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Attorneys for Plaintiff Maria Madrigal & JORGE VILLALPANDO,
individually, and on behalf of others similarly situated

(Additional Counsel on Following Page)

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

FOR THE COUNTY OF STANISLAUS

MARIA MADRIGAL & JORGE
VILLALPANDO, individually and on behalf
of all others similarly situated,

Plaintiffs,

vs.

BEST DEAL FOOD COMPANY, INC.; and
DOES 1 through 25, inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No.: CV-23-005838

Honorable David Hood
Department 24

**DECLARATION OF PLAINTIFF
JORGE VILLALPANDO IN SUPPORT OF
MOTION FOR FINAL APPROVAL OF
CLASS ACTION AND
PAGA SETTLEMENT**

Date: October 29, 2026

Time: 8:30 a.m.

Dept: 24

Complaint Filed: October 10, 2023

FAC Filed: February 7, 2024

SAC Filed: May 28, 2025

Trial Date: Not Set

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8 Attorneys for Plaintiff Jorge Villalpando,
9 individually, and on behalf of all others similarly situated

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

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

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

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

1 much information as I could.

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

5 7. I know that I took a sizeable risk by bringing and pursuing this lawsuit for several
6 reasons. First, I understood that if I lost, I would potentially have to pay the costs in the lawsuit. I
7 also understood there was a risk of losing any job and/or income due to the time that I would have to
8 spend fulfilling my responsibilities in this matter, including having to attend the trial, if needed. In
9 contrast, the other employees who will be receiving money from this lawsuit did not have to file a
10 claim or take the risk that I took in bringing this action.

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

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

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

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

26 12. I respectfully request that the Court approve and award me an Enhancement Award in
27 the amount of \$10,000.00 for my efforts and active participation in the case and for the broader, general
28 release of all claims that I have or may have against Defendant in connection with the settlement.

1 Taking into consideration the time that I dedicated to this case, I believe that this amount is reasonable.

2 13. I understand that Blackstone Law, APC and Aegis Law Firm, PC will share the
3 attorneys' fees in this matter. I agreed to this in writing. I understand that the amount of attorneys'
4 fees will not increase as a result of this fee sharing.

5 14. I am not related to anyone associated with Blackstone Law, APC or Aegis Law Firm,
6 PC.

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 11/18/2025, at Hanford, California.

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10 *Jorge Villalpando*

11 Jorge Villalpando
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