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Attorneys for Plaintiff GERI GATES,
individually, and on behalf of others similarly
situated

[Additional counsel listed on next page]

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FOR THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

GERI GATES, individually, and on behalf
of others similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

vs.

SD & A TELESERVICES, INC., a
Georgia Corporation; and DOES 1 through
25, inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No.: 23STCV29390
(Consolidated with Case Nos. 24STCV02771 and
23STCV224461)

Honorable Laura A. Seigle
Department 17

**DECLARATION OF PLAINTIFF
GERI GATES IN SUPPORT OF
MOTION FOR PRELIMINARY
APPROVAL OF CLASS ACTION AND
PAGA SETTLEMENT**

Date: December 17, 2025
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Dept: 17

Complaint Filed: November 30, 2023
Trial Date: Not Set

1 **DECLARATION OF GERI GATES**

2 I, Geri Gates, 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 SD&A Teleservices, Inc. ("Defendant") in its Art
7 Division as an hourly-paid, non-exempt Sales Agent from approximately March 2014 to
8 approximately November 2023.

9 3. Because I thought the practices at Defendant may not be lawful, I decided to seek legal
10 advice about my work experiences at Defendant and about filing a lawsuit to obtain relief for my
11 grievances. I contacted Blackstone Law, APC and spoke with their attorneys. I wanted to take steps
12 to make sure Defendant was held accountable for not properly compensating its employees for all
13 hours worked and for non-compliant meal and rest breaks. After speaking with the attorneys, I also
14 investigated class and representative action lawsuits on my own. Thereafter, I further consulted with
15 the attorneys at Blackstone Law, APC about my situation, class actions, representative action lawsuits
16 under the Private Attorneys General Act ("PAGA"), and what it meant to bring a class and PAGA
17 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 Defendant, answering any questions my attorneys had
21 about the documents, providing information regarding the company's practices and the duties of other
22 hourly-paid and/or non-exempt employees, and helping my attorneys develop a strategy as to what
23 additional documents and information they could seek to obtain from Defendant.

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 Defendant's practices and treatment of its
27 employees whenever they needed me. I responded to them as quickly as possible and gave them as
28 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. In
8 contrast, the other employees who will be receiving money from this lawsuit did not have to file a
9 claim or take the risk that I took in bringing this action.

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

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

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

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

25 12. I respectfully request that the Court approve and award me an Enhancement Payment
26 in the amount of \$7,500.00 for my efforts and active participation in the case. Taking into
27 consideration the time that I dedicated to this case, I believe that this amount is reasonable.

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13. I understand that Blackstone Law, APC, Law Office of Carly Nese, and Benowitz Law Corporation will share the attorneys' fees in this matter. I agreed to this in writing. I understand that the amount of attorneys' fees will not increase as a result of this fee sharing.

14. I am not related to anyone associated with Blackstone Law, APC, Law Office of Carly Nese, or Benowitz Law Corporation.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on 10/23/2025, at Santa Monica, California.

Gerri Gates

Gerri Gates