adequate.

5 As consideration for this Settlement, the Gross Settlement Amount to be paid by Defendant is
6 Seven Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$750,000). The Settlement is all-in with no reversion to
7 Defendant and no need to submit a claim form. Decl. Nordrehaug at ¶ 3.

8 Class Counsel has conducted an investigation into the facts of the class action. Informal
9 discovery was obtained, which included the production of hundreds of pages documents and data. Class
10 Counsel engaged in a thorough review and analysis of the relevant documents and data with the
11 assistance of an expert. Accordingly, the agreement to settle did not occur until Class Counsel
12 possessed sufficient information to make an informed judgment regarding the likelihood of success on
13 the merits and the results that could be obtained through further litigation. In addition, Class Counsel
14 previously negotiated settlements with other employers in actions involving nearly identical issues and
15 analogous defenses. Based on the foregoing data and their own independent investigation, evaluation
16 and experience, Class Counsel believes that the settlement with Defendant on the terms set forth in the
17 Agreement is fair, reasonable, and adequate and is in the best interest of the Class in light of all known
18 facts and circumstances, including the risk of significant delay, defenses asserted by Defendant, and
19 potential appellate issues. Decl. Nordrehaug at ¶ 14.

20 Plaintiffs and Class Counsel recognize the expense and length of continuing to litigate and trying
21 this Action against Defendant through possible appeals which could take several years. Class Counsel
22 has also taken into account the uncertain outcome and risk of litigation, especially in complex class
23 actions such as this Action. Class Counsel is also mindful of and recognize the inherent problems of
24 proof under, and alleged defenses to, the claims asserted in the Action. Based upon their evaluation,
25 Plaintiffs and Class Counsel have determined that the Settlement set forth in the Agreement is in the
26 best interest of the Class Members. Decl. Nordrehaug, ¶ 23.

27 Here, there can be no dispute that the litigation has been hard-fought with aggressive and
28 capable advocacy on both sides. The Parties were represented by experienced and capable counsel who

1 zealously advocated their positions. Accordingly, “[t]here is likewise every reason to conclude that
2 settlement negotiations were vigorously conducted at arms’ length and without any suggestion of undue
3 influence.” *In re Wash. Public Power Supply System Sec. Litig.*, 720 F. Supp. at 1392.

4 **2. The Settlement Has No "Obvious Deficiencies" and Falls Well Within**
5 **the Range for Approval**

6 The proposed Settlement herein has no "obvious deficiencies" and is well within the range of
7 possible approval. All Class Members will receive an opportunity to participate in the Settlement and
8 receive payment according to the same formula. (Agreement at ¶ 3.2(e).) Based upon 2,535 Class
9 Members who collectively worked 75,000 full time equivalent workweeks (Agreement at ¶ 4.1), the
10 Gross Settlement Amount provides an average value of \$295 per Class Member and \$10 per workweek
11 and after deductions, the Net Settlement Amount provides an average recovery of \$151.47 per Class
12 Member and a recovery of \$5.12 per workweek. Decl. Nordrehaug, ¶6.

13 The calculations to compensate for the amount due for the Class at the time of the mediation
14 were calculated by Berger Consulting, Plaintiffs’ damage expert. As to the Class whose claims are at
15 issue in this Action, Plaintiffs used this expert to analyze the data and determine the potential unpaid
16 wages for the employees. The maximum potential damages were calculated to be \$3,851,114 for the
17 alleged unpaid wages due to off-the-clock work at 1 hour per week, \$2,964,877 for alleged meal period
18 damages based upon a 52% potential violation rate for shifts observed in the time records and after
19 deduction of meal premiums paid by Defendant, and \$1,158,911 for alleged rest period damages based
20 upon a 10% potential violation rate, \$203,235 for alleged unreimbursed business expenses for personal
21 cell phone usage at \$5 per month. Decl. Nordrehaug, ¶6. As a result, the total damage valuation was
22 calculated that Defendant was subject to a maximum damage claim in the amount of \$8,178,137. As
23 to potential penalties, Plaintiffs calculated that potential waiting time penalties were a maximum of
24 \$6,000,542, and potential maximum wage statement penalties were \$8,070,850.⁴ Defendant vigorously

25
26 ⁴ While Plaintiffs alleged claims for statutory penalties pursuant to Labor Code Sections 203 and
27 226, at mediation Plaintiffs recognized that these claims were subject to additional, separate defenses
28 asserted by Defendant, including, a good faith dispute defense as to whether any premium wages for
meal or rest periods or other wages were owed given Defendant’s position that Plaintiffs and Class
Members were properly compensated. *See Nordstrom Commission Cases*, 186 Cal. App. 4th 576, 584

1 disputed Plaintiffs' calculations and exposure theories. See Decl. Nordrehaug, at ¶6 for additional
2 details as to the valuation of the claims.

3 Consequently, the Gross Settlement Amount of \$750,000 represents more than 9% of the
4 maximum value of the alleged damages at issue in this case at the time this Settlement was negotiated.⁵
5 Importantly, the recent decision that good faith belief of compliance by the employer in *Naranjo v.*
6 *Spectrum Sec. Servs., Inc.*, 15 Cal. 5th 1056, 1065 (2024), could completely negate the claims for
7 waiting time and wage statement penalties, even if wages were owed to the Class. The above maximum
8 calculations should then be adjusted in consideration for both the risk of class certification and the risk
9 of establishing class-wide liability on all claims. Given the amount of the settlement as compared to
10 the potential value of claims in this case and the defenses asserted by Defendant, this settlement is fair
11 and reasonable.⁶ Clearly, the goal of this litigation has been met. Decl. Nordrehaug, ¶6.

12 Where both sides face significant uncertainty, the attendant risks favor settlement. *Hanlon v.*
13 *Chrysler Corp.*, 150 F.3d 1011, 1026 (9th Cir. 1998). Here, a number of defenses asserted by
14 Defendant present serious threats to the claims of the Plaintiffs and the other Class Members.
15 Defendant asserted that Defendant's practices complied with all applicable Labor laws. Defendant
16 argued that Class Members were paid for all time worked and that all work time was properly recorded.

17 _____
18 (2010) ("There is no willful failure to pay wages if the employer and employee have a good faith dispute
19 as to whether and when the wages were due.").

20 ⁵ Because the PAGA claim is not a class claim and primarily is paid to the State of California,
21 Plaintiff have not included the PAGA claim in this discussion of the value of the class claims. The
22 PAGA claim is addressed in the Decl. Nordrehaug at ¶33.

23 ⁶ See *Glass v. UBS Fin. Servs.*, 2007 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 8476 (N.D. Cal. 2007) (approving a
24 settlement where the settlement amount constituted approximately 25% of the estimated overtime
25 damages for the class); *Stovall-Gusman v. W.W. Granger, Inc.*, 2015 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 78671, at *12
26 (N.D. Cal. 2015) (granting final approval where "the proposed Total Settlement Amount represents
27 approximately 10% of what class might have been awarded had they succeeded at trial."); *Dunleavy v.*
28 *Nadler (In re Mego Fin. Corp. Sec. Litig.)*, 213 F.3d 454, 459 (9th Cir. 2000) (affirming approval of
a class settlement which represented "roughly one-sixth of the potential recovery".) See also *Viceral v.*
Mistras Grp., Inc., 2016 WL 5907869 (N.D. Cal. 2016) (approving wage and hour class action
settlement amounting to 8.1% of full value); *Ma v. Covidien Holding, Inc.*, 2014 WL 2472316, (C.D.
Cal. 2014) (approving wage and hour class action settlement worth "somewhere between 9% and 18%"
of maximum valuation).

1 Defendant contends that its meal and rest period policies fully complied with California law and
2 Defendant did not fail to provide the opportunity for legally required meal and rest breaks. Defendant
3 could argue that the payment of significant meal period premiums is evidence of its lawful practices.
4 Defendant contends that there was no failure to pay for business expenses and any cell phone usage was
5 merely convenient and voluntary such that reimbursement was not legally required. Finally, Defendant
6 could argue that the Supreme Court decision in *Brinker v. Superior Court*, 53 Cal. 4th 1004 (2012),
7 weakened Plaintiffs' claims, on liability, value, and class certifiability as to the meal and rest period
8 claims. Defendant also argues that based on their facially lawful practices, Defendant acted in good
9 faith and without willfulness, which if accepted would negate the claims for waiting time penalties
10 and/or inaccurate wage statements. See e.g. *Naranjo v. Spectrum Sec. Servs., Inc.*, 15 Cal. 5th 1056,
11 1065 (May 6, 2024) ("if an employer reasonably and in good faith believed it was providing a complete
12 and accurate wage statement in compliance with the requirements of section 226, then it has not
13 knowingly and intentionally failed to comply with the wage statement law.") Defendant's defenses
14 could eliminate or substantially reduce any recovery to the Class. While Plaintiffs believe that these
15 defenses could be overcome, Defendant maintains these defenses have merit and therefore present a
16 serious risk to recovery by the Class. Decl. Nordrehaug, ¶ 24.

17 There was also a significant risk that, if the Action was not settled, Plaintiffs would be unable
18 to obtain a certified class and maintain the certified class through trial, and thereby not recover on behalf
19 of any employees other than themselves. At the time of the mediation, Defendant forcefully opposed
20 the propriety of class certification, arguing that individual issues precluded class certification. Further,
21 as demonstrated by the California Supreme Court decision in *Duran v. U.S. Bank National Assn.*, 59
22 Cal. 4th 1 (2014), there are significant hurdles to overcome for a class-wide recovery even where the
23 class has been certified. While other cases have approved class certification in wage and hour claims,
24 class certification in this action was hotly disputed and the maintenance of a certified class through trial
25 was by no means a foregone conclusion. Decl. Nordrehaug, ¶ 25.

26 After arm's length negotiations between experienced and informed counsel, the Parties
27 recognized the potential risks and agreed on the Settlement with a Gross Settlement Amount of
28 \$750,000. As the Court held in *Glass*, where the parties faced uncertainties similar to those here:

1 In light of the above-referenced uncertainty in the law, the risk, expense, complexity,
2 and likely duration of further litigation likewise favors the settlement. Regardless of how
3 this Court might have ruled on the merits of the legal issues, the losing party likely
4 would have appealed, and the parties would have faced the expense and uncertainty of
5 litigating an appeal. ‘The expense and possible duration of the litigation should be
6 considered in evaluating the reasonableness of [a] settlement.’”

2007 WL 221862, at *4 (quoting *In re Mego Financial Corp. Securities Litigation*, 213 F.3d 454, 458
(9th Cir. 2000)).

7 **3. The Settlement Does Not Improperly Grant Preferential Treatment To 8 Class Representatives or Segments Of The Class**

8 The relief provided in the Settlement will benefit all members of the Class. The Settlement does
9 not grant preferential treatment to Plaintiffs or segments of the Class in any way. Payments to the Class
10 Members are all determined under a neutral methodology. Each Participating Class Member will
11 receive the same opportunity to participate in and receive payment through a neutral formula that is
12 based upon the shifts worked by that individual. Decl. Nordrehaug, ¶4.

13 Plaintiffs will apply to the Court for Class Representative Service Payments in consideration
14 for their service and for the risks undertaken on behalf of the Class. (Agreement at ¶ 3.2(a).) Plaintiffs
15 performed their duties admirably by working with Class Counsel over the course of litigation. The
16 Declarations of the Plaintiffs are submitted herewith in support. Decl. Nordrehaug at ¶27. At this stage,
17 the not to exceed amount for the requested service award is within the accepted range of awards for
18 purposes of preliminary approval, subject to the Court’s determination at final approval. *See e.g.*
19 *Andrews v. Plains All Am. Pipeline L.P.*, 2022 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 172183, at *11 (C.D. Cal. 2022)
20 (finding that the requested service awards of \$15,000 each are appropriate); *Reynolds v. Direct Flow*
21 *Med., Inc.*, 2019 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 149865, at *19 (N.D. Cal. 2019) (granting request for \$12,500
22 service award); *Mathein v. Pier 1 Imps. (U.S.), Inc.*, 2018 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 71386 (E.D. Cal. 2018)
23 (awarding \$12,500 where average class member payment was \$351); *Louie v. Kaiser Foundation*
24 *Health Plan, Inc.*, 2008 WL 4473183, *7 (S.D. Cal. Oct. 06, 2008) (awarding \$25,000 service award
25 to each of six plaintiffs in overtime class action); *Glass v. UBS Fin. Servs.*, 2007 WL 221862, *16-17
26 (N.D. Cal. 2007) (awarding \$25,000 service award in overtime class action and a pool of \$100,000 in
27 enhancements). As explained in *Glass*, service awards are routinely awarded to class representatives
28 to compensate the employees for the time and effort expended on the case, for the risk of litigation, for

1 the fear of suing an employer and retaliation there from, and to serve as an incentive to vindicate the
2 statutory rights of all employees. 2007 WL 221862 at *16-17.

3 **4. The Stage Of The Proceedings Are Sufficiently Advanced To Permit**
4 **Preliminary Approval Of The Settlement**

5 The stage of the proceedings at which this Settlement was reached also militates in favor of
6 preliminary approval and ultimately, final approval of the Settlement. Class Counsel has conducted a
7 thorough investigation into the facts of the class action. Class Counsel began investigating the Class
8 Members' claims before the Action was filed, and during the course of litigation, Class Counsel
9 engaged in informal discovery to obtain necessary information. Class Counsel conducted a review and
10 analysis of the relevant documents and data. Class Counsel was also experienced with the claims at
11 issue here, as Class Counsel previously litigated and settled similar claims in other actions.
12 Accordingly, the agreement to settle did not occur until Class Counsel possessed sufficient information
13 to make an informed judgment regarding the likelihood of success on the merits and the results that
14 could be obtained through further litigation. Decl. Nordrehaug at ¶28.

15 Based on the foregoing data and their own independent investigation and evaluation, Class
16 Counsel is of the opinion that the Settlement with Defendant for the consideration and on the terms set
17 forth in the Agreement is fair, reasonable, and adequate and is in the best interest of the Class in light
18 of all known facts and circumstances, including the risk of significant delay, defenses asserted by
19 Defendant, and numerous potential appellate issues. There can be no doubt that Counsel possessed
20 sufficient information to make an informed judgment regarding the likelihood of success on the merits
21 and the results that could be obtained through further litigation. Decl. Nordrehaug at ¶29.

22 **V. THE CLASS IS PROPERLY CERTIFIED FOR SETTLEMENT PURPOSES ONLY**

23 Plaintiffs contend that the proposed settlement meets all of the requirements for class
24 certification under California Code of Civil Procedure § 382 as demonstrated below, and therefore, the
25 Court may appropriately approve the Class as defined in the Agreement. This Court should
26 conditionally certify the Class for settlement purposes only, defined as follows:

27 All individuals who are or were previously employed by Defendant and any of its
28 subsidiaries in California and classified as a non-exempt employee at any time during
the Class Period.

1 (Agreement at ¶ 1.5.)

2 The Class Period is from January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2024. (Agreement at ¶ 1.13.)

3 **A. California Code of Civil Procedure § 382**

4 Plaintiffs seek certification of this Class for settlement purposes under California Code of Civil
5 Procedure § 382. The California Supreme Court has summarized the standard for determining whether
6 class certification is appropriate as follows:

7 Code of Civil Procedure Section 382 authorizes class actions “when the question is one
8 of a common or general interest, of many persons, or when the parties are numerous, and
9 it is impracticable to bring them all before the court....” The party seeking certification
10 has the burden to establish the existence of both an ascertainable class and a well-
11 defined community of interest among class members. (*citations omitted*). The
12 “community of interest” requirement embodies three factors: (1) predominant common
13 questions of law or fact; (2) class representatives with claims or defenses typical of the
14 class; and (3) class representatives who can adequately represent the class.

15 *Sav-On Drug Stores, Inc. v. Superior Court*, 34 Cal. 4th 319, 326 (2004).

16 While Defendant reserves all rights to dispute that the Plaintiffs can satisfy these requirements,
17 the Parties agree that Defendant will not dispute that these requirements may be satisfied in this case
18 for purposes of settlement only and therefore, the proposed Class should be certified for purposes of
19 settlement only. (Agreement at ¶ 2.11.)

20 **B. The Proposed Class Is Ascertainable and Numerous**

21 Plaintiffs bring this action on behalf of a Class of non-exempt employees of Defendant during
22 the Class Period. Plaintiffs assert that all of these individuals are ascertainable because the class
23 members can readily be determined through examination of Defendant’s files. Given that the Class
24 consists of 2,535 individuals, Plaintiffs maintain that numerosity is clearly satisfied. *See Bowles v.*
25 *Superior Court*, 44 Cal.2d 574 (1955) (class with 10 members sufficiently numerous); *Rose v. City of*
26 *Hayward*, 126 Cal.App.3d 926, 934 (1981) (class of 48 members satisfies numerosity requirement.)
27 Here, Plaintiffs assert that the 2,535 current and former employees that comprise the Class can be
28 identified based on Defendant’s records and are sufficiently numerous for class certification. Decl.
Nordrehaug at ¶30.

C. Common Issues of Law and Fact Predominate

Predominance of common issues of law or fact does not require that the common issues be

1 dispositive of the entire controversy or even that they be dispositive of all liability issues. 1 *Newberg*
2 *on Class Actions*, Section 4.25 at 4-82, 4-83 (1992). “Predominance is a comparative concept, and ‘the
3 necessity for class members to individually establish eligibility and damages does not mean individual
4 fact questions predominate.’” *Sav-On*, 34 Cal. 4th at 334.

5 Commonality exists if there is a predominant common legal question regarding how an
6 employer’s policies impact its employees. *Ghazaryan v. Diva Limousine, Ltd.*, 169 Cal. App. 4th 1524,
7 1536 (2008) (“[T]he common legal question remains the overall impact of Diva's policies on its
8 drivers.”) Whether the plaintiff is likely to prevail on their theory of recovery is irrelevant at the
9 certification stage since the question is “essentially a procedural one that does not ask whether an action
10 is legally or factually meritorious.” *Linder v. Thrifty Oil Co.*, 23 Cal. 4th 429, 439-440 (2003).

11 Here, Plaintiffs contend that common questions of law and fact are present, specifically the
12 common questions of whether Defendant’s employment practices were lawful, whether Defendant
13 failed to provide meal and rest periods to Class Members, whether Class Members were lawfully
14 compensated for all hours worked, whether Defendant failed to provide required expense
15 reimbursement, and whether Class Members are entitled to damages and penalties as a result of these
16 practices. Plaintiffs contend that certification of this Class is appropriate because Defendant allegedly
17 engaged in uniform practices with respect to the Class Members. As a result, these common questions
18 of liability could be answered on a class wide basis. Decl. Nordrehaug, ¶30. Defendant disputes that
19 common questions predominate but will not oppose such a finding for purposes of this Settlement only.

20 **D. The Claims of the Plaintiffs Are Typical of the Class Claims**

21 The typicality requirement requires the Plaintiffs to demonstrate that the members of the Class
22 have the same or similar claims as the Plaintiffs. “The typicality requirement is met when the claims
23 of the [p]laintiff arise from the same event or are based on the same legal theories.” *Tate v.*
24 *Weyerhaeuser Co.*, 723 F.2d 598, 608 (8th Cir. 1983). In *Hanlon, supra*, 150 F.3d at 1020, the Ninth
25 Circuit held that “[u]nder the rule's permissive standards, representative claims are ‘typical’ if they are
26 reasonably coextensive with those of absent class members; they need not be substantially identical.”

27 In this Action, Plaintiffs contend that the typicality requirement is fully satisfied. Plaintiffs, like
28 every other member of the Class, were employed by Defendant as non-exempt employees, and, like

1 every other member of the Class, were subject to the same employment practices. Plaintiffs, like every
2 other member of the Class, also claim owed compensation as a result of the Defendant's uniform
3 company policies and practices. Thus, the claims of Plaintiffs and the members of the Class arise from
4 the same course of conduct by Defendant, involve the same issues, and are based on the same legal
5 theories. Decl. Nordrehaug at ¶30. For purposes of settlement, Plaintiffs assert that the typicality
6 requirement is met as to the common issues presented in this case. Defendant does not oppose a finding
7 of typicality for purposes of this Settlement only.

8 **E. The Class Representation Fairly and Adequately Protected the Class**

9 Plaintiffs contend that the Class Members are adequately represented here because Plaintiffs and
10 representing counsel (a) do not have any conflicts of interest with other class members, and (b) will
11 prosecute the case vigorously on behalf of the class. *Hanlon*, 150 F.3d at 1020. This requirement is
12 met here. First, Plaintiffs are well aware of their duties as the representatives of the Class and have
13 actively participated in the prosecution of this case to date. Plaintiffs effectively communicated with
14 Class Counsel, provided documents and information to Class Counsel, and participated in the
15 investigation and resolution of the Action. The personal involvement of the Plaintiffs was essential to
16 the prosecution of the Action and the monetary settlement reached. Second, Plaintiffs retained
17 competent counsel who are experienced in employment class actions and who have no conflicts. Decl.
18 Nordrehaug at ¶ 31. Third, there is no antagonism between the interests of the Plaintiffs and those of
19 the Class. Both the Plaintiffs and the Class Members seek monetary relief under the same set of facts
20 and legal theories. Under such circumstances, there can be no conflicts of interest, and adequacy of
21 representation is satisfied. *Reaves v. Ketoro, Inc.*, 2020 U.S. Dist. Lexis 167926, *23 (C.D. Cal. 2020).
22 Defendant disputes that the adequacy requirement is satisfied but will not oppose such a finding for
23 purposes of this Settlement only.

24 **F. The Superiority Requirement Is Met**

25 To certify a class, the Court must also determine that a class action is superior to other available
26 methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of the controversy. "Where classwide litigation of
27 common issues will reduce litigation costs and promote greater efficiency, a class action may be
28 superior to other methods of litigation." *Valentino v. Carter-Wallace, Inc.*, 97 F.3d 1227, 1234 (9th Cir.

1 1996). As courts have previously observed:

2 Absent class treatment, each individual plaintiff would present in separate, duplicative
3 proceedings the same or essentially the same arguments and evidence, including expert
4 testimony. The result would be a multiplicity of trials conducted at enormous expense
5 to both the judicial system and the litigants. “It would be neither efficient nor fair to
6 anyone, including defendants, to force multiple trials to hear the same evidence and
7 decide the same issues.”

8 *Sav-On*, 34 Cal. 4th at 340, citing *Boggs v. Divested Atomic Corp.*, 141 F.R.D. 58, 67 (S.D. Ohio 1991).

9 Here, Plaintiffs contend that a class action is the superior mechanism for resolution of the claims
10 as pled by the Plaintiffs. While Defendant disputes that class treatment is superior, Defendant does not
11 dispute a finding of superiority in this action for purposes of this Settlement only.

12 **VI. THE PROPOSED METHOD OF CLASS NOTICE IS APPROPRIATE**

13 The Court has broad discretion in approving a practical notice program. The Parties have agreed
14 upon procedures by which the Class Members will be provided with written notice of the Settlement
15 similar to that approved and utilized in hundreds of class action settlements. In accordance with the
16 Agreement, Defendant will provide to the Administrator a confidential electronic spreadsheet
17 containing the Class Data. (Agreement at ¶ 4.2.) Within 14 days after receiving the Class Data, the
18 Administrator will mail the Class Notice to all Class Members via first-class U.S. Mail using the most
19 current mailing address information available. (Agreement at ¶ 8.4(b).)

20 The Class Notice, drafted jointly and agreed upon by the Parties through their respective counsel
21 and to be approved by the Court, is based on the Los Angeles model form and includes all relevant
22 information. (*See Exhibit “A”* to the Agreement.) The Parties agree that the Class Notice need only be
23 in English as all Class Members were able to read and understand English as a condition of their
24 employment. The Class Notice will include, among other information: (i) information regarding the
25 Action; (ii) the impact on the rights of the Class Members if they do not opt out, including a description
26 of the applicable release; (iii) information to the Class Members regarding how to opt out and how to
27 object to the Settlement; (iv) the estimated Individual Class Payment for each of the Class Members;
28 (iii) the amount of attorneys’ fees and expenses to be sought; (v) the amount of the Plaintiffs’ service
award request; and (vi) the anticipated expenses of the Administrator. Decl. Nordrehaug at ¶32.

The Class Notice will state that the Class Members shall have forty-five (45) days from the date

1 that the Class Notice is mailed to them (the “Response Deadline”) to request exclusion (opt-out) or to
2 submit a written objection. (Agreement at ¶¶ 1.42, 8.5, 8.7.) Class Members shall be given the
3 opportunity to object to the Settlement and/or requests for attorneys’ fees and expenses and to appear
4 at the Final Approval Hearing. (Agreement at ¶ 8.7.) Class Members who do not submit a timely and
5 proper request to opt-out will automatically receive a payment of their Individual Class Payment. This
6 notice program was designed to meaningfully reach the Class Members and it advises them of all
7 pertinent information concerning the Settlement. Decl. Nordrehaug at ¶32. The mailing and
8 distribution of the Class Notice satisfies the requirements of due process and is the best notice
9 practicable under the circumstances and complies with Rules of Court 3.766 and 3.769(f).

10
11 **VII. CONCLUSION**

12 Plaintiff respectfully requests that the Court preliminarily approve the proposed settlement, sign
13 the proposed Preliminary Approval Order, which is submitted herewith, and schedule the final approval
14 hearing a date that is at least one hundred twenty (120) days from the date of Preliminary Approval.

15 Dated: July 11, 2025

**BLUMENTHAL NORDREHAUG BHOWMIK
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By: /s/ Kyle Nordrehaug
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