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Clerk of the Superior Court
By Katie Winburn, Deputy Clerk

Attorneys for Plaintiff APRIL DEMETROPOULOS,
on behalf of herself and current and former aggrieved employees,

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

APRIL DEMETROPOULOS, on behalf of herself
and current and former aggrieved employees

Plaintiff,

vs.

PETCO ANIMAL SUPPLIES STORES, INC.;
and DOES 1 to 100, inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No.: 37-2024-00007860-CU-OE-CTL

PAGA ACTION

**PLAINTIFF APRIL
DEMETROPOULOS'S COMPLAINT
FOR:**

- 1. CIVIL PENALTIES PURSUANT
TO THE PRIVATE ATTORNEYS
GENERAL ACT OF 2004
("PAGA"), LABOR CODE
SECTIONS 2698, ET SEQ.**

COMES NOW Plaintiff APRIL DEMETROPOULOS ("Plaintiff"), who alleges and
complains against Defendants PETCO ANIMAL SUPPLIES STORES, INC.; and DOES 1 to 100,
inclusive (collectively "Defendants") as follows:

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This is a Private Attorneys General Act of 2004, Labor Code §§ 2698, *et seq.*
("PAGA") representative action brought by Plaintiff on behalf of the State of California, herself
and other current and former aggrieved employees of Defendants who worked as hourly non-
exempt employees in California during the relevant time period seeking civil penalties associated
with Defendants' violation of the Labor Code based on Defendants' failure to pay wages for all

1 hours worked at the employees' overtime rate, failure to provide all legally required and legally
2 compliant meal and rest periods, failure to timely pay earned wages during employment, failure to
3 provide complete and accurate wage statements, and failure to timely pay all unpaid wages
4 following separation of employment. Plaintiff seeks on a representative basis, following notice to
5 the Labor and Workforce Development Agency, civil penalties, reasonable attorneys' fees
6 pursuant to Labor Code section 2699(g)(1) and costs brought on behalf of Plaintiff, the State of
7 California, and others aggrieved.

8 **II. JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

9 2. This Court has jurisdiction over the claims of Plaintiff and all other current and
10 former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees because Plaintiff's lawsuit seeks
11 civil penalties on behalf of herself, all other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly
12 non-exempt employees, and the State of California in excess of twenty-five thousand dollars
13 (\$25,000); Defendants employed Plaintiff and all other current and former aggrieved California-
14 based hourly non-exempt employees; and the injuries to Plaintiff and all other current and former
15 aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees occurred in locations throughout
16 California, including but not limited to San Diego County, California, at 10850 Via Frontera, San
17 Diego, CA 92127.

18 3. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Judicial Council of California enacted
19 Emergency Rule 9 to the California Rules of Court, which provided that, notwithstanding any
20 other law, the statutes of limitations and repose for civil causes of action that exceed 180 days are
21 tolled from April 6, 2020, until October 1, 2020.

22 **III. PARTIES**

23 4. Plaintiff brings this action as a representative of the Labor and Workforce
24 Development Agency on behalf of herself and other current and former employees subject to
25 violations of the Labor Code. The named Plaintiff and the persons on whose behalf this action is
26 filed include current, former and/or future employees of Defendants who work, worked, or will
27 work for Defendants as direct employees as well as temporary employees employed through temp
28 agencies as hourly non-exempt employees in California. At all times mentioned herein, the

1 currently named Plaintiff is and was domiciled and a resident and citizen of California and was
2 employed by Defendants in an hourly position by Defendants' from approximately September 12,
3 2019, until on or about September 29, 2023.

4 5. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that Defendant PETCO
5 ANIMAL SUPPLIES STORES, INC. is authorized to do business within the State of California
6 and is doing business in the State of California and/or that Defendants DOES 1-50 are, and at all
7 times relevant hereto were persons acting on behalf of Defendant PETCO ANIMAL SUPPLIES
8 STORES, INC. in the establishment of, or ratification of, the aforementioned illegal wage and
9 hour practices or policies. Defendant PETCO ANIMAL SUPPLIES STORES, INC. is
10 headquartered in San Diego County and employed Plaintiff and aggrieved employees members
11 throughout the State of California.

12 6. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that Defendants DOES 1
13 through 50 are corporations, or are other business entities or organizations of a nature unknown to
14 Plaintiff that employed Plaintiff and aggrieved California non-exempt employees, permitted
15 Plaintiff and aggrieved employees to work, and exercised control over the wages, hours and
16 working conditions of employment of Plaintiff and aggrieved employees.

17 7. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that Defendants DOES 51
18 through 100 are individuals unknown to Plaintiff. Each of the individual defendants is sued
19 individually and in his or her capacity as an agent, shareholder, owner, representative, manager,
20 supervisor, independent contractor and/or employee of each defendant who violated or caused to
21 be violated the minimum wage and overtime provisions of the Labor Code and/or any provision of
22 the Industrial Welfare Commission's wage orders regulating hours and days of work.

23 8. Plaintiff is unaware of the true names of Defendants DOES 1 through 100. Plaintiff
24 sues said defendants by said fictitious names, and will amend this complaint when the true names
25 and capacities are ascertained or when such facts pertaining to liability are ascertained, or as
26 permitted by law or by the Court. Plaintiff is informed and believes that each of the fictitiously
27 named defendants is in some manner responsible for the events and allegations set forth in this
28 complaint.

9. Plaintiff makes the allegations in this complaint without any admission that, as to any particular allegation, Plaintiff bears the burden of pleading, proving, or persuading and Plaintiff reserves all of Plaintiff's right to plead in the alternative.

FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION

**CIVIL PENALTIES PURSUANT TO THE PRIVATE ATTORNEYS GENERAL ACT OF
2004, LABOR CODE SECTIONS 2698, ET SEQ.**

(Against all Defendants by Plaintiff)

10. Plaintiff incorporates all paragraphs above as though fully set forth herein.

11. During Plaintiff's employment and continuing through the present, Plaintiff alleges Defendants violated Labor Code sections 201, 202, 203, 204, 226, 226.7, 510, 512, 1194 and the applicable Wage Orders.

12. Specifically, Defendants have committed the following violations of California Labor Code:

13. **Failure to pay wages for overtime hours worked at the overtime rate of pay:** Defendants employed many of their employees, including Plaintiff, as hourly non-exempt employees. In California, an employer is required to pay hourly employees for all "hours worked," which includes all time that an employee is under control of the employer and all time the employee is suffered and permitted to work. This includes the time an employee spends, either directly or indirectly, performing services that inure to the benefit of the employer.'

14. Labor Code sections 510 and 1194 require an employer to compensate employees a higher rate of pay for hours worked in excess of eight (8) hours in a workday, in excess of forty (40) hours in a workweek, and on any seventh consecutive day of work in a workweek:

Any work in excess of eight (8) hours in one workday, any work in excess of forty (40) hours in any one (1) workweek, and the first eight (8) hours worked on the seventh day of work in any one (1) workweek, shall be compensated at the rate of no less than one-and-one-half (1.5) times the regular rate of pay for an employee. Any work in excess of twelve (12) hours in one (1) day shall be compensated at the rate of no less than twice the regular rate of pay for an employee. In addition, any work in excess of eight (8) hours on any seventh day of a workweek shall be compensated at the rate of no less than twice the regular rate of pay of an employee.

Labor Code section 510.

1 15. In this case, Defendants failed to pay Plaintiff and other current and former
2 aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees overtime wages for all overtime hours
3 worked due to Defendants' policies, practices, and/or procedures.

4 16. Overtime is based upon an employee's regular rate of pay. "The regular rate at
5 which an employee is employed shall be deemed to include all remuneration for employment paid
6 to, or on behalf, of the employee." See Division of Labor Standards Enforcement – Enforcement
7 Policies and Interpretations Manual, Section 49.1.2.

8 17. In this case, Plaintiff alleges that when she and other current and former aggrieved
9 California-based hourly non-exempt employees earned overtime wages, Defendants failed to pay
10 them overtime wages at the proper overtime rate of pay due to Defendants' failure to include all
11 remuneration when calculating the overtime rate of pay. Specifically, Defendants maintained a
12 policy, practice, and/or procedure of failing to include all remuneration such as GSL Incentive pay
13 and Time away pay, for example, when calculating Plaintiff's and other current and former
14 aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees' regular rate of pay for the purpose of
15 paying overtime.

16 18. The foregoing policies, practices, and/or procedures resulted in time during each
17 workday that Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt
18 employees were under the control of Defendants but were not compensated. To the extent that the
19 foregoing uncompensated time occurred when Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved
20 California-based hourly non-exempt employees worked more than eight (8) hours in a workday,
21 more than forty (40) hours in a workweek, and/or seven (7) days in a workweek, Defendants failed
22 to pay them at their overtime rate of pay for overtime hours worked, in violation of Labor Code
23 sections 510 and 1194 and the applicable Wage Order.

24 19. **Failure to pay wages to hourly non-exempt employees for workdays that**
25 **Defendants failed to provide legally required and compliant meal periods:** Plaintiff and other
26 current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees regularly worked
27 shifts of more than five (5) hours in length and shifts of more than ten (10) hours in length.

28 20. California law requires an employer to authorize or permit an employee an

uninterrupted meal period of no less than thirty (30) minutes in which the employee is relieved of all duties and the employer relinquishes control over the employee's activities prior to the employee's sixth hour of work. Labor Code sections 226.7, 512; Wage Order 4 at §11; *Brinker Rest. Corp. v. Super Ct. (Hohnbaum)* (2012) 53 Cal.4th 1004. An employer may not employ an employee for a work period of more than ten (10) hours per day without providing the employee with a second such meal period of not less than thirty (30) minutes prior to the start of the eleventh hour of work. *Id.* If the employee is not relieved of all duty during a meal period, the meal period shall be considered an "on duty" meal period and counted as time worked. A paid "on duty" meal period is only permitted when: (1) the nature of the work prevents an employee from being relieved of all duty; and (2) the parties have a written agreement agreeing to on-duty meal periods.

21. If an employer fails to provide an employee a meal period in accordance with the law, the employer must pay the employee one (1) hour of pay at the employee's regular rate of pay for each workday that a legally required and compliant meal period was not provided. Labor Code section 226.7; Wage Order 4 at §11.

22. In this case, Defendants failed to authorize or permit legally required and compliant meal periods to Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees due to Defendants' policies, practices, and/or procedures.

23. Additionally, Plaintiff alleges that Defendants maintained a policy, practice, and/or procedure of failing to compensate Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees one (1) hour of pay at their regular rate of pay for each workday that Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees did not receive legally required and compliant meal periods, in violation of Labor Code section 226.7.

24. Finally, on occasions when Defendants paid Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees a "premium" wage for late, missed, short, on-premise, on-duty, and/or interrupted meal periods, Defendants failed to pay the one (1) additional hour of pay at Plaintiff's and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees' regular rate of compensation. Specifically, Defendants maintained

1 a policy, practice, and/or procedure of failing to include all remuneration such as GSL Incentive
2 pay and Time away pay, for example, when calculating Plaintiff's and other current and former
3 aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees' regular rate of pay for the purpose of
4 paying meal period premium wages.

5 25. Defendants' foregoing policies, practices, and/or procedures resulted in Plaintiff
6 and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees not
7 receiving wages to compensate them for workdays during which Defendants did not provide them
8 with meal periods in compliance with California law.

9 26. **Failure to pay wages to hourly non-exempt employees for workdays that**
10 **Defendants failed to provide legally required and compliant rest periods:** Plaintiff and other
11 current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees regularly worked
12 shifts of more than three-and-a-half (3.5) hours.

13 27. California law requires every employer to authorize and permit an employee a rest
14 period of ten (10) net minutes for every four (4) hours worked or major fraction thereof. Labor
15 Code section 226.7; Wage Order 4 at §12. Under California law, "[e]mployees are entitled to 10
16 minutes' rest for shifts from three and one-half to six hours in length, 20 minutes for shifts of more
17 than six hours up to 10 hours, 30 minutes for shifts of more than 10 hours up to 14 hours, and so
18 on." *Brinker Restaurant Corp. v. Sup. Ct. (Hohnbaum)* (2012) 53 Cal.4th 1004, 1029; Labor Code
19 section 226.7; Wage Order 4 at §12. Rest periods, insofar as practicable, shall be in the middle of
20 each work period. Wage Order 4 at §12. Additionally, the rest period requirement "obligates
21 employers to permit – and authorizes employees to take – off-duty rest periods." *Augustus v. ABM*
22 *Security Services, Inc.*, (2016) 5 Cal.5th 257, 269. That is, during rest periods employers must
23 relieve employees of all duties and relinquish control over how employees spend their time. *Id.*

24 28. If the employer fails to authorize or permit a required rest period, the employer
25 must pay the employee one (1) hour of pay at the employee's regular rate of pay for each workday
26 the employer did not authorize or permit a legally required rest period. Labor Code section 226.7;
27 Wage Order 4 at § 12.

1 29. In this case, Defendants failed to authorize or permit all legally required and
2 compliant rest periods to Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly
3 non-exempt employees due to Defendants' policies, practices, and/or procedures.

4 30. Additionally, Plaintiff alleges that Defendants maintained a policy, practice, and/or
5 procedure of failing to compensate Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved California-
6 based hourly non-exempt employees with one (1) hour of pay at their regular rate of pay for each
7 workday they did not receive legally required and compliant rest periods, in violation of Labor
8 Code section 226.7.

9 31. Finally, on occasions when Defendants did pay Plaintiff and other current and
10 former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees a "premium" wage for late,
11 missed, short, on-premise, on-duty, and/or interrupted rest periods, Defendants failed to pay the
12 one (1) additional hour of pay at Plaintiff's and other current and former aggrieved California-
13 based hourly non-exempt employees' regular rate of compensation. Specifically, Defendants
14 maintained a policy, practice, and/or procedure of failing to include all remuneration such as GSL
15 Incentive pay and Time away pay, for example, when calculating Plaintiff's and other current and
16 former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees' regular rate of pay for the
17 purpose of paying rest period premiums.

18 32. Defendants' foregoing policies, practices, and/or procedures resulted in Plaintiff
19 and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees not
20 receiving wages to compensate them for workdays in which Defendants did not provide them with
21 rest periods in compliance with California law.

22 33. **Failure to timely pay earned wages during employment:** In California, wages
23 must be paid at least twice during each calendar month on days designated in advance by the
24 employer as regular paydays, subject to some exceptions. Labor Code section 204(a). Wages
25 earned between the 1st and 15th days, inclusive, of any calendar month must be paid between the
26 16th and the 26th day of that month and wages earned between the 16th and the last day,
27 inclusive, of any calendar month must be paid between the 1st and 10th day of the following
28 month. *Id.* Other payroll periods such as those that are weekly, biweekly, or semimonthly, must be

1 paid within seven (7) calendar days following the close of the payroll period in which wages were
2 earned. Labor Code section 204(d).

3 34. As a derivative of Plaintiff's claims above, Plaintiff alleges that Defendants failed
4 to timely pay Plaintiff's and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-
5 exempt employees' earned wages (including overtime wages, meal period premium wages and/or
6 rest period premium wages), in violation of Labor Code section 204. Defendants' aforementioned
7 policies, practices, and/or procedures resulted in their failure to pay Plaintiff's and other current
8 and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees' their earned wages within
9 the applicable time frames outlined in Labor Code section 204.

10 35. **Failure to provide complete and accurate wage statements:** Labor Code section
11 226, subdivision (a). Labor Code section 226(a) provides, *inter alia*, that, upon paying an
12 employee his or her wages, the employer must "furnish each of his or her employees ... an
13 itemized statement in writing showing (1) gross wages earned, (2) total hours worked by the
14 employee, except for any employee whose compensation is solely based on a salary and who is
15 exempt from payment of overtime under subdivision (a) of Section 515 or any applicable order of
16 the Industrial Welfare Commission, (3) the number of piece-rate units earned and any applicable
17 piece rate if the employee is paid on a piece-rate basis, (4) all deductions, provided, that all
18 deductions made on written orders of the employee may be aggregated and shown as one item, (5)
19 net wages earned, (6) the inclusive dates of the pay period for which the employee is paid, (7) the
20 name of the employee and his or her social security number, (8) the name and address of the legal
21 entity that is the employer, and (9) all applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay period and
22 the corresponding number of hours worked at each hourly rate by the employee."

23 36. As a derivative of Plaintiff's allegations above, Defendants' failure to pay Plaintiff
24 and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees all wages
25 earned (including overtime wages, meal period premium wages, and/or rest period premium
26 wages) rendered Plaintiff's and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-
27 exempt employees' wage statements inaccurate, in violation of Labor Code section 226.

28

1 37. **Failure to pay employees all wages due at time of termination/resignation:** An
2 employer is required to pay all unpaid wages timely after an employee's employment ends. The
3 wages are due immediately upon termination (Labor Code section 201) or within seventy-two (72)
4 hours of resignation (Labor Code section 202).

5 38. As a derivative of Plaintiff's allegations above, because Defendants failed to pay
6 Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees
7 all their earned wages (including overtime wages, meal period premium wages, and/or rest period
8 premium wages), Defendants failed to pay those employees timely after each employee's
9 termination and/or resignation, in violation of Labor Code sections 201, 202, and 203.

10 39. Labor Code sections 2699, subdivisions (a) and (g) authorize an aggrieved
11 employee, on behalf of himself or herself and other current or former employees, to bring a civil
12 action to recover civil penalties against all Defendants pursuant to the procedures specified in
13 Labor Code section 2699.3.

14 40. Plaintiff has complied with the procedures for bringing suit specified in Labor
15 Code section 2699.3. On December 15, 2023, Plaintiff filed a PAGA Claim Notice with the
16 LWDA and provided notice to Defendants by certified mail which provided notice of the specific
17 provisions of the Labor Code alleged to have been violated, including the facts and theories to
18 support the violations alleged.

19 41. Pursuant to Labor Code section 2699.3, the LWDA must give written notice by
20 certified mail to the parties that it intends to investigate the alleged violations of the Labor Code
21 within 60 days of the date of the complainant's written notice. The LWDA failed to provide the
22 parties notice within 60 days of the date of Plaintiff's PAGA Claim Notice that the LWDA intends
23 to investigate Plaintiff's claims.

24 42. Pursuant to Labor Code sections 2699(a) and (f), Plaintiff is entitled to recover civil
25 penalties for Defendants' violations of Labor Code sections 201, 202, 203, 204 226, 226.7, 510,
26 512, 1194, During Plaintiff's employment and continuing through the present, preceding Plaintiff
27 sending the initial PAGA Claim Notice to the LWDA to the present, in the following amounts:
28

1 3. For attorneys' fees and costs of suit, including but not limited to those recoverable
2 under California Labor Code section 2699(g); and

3 4. For such and other further relief, in law and/or equity, as the Court deems just or
4 appropriate

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6 Dated: February 20, 2024

Respectfully submitted,
LAVI & EBRAHIMIAN, LLP

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