John G. Yslas (SBN 187324)
john.yslas@wilshirelawfirm.com
Emily Borman (SBN 303180)
emily.borman@wilshirelawfirm.com
Diego Aviles (SBN 315533)
daviles@wilshirelawfirm.com
Harry Erganyan (SBN 333091)
herganyan@wilshirelawfirm.com
Mariam Nazaretyan (SBN 334154)
mnazaretyan@wilshirelawfirm.com
WILSHIRE LAW FIRM, PLC
660 S. Figueroa Street, Sky Lobby
Los Angeles, California 90017
Telephone: (213) 381-9988
Facsimile: (213) 381-9989

Attorneys for Plaintiffs

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO

JESSICA MARIE JONES and AUNDRAE ALLEN SOTO, individually, and on behalf of all others similarly situated,

Plaintiffs,

v.

JSAK VICTORVILLE PARTNERS LP DBA HILTON GARDEN INN VICTORVILLE., a California limited partnership; and DOES 1 through 10, inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No.: CIVSB2327394

[Assigned for All Purposes to the Hon. Stephanie Tanada, Dept: S33]

FIRST AMENDED PLAINTIFFS' MOTION FOR PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF CLASS ACTION AND PAGA SETTLEMENT

PRELIMINARY APPROVAL HEARING
Date: March 25, 2026
Time: 8:30 a.m.
Dept: S33

Complaint filed: October 30, 2023
FAC filed: June 2, 2025
Trial date: None

TO ALL PARTIES AND THEIR ATTORNEYS OF RECORD:

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that on March 25, 2026, at 8:30 a.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard in Department S33 of the above-entitled Court, located at 247 West Third Street, San Bernardino, CA 92415, Plaintiffs Jessica Marie Jones and Aundrae Allen Soto ("Plaintiffs") will and hereby does move this Court for an Order:

1. Granting preliminary approval of the proposed Class Action and PAGA Settlement Agreement ("Settlement");
2. Conditionally certifying the proposed Class for settlement purposes only;
3. Appointing Plaintiffs as the Class Representatives;
4. Appointing Wilshire Law Firm, PLC as Class Counsel;
5. Appointing APEX Class Action Administration as the Settlement Administrator; and
6. Setting a final approval hearing date.

Pursuant to California Rules of Court, Rule 3.769(d) and (e), this Motion is made on the grounds that the proposed Settlement satisfies all criteria for preliminary approval and falls well within the range of reasonableness. The Settlement was reached through informed, arm's length bargaining between experienced attorneys with the assistance of an experienced neutral, and Plaintiff and Plaintiffs' Counsel will fairly and adequately represent the Class.

This Motion is based on this Notice of Motion, the accompanying Memorandum of Points and Authorities, the First Amended Declaration of John G. Yslas, the First Amended Declaration of Jessica Marie Jones, the First Amended Declaration of Aundrae Allen Soto, the Declaration of Sean Hartranft and on all records and documents on file, together with such oral and documentary evidence that may be presented at the hearing on this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: February 27, 2026

WILSHIRE LAW FIRM

By: ______________________________

John Y. Yslas
Emily Borman
Diego Aviles
Harry Erganyan
Mariam Nazaretyan
Attorneys for Plaintiffs Jessica Marie Jones and Aundrae Allen Soto

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MEMORANDUM OF POINTS AND AUTHORITIES

I. INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to California Rules of Court, Rule 3.769(d) and (e), Plaintiffs seek preliminary approval of a class action settlement of wage and hour claims, including representative claims brought under the Private Attorneys' General Act of 2004 ("PAGA"), against Defendant JSAK Victorville Partners LP dba Hilton Garden Inn Victorville. ("Defendant"). The proposed Class is defined as all current and former hourly, non-exempt employees who were employed by Defendant ("Class Members") during the Class Period of May 5, 2019 through July 1, 2025 ("Class Period"). The main terms of the Settlement are as follows:

1. A Gross Settlement Amount of $500,000.00, which will be distributed to approximately 182 Class Members on a pro rata basis according to the total workweeks worked by each Class Member during the Class Period;
2. Attorneys' fees of up to one-third of the Gross Settlement Amount (currently $166,666.67) and up to $25,000.00 in reimbursement of litigation costs to Plaintiffs' Counsel;
3. A class representative service payment of up to $10,000.00 to each Plaintiff;
4. Costs of settlement administration of up to $6,990.00; and
5. Allocation of $20,000.00 to PAGA penalties, seventy-five percent (75%) of which ($15,000.00) will be paid to the Labor and Workforce Development Agency ("LWDA"), and twenty-five percent (25%) of which ($5,000.00) will be paid to Class Members who worked for Defendant during the PAGA Period of January 16, 2023 through July 1, 2025 ("Aggrieved Employees").

The Settlement meets all criteria for preliminary approval and falls within the range of reasonableness given the risks and expenses of further litigation. The Settlement was reached through informed, arm's length bargaining between experienced attorneys with the assistance of an experienced neutral. As such, Plaintiffs request that the Court grant preliminary approval of the Settlement, conditionally certify the Class for settlement purposes only, appoint Plaintiffs as the Class Representatives, appoint Plaintiffs' Counsel as Class Counsel, appoint APEX Class Action

Administration as the Settlement Administrator, authorize the Settlement Administrator to administer notice of the Settlement to the Class, and set a final approval hearing date.

II. PROCEDURAL HISTORY

On October 30, 2023, Plaintiffs filed this action as a putative class action against Defendant alleging: (1) failure to pay minimum and straight time wages; (2) failure to pay overtime wages; (3) failure to provide meal periods; (4) failure to authorize and permit rest periods; (5) failure to timely pay final wages at termination; (6) failure to provide accurate itemized wage statements; (7) failure to indemnify employees for expenditures; (8) failure to produce requested employment records, and (9) unfair business practices. First Amended Declaration of John G. Yslas in Support of Motion for Preliminary Approval of Class Action and PAGA Settlement ("Amended Yslas Decl.") at ¶ 3.

On January 16, 2024, Plaintiffs provided written notice to the LWDA and Defendant of their intention to file a PAGA claim. Amended Yslas Decl. at ¶ 4. The LWDA did not notify Plaintiffs that it intended to investigate within 65 days of this written notice. *Id*. Therefore, on October 2, 2024, Plaintiffs filed a separate action alleging a claim under PAGA, Alameda County Superior Court, Case No. 24CV094411 (the "PAGA Action"). *Id.* On June 2, 2025, Plaintiffs filed a First Amended Complaint in the instant action incorporating Plaintiffs' PAGA allegations. Thereafter, on June 11, 2025, Plaintiffs dismissed the PAGA Action pending in Alameda County Superior Court. *Id.* at ¶ 5.

On December 4, 2024, the Parties participated in an all-day mediation presided over by mediator Russ Wunderli. The Parties, however, were unable to reach an agreement. Thereafter, on May 1, 2025, the Parties participated in a half-day mediation presided over by mediator Russ Wunderli. *Id.* at ¶ 6. The Parties were able to reach a settlement at the May 1, 2025 mediation. *Id.* The parties negotiated the terms of the Settlement over the next several months, which was finalized in October 2025. *Id.* at ¶ 7, Exhibit 1 ("Settlement Agreement"). The Parties executed an Amendment to the Settlement Agreement on February 26, 2026, which amends the PAGA Release to state with specificity the claims being released. *Id.* at ¶ 7, Exhibit 1. On November 5, 2025, Plaintiffs submitted a copy of the Settlement Agreement to the LWDA. *Id.* at ¶ 8, Exhibit 2.

III. SUMMARY OF THE SETTLEMENT TERMS

A. Terms of the Proposed Settlement

The parties have agreed to settle the claims alleged in this case and the related PAGA Action for a fixed common-fund non-reversionary Gross Settlement Amount of $500,000.00. Settlement Agreement at § 3.1. Subject to Court approval, the following payments will be deducted from the Gross Settlement Amount: (1) a class representative service payment of up to $10,000.00 to each Plaintiff; (2) attorneys' fees of up to one-third of the Gross Settlement Amount (currently $166,666.67) and reimbursement of litigation costs of up to $25,000.00 to Plaintiffs' Counsel; (3) costs of settlement administration of up to $6,990.00 to APEX Class Action Administration; (4) individual class payments to Class Members; and (5) PAGA penalties in the amount of $20,000.00, which will be allocated 75% to the LWDA ($15,000.00) and 25% to Aggrieved Employees ($5,000.00). *Id.* at § 3.2.5; Declaration of Sean Hartranft ("Hartranft Decl.") at ¶ 8. **After all requested deductions are made, the remaining Net Settlement Amount is currently estimated to be $261,343.33.** Hartranft Decl. at ¶ 8. Based on an estimated 18,389 workweeks during the Class Period, the Administrator estimates that Participating Class Members will receive an average settlement payment of approximately $1,435.95, with the lowest payout being approximately $ 14.21, and the highest payout reaching approximately $ 6,789.25. *Id* at ¶ 8. Excluding any class representative service payment, the expected amount to be received by Plaintiff Aundrae Soto is approximately $1,378.37 and the expected amount to be received by Plaintiff Jessica Marie Jones is approximately $71.05. *Id*. at ¶ 9.

Individual class payments will be calculated based on the number of workweeks worked by each Class Member during the Class Period. *Id*. at § 3.2.4. For tax purposes, the individual class payments will be allocated 20% to wages and 80% to penalties, interest, and reimbursement of expenses. *Id*. at § 3.2.4.1. Defendant's share of payroll taxes will be paid from the Gross Settlement Amount. *Id*. at 4.3.

Individual PAGA payments to Aggrieved employees will be calculated based on the number of pay periods worked by each Aggrieved Employee during the PAGA Period. *Id*. at § 3.2.5.1. For tax purposes, the individual PAGA payments will be allocated 100% to penalties. *Id*.

Any deductions not approved by the Court will be retained by the Settlement Administrator in the Net Settlement Amount. *Id.* at § 3.2. Funds from any uncashed checks will be transmitted by the Settlement Administrator to the California Controller's Unclaimed Property Fund in the name of the Class Member thereby leaving no "unpaid residue" subject to the requirements of California Code of Civil Procedure Section 384, subd. (b). *Id.* at § 4.4.3. None of the Gross Settlement Amount will revert to Defendant. *Id*. at § 3.1

B. Proposed Settlement Administration

The parties' proposed Class Notice complies with the requirements of California Rules of Court, Rule 3.766(d). *See* Exhibit A to Settlement Agreement. It provides information regarding the nature of this lawsuit, a summary of the settlement terms, the formula used for calculating individual class and PAGA payments and instructions to dispute the calculations, instructions on how to opt-out of or object to the Settlement, the date, time, and location of the final approval hearing, and the amounts sought for the class representative service payment, attorneys' fees and litigation costs, and settlement administration costs. *See generally, id*. The Class Notice also notifies Class Members that they do not need to submit a claim in order to participate in the Settlement and receive a payment. *See id*. **The Settlement Administrator will mail Class Members the Class Notice by first-class mail in English and in Spanish**. Settlement Agreement at § 7.4.2; *see also* Amended Yslas Decl. at ¶ 30; Hartranft Decl. at ¶ 7, Ex. B.

If a Class Notice is returned as undeliverable, the Settlement Administrator will re-mail the Class Notice within 3 business days to the forwarding address provided by the U.S. Postal Service. *Id*. at § 7.4.3. If no forwarding address is provided, the Settlement Administrator will conduct a Class Member Address Search and re-mail the Class Notice to the most current address obtained. *Id.* The deadline to opt-out of the Settlement or to submit an objection or dispute will be extended by 14 days for all Class Members whose Class Notice was remailed. *Id*. at §7.4.4.

C. Proposed Release

All Participating Class Members "will waive and release all wage and hour class claims asserted in the complaint filed in the Action or that could have been alleged based on the factual allegations asserted in the complaint filed in the Action during the Class Period."

Settlement Agreement at § 5.2.

The claims release by Aggrieved Employees, "including Non-Participating Class Members who are Aggrieved Employees, are all claims for civil penalties under PAGA arising during the PAGA Period that were alleged in Plaintiffs' PAGA Notice to the LWDA and the PAGA claims included in the Action, or that could have been based on the facts asserted in the PAGA Notice and the PAGA claims included in the Action against Released Parties, including claims for unpaid wages, unpaid overtime, failure to pay minimum wages, failure to provide meal periods, failure to provide rest periods, failure to pay all wages due at termination, inaccurate wage statements, failure to reimburse business expenses, failure to produce employment records, failure to provide proper sick leave and supplemental paid sick leave, failure to pay vested vacation and/or paid time off; failure to provide suitable seating, and claims under the following statutes: California Labor Code sections 98.6, 201, 201.3, 202, 203, 204, 210, 216, 223, 226, 226.3, 226.7, 227.3, 232, 232.5, 245, 246, 247, 248, 248.5, 2699, 2802, 432, 432.5, 432.7, 510, 1102.5, 1174, 1174.5, 1194, 1197, 1197.1, 1197.5, 1198, 1198.5, 1527, 2699, 3366, 3457, 6401, 8397.4., and the applicable IWC Wage Order(s) (collectively, the "Released PAGA Claims)." *Id.* at § 5.3. Only Plaintiffs will agree to a general release and a waiver of Civil Code § 1542. *Id*. at §§ 5.1, 5.1.1.

IV. THE PROPOSED SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT MEETS ALL CRITERIA FOR PRELIMINARY APPROVAL

A. Provisional Certification of the Class is Appropriate

Class certification is appropriate when there is: (1) an ascertainable and sufficiently numerous class; (2) a well-defined community of interest among class members; and (3) substantial benefits from certification that render proceeding as a class superior to the alternatives. *Brinker Restaurant Corp. v. Superior Court*, 53 Cal.4th 1004, 1021 (2012). Although courts still need to review and consider each element for certification, a lesser standard can be used to provisionally certify a settlement class. *Global Minerals & Metals Corp. v. Superior Court*, 113 Cal.App.4th 836, 859 (2003).

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1. The Proposed Class is Numerous and Ascertainable

"Ascertainability" is determined by examining the class definition and the size of the class, and may also involve examining the means available to identify class members. *Noel v. Thrifty Payless, Inc.*, 7 Cal.5th 955, 980-981, 985-986 (2019). As the settlement eliminates the need for trial, "the case management issues inherent in the ascertainable class determination need not be confronted." *Global Minerals*, 113 Cal.App.4th at 859. Further, under California law, there is no minimum number of class members for maintenance of a class action. *Hendershot v. Ready to Roll Transp., Inc.*, 228 Cal.App.4th 1213, 1222 (2014). Class sizes as small as 10 have been permitted. *Rose v. City of Hayward*, 126 Cal.App.3d 926, 934 (1981), disapproved on other grounds by *Noel*, 7 Cal.5th at 986.

The Class here consists of all current and former hourly, non-exempt employees who worked for Defendant during the Class Period. *See* Settlement Agreement at §§ 1.5, 1.13. The Class is also readily ascertainable from Defendant's business records, because all Class Members are or were employees of Defendant. *Id* at § 1.9. Defendant's records show there are approximately 182 Class Members, making joinder of all Class Members impracticable. Amended Yslas Decl. at ¶ 10.

2. A Well-Defined Community of Interest Exists

The community of interest requirement embodies three factors: (1) predominant common questions of law or fact; (2) class representatives with claims or defenses typical of the class; and (3) class representatives who can adequately represent the class. *Brinker*, 53 Cal.4th at 1021.

a. Common Questions Predominate

In determining whether common issues "predominate," courts consider both plaintiff's legal theories and defendant's affirmative defenses. *Duran v. U.S. Bank Nat'l Ass'n*, 59 Cal.4th 1, 28-29 (2014). The "predominate common questions" factor does not require that all class members have identical claims. *Ayala v. Antelope Valley Newspapers, Inc.*, 59 Cal.4th 522, 530 (2014). Rather, the focus is on whether issues shared by the class members are sufficiently uniform to permit class-wide assessment, and whether individual variations in proof on those issues are manageable. *Id.*

Plaintiffs have alleged that Defendant maintained common employment policies and/or practices that unlawfully deprived Class Members of wages, meal period, rest periods, reimbursements for business expenses, accurate wage statements, and timely payment of wages upon separation of employment. Amended Yslas Decl. at ¶ 11. These allegations present common factual and legal questions of, *inter alia*, whether Defendant applied the same scheduling, timekeeping, pay, meal period, rest period, and reimbursement policies to all Class Members, whether these policies and practices resulted in Labor Code violations, whether Defendant's conduct was intention, and whether Class Members are entitled to damages and/or penalties. *Id*. These common questions could be resolved using Class Members' time records, payroll records, testimony from Defendant's designated representative(s), and Class Members' testimony. *Id*. Therefore, the Court can and should exercise its discretion to grant conditional class certification for settlement purposes.

b. Plaintiffs are Typical of the Class

Typicality does not require that the representative plaintiff's claims and those of the class members be identical or perfectly aligned. *Wershba v. Apple Computer, Inc.*, 91 Cal.App.4th 224, 228 (2001), disapproved on other grounds by *Hernandez v. Restoration Hardware, Inc.*, 4 Cal.5th 260, 269-280 (2018). Typicality does not require that a plaintiff's claims be identical to those of other class members, only that their claims and the defenses applicable to them are sufficiently similar to those of other class members that a named plaintiff is able to adequately represent the class and focus on common issues. *Medrazo v. Honda of North Hollywood*, 166 Cal.App.4th 89, 99 (2008).

Plaintiffs have alleged that they and the Class Members were employed by the same Defendant and injured by Defendant's common wage and hour policies and practices, including Defendant's scheduling, timekeeping, pay, meal period, rest period, and reimbursement policies. *See* Amended Yslas Decl. at ¶ 11. Through informal discovery, including the production of thousands of documents by Defendant, Plaintiffs confirmed that these challenged policies and practices applied to Plaintiffs as well as Class Members. *See id.* at ¶ 9. Therefore, Plaintiffs' claims and Class Members' claims arise from the same challenged employment policies and practices and are based on the same legal theories.

c. Plaintiffs and Plaintiffs' Counsel Will Adequately Represent the Class

Certification requires adequacy of both the proposed class representative and of the proposed class counsel. Cal. Code Civ. Proc. § 382. "Only a conflict that goes to the very subject matter of the litigation will defeat a party's claim of representative status." *Richmond v. Dart Industries*, 29 Cal.3d 462, 470 (1981). Only conflicts that are "irreconcilable" can defeat adequacy. *Nat'l Solar Equip. Owners' Ass'n v. Grumman Corp.*, 235 Cal.App.3d 1273, 1286 (1991). The proposed representative Plaintiffs and proposed Class Counsel present no such conflict.

Plaintiffs' interests are coextensive with Class Members' interests. First Amended Declaration of Jessica Marie Jones in Support of Motion for Preliminary Approval ("Amended Jones Decl.") at ¶ 6; First Amended Declaration of Aundrae Allen Soto in Support of Motion for Preliminary Approval ("Amended Soto Decl.") at ¶ 6. Plaintiffs have demonstrated an ability to advocate for the interests of Class Members by initiating this lawsuit, gathering documents and information, being available on the day of mediation to answer questions, meeting with their attorneys to understand the claims and theories of liability at issue, assisting their attorneys in preparation for mediation, and reviewing the proposed Settlement. *Id.* at ¶ 7.

Likewise, Wilshire Law Firm has expended considerable time and effort on this case and will continue to do so through final approval. *See generally*, Amended Yslas Decl. Therefore, Plaintiffs should be appointed Class Representatives, and their counsel should be appointed Class Counsel.

3. A Class Action is Superior to a Multitude of Individual Lawsuits

Courts have held that class treatment of wage and hour claims is clearly "superior to the other available methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of the controversy." *Dean Witter Reynolds, Inc. v. Superior Court*, 211 Cal.App.3d 758, 772-773 (1989). This is so because "[p]ublic policy has long favored the 'full and prompt payment of wages due an employee.'" *Sav-On Drug Stores, Inc. v. Superior Court*, 34 Cal.4th 319, 340 (2004). Here, a class action is superior to a multitude of individual lawsuits. Given the size and amount of each Class Members' claim, Class Members have little incentive to litigate their claims on an individual basis because the out-of-pocket expenses and personal commitment necessary to litigate each claim likely outweighs any potential recovery. Amended Yslas Decl. at ¶ 10. Therefore, a class action is the superior method for seeking relief.

B. The Settlement Meets the Standards for Preliminary Approval

The moving party must demonstrate that "the settlement is fair, adequate and reasonable." *Kullar v. Foot Locker Retail, Inc.*, 168 Cal.App.4th 116, 126 (2008). "In determining whether a class settlement is fair, adequate, and reasonable, the trial court should consider relevant factors, such as the strength of plaintiffs' case, the risk, expense, complexity and likely duration of further litigation, the risk of maintaining class action status through trial, the amount offered in settlement, the extent of discovery completed and the stage of the proceedings, the experience and views of counsel, the presence of a governmental participant, and the reaction of the class members to the proposed settlement." *Wershba*, 91 Cal.App.4th at 244-245 (internal quotations and citations omitted).

As a prefatory matter, no one at Wilshire Law Firm, PLC (meaning the law firm itself and anyone employed at the law firm) has any interest, financial or otherwise, in the proposed third-party administrator, APEX. No one at Wilshire Law Firm, PLC has any actual or potential conflict of interest with any class member. Amended Yslas Decl. at ¶ 31. After diligent searches conducted across relevant administrative and judicial forums, Plaintiffs' Counsel is not aware of any other pending matters or court actions asserting claims that will be extinguished or adversely affected by the proposed Settlement. Amended Yslas Decl. at ¶ 32.

1. The Settlement is Entitled to a Presumption of Fairness

A settlement is entitled to "a presumption of fairness . . . where : (1) the settlement is reached through arm's length bargaining; (2) investigation and discovery are sufficient to allow counsel and the court to act intelligently; (3) counsel is experienced in similar litigation; and (4) the percentage of objectors is small." *Dunk v. Ford Motor Co.*, 48 Cal.App.4th 1794, 1801 (1996). The Settlement here satisfies the first three factors. Plaintiffs will analyze the fourth factor at final approval after Class Members have been notified of the Settlement and provided with an opportunity to object.

a. <u>The Settlement is the Result of Arm's Length Negotiation</u>

Courts have recognized that the involvement of a respected mediator provides a high degree of assurance that the settlement is the result of arm's length bargaining. *See Chavez v. Netflix, Inc.*, 162 Cal.App.4th 43, 52-53 (2008). The Settlement in this matter was the product of a full-day and an additional half-day mediation session with a respected mediator. Amended Yslas Decl. at ¶ 6. The negotiations were adversarial, conducted at arm's length, and tempered by the efforts of both sides to serve the interests of their clients. *Id.*

b. <u>Sufficient Investigation and Discovery Have Been Conducted</u>

Prior to attending mediation, Plaintiffs' Counsel thoroughly investigated the claims, applicable law, and potential defenses. *Id.* at ¶ 9. Plaintiffs' Counsel assessed the value to the class claims using the documents and data Defendant produced in informal discovery, including class data providing the number of Class Members, the number of workweeks in the Class Period, and the number of pay periods in the PAGA Period, Plaintiffs' personnel file, employment handbook and policies, job descriptions, and a random sampling of time and payroll records. *Id.*

c. <u>Plaintiffs' Counsel is Experienced in Similar Litigation</u>

Plaintiffs are represented by Wilshire Law Firm. *Id.* at ¶ 1. Plaintiffs' Counsel has extensive experience litigating wage and hour class actions on behalf of employees. *See id.* at ¶¶ 21-29. Plaintiffs' Counsel have been involved as counsel in numerous class actions that have resulted in millions of dollars in recovery. *See id.*

2. The Settlement is Reasonable Given the Strengths of Plaintiffs' Claims and the Risks and Expense of Further Litigation

A settlement does not have to provide 100% of the damages sought to be considered fair and reasonable. *See Rebney v. Wells Fargo Bank*, 220 Cal.App.3d 1117, 1139 (1991). Although the exposure Plaintiffs' Counsel calculated is substantial, the various risks at succeeding at class certification and through trial affected the valuation of the claims for settlement purposes. Amended Yslas Decl. at ¶ 12.

Minimum and Overtime Wages: Plaintiffs allege that Defendant failed to pay for all hours worked, including minimum, straight time, and overtime wages, by requiring class members to work off-the-clock, unpaid. Amended Yslas Decl. at ¶ 13. For purposes of calculating Defendant's liability based on a best-case scenario for Plaintiffs' and the Class, I estimate that Defendant's maximum potential exposure by assuming that all unpaid work time should have been paid at the overtime rate, and I assumed that Defendant is liable for one hour of unpaid worktime per workweek. *Id.* This results in an estimate of approximately $498,709.68 (18389 workweeks x $18.08 hourly rate x 1.5 overtime rate x 1 hour of unpaid work per workweek), but I applied a risk discount based on a 50% chance of succeeding at class certification and a 40% chance of succeeding at trial on the merits because liability depends on whether Defendant knew or should have known that class members were working off-the-clock, yielding a realistic damage estimate of approximately $$99,741.94 ($498,709.68 x 50% x 40%). *Id.*

Meal Periods: With respect to the meal period claim, Plaintiffs allege that Defendant required Plaintiffs and similarly situated class members to either work in lieu of taking meal periods, or their meal periods were untimely or interrupted. Amended Yslas Decl. at ¶ 14. My expert analyzed Defendant's timekeeping records and found that approximately 69.9% of all meal break violations consisting of short, late, or missed meal periods. *Id.* Therefore, potential liability for the meal period claim is approximately $745,624.64 (58,999 shifts x $18.08 hourly rate x 69.9% violation rate). *Id.* After taking into account the difficulty of certifying and proving meal period claims, as well as Defendant's contention that the claim lacks merit and a 69.9% violation rate is unrealistic, I discounted this figure based on a 40% chance of succeeding at class certification and a 40% chance of succeeding at trial, yielding a realistic damage estimate of approximately $$119,299.94 ($745,624.64 x 40% x 40%). *Id.*

Rest Breaks: With respect to the rest period claim, Plaintiffs allege that Defendant required them and similarly situated class members to work in lieu of taking rest periods, remain on-call during their rest periods or their rest periods were interrupted. Amended Yslas Decl. at ¶ 15. Assuming a 70% violation rate for the class period based on Plaintiffs' and other class members' experience working for Defendant, Defendant's potential liability for the rest period claim is approximately $807,819.82 (63,829 shifts x $18.08 hourly rate x 70% violation rate); however, I discounted this figure to account for the difficulty of certifying and proving rest period claims, particularly because rest periods do not have to be recorded, and to account for the possibility of Class Members voluntarily choosing to forego a rest period. *Id.* Because this claim would have relied exclusively on Class Member testimony, I discounted this claim based on a 30% chance of succeeding at class certification and a 30% chance of succeeding at trial, yielding a realistic damage estimate of approximately $72,703.78 ($807,819.82 x 30% x 30%). *Id.*

Reimbursements: Plaintiffs' reimbursement claim was based on the allegation that Defendant required Class Members to use their personal cellphones on a daily basis to communicate with management. Amended Yslas Decl. at ¶ 16. Additionally, employees were required to wear shirts with the company logo, however, Defendant did not reimburse its employees for costs of laundering their uniforms. *Id*. Based on Plaintiffs' estimate that they incurred $30 in unreimbursed expenses per month, Plaintiffs' Counsel assumed each Class Member incurred $30 in unreimbursed expenses per month in calculating potential exposure to be approximately $137,917.50 for this claim. *Id*. However, Defendant argued that these expenses were not required by Defendant, and that it could not have known that these expenses were being incurred. Accordingly, Plaintiffs' Counsel could not attribute any value to this claim in terms of settlement value. *Id.*

Derivative Penalties: With respect to Plaintiffs' derivative claims for statutory and civil penalties, Plaintiffs estimated that Defendant's realistic potential liability is approximately $1,408,751.04. Amended Yslas Decl. at ¶ 17. Defendant's maximum potential liability for waiting time penalties is approximately $647,951.04 (132 employees x $18.08 hourly rate x 8 hours/day x 30 days) based on approximately 132 terminated class members during the 3-year statute of limitations period, approximately $424,000.00 (106 employees x $4,000 statutory maximum) for inaccurate wage statements based on approximately 106 class members who worked during the 1-year statute of limitations period, and approximately $336,800 for PAGA violations based on the Court assessing a $100 penalty for initial violations for all 3,368 pay periods within the PAGA period. *Id* . In light of the foregoing, I believe that it would be unrealistic to expect the Court to award the full $1,408,751.04 in penalties given Defendant's defenses, the contested nature of Plaintiffs' claims, the challenges of establishing willfulness as applicable, and the discretionary nature of penalties. *Id* . Considering that the underlying claims are realistically estimated to be approximately $502,805.85, such a disproportionate award would also raise due process concerns. As such, I discounted these figures to account for the risk and uncertainty of prevailing at trial, resulting in a realistic evaluation of approximately $87,473.39 ($647,951.04 x 45% x 30%) for waiting time penalty claims, approximately $67,840.00 ($647,915.04 x 40% x 40%) for wage statement penalty claims, and $33,680.00 for PAGA penalties. *Id.*

C. The Requested Service Payment is Reasonable

Plaintiffs seek a class representative service payment of up to $10,000.00 (per plaintiff) for accepting the responsibilities of representing the interests of the Class and potential costs that were not borne by any other Class Member. Settlement Agreement at § 3.2.1. A named plaintiff is eligible for payment that reasonably compensates them for undertaking and fulfilling a fiduciary duty to represent absent class members. *See Cellphone Termination Fee Cases*, 186 Cal.App.4th 1380, 1393 (2010); *Bell v. Farmers Ins. Exch.*, 115 Cal.App.4th 715, 726 (2004).

Throughout this case, Plaintiffs assisted counsel in gathering evidence necessary to prosecute the claims, maintained regular contact with counsel, was available on the day of mediation to answer questions, and reviewed the Settlement to ensure it was fair to the Class. Amended Jones Decl. at ¶ 7; Amended Soto Decl. at ¶ 7. No action would likely have been taken by Class Members individually and no compensation would have been recovered for them, but for Plaintiffs' services on behalf of the Class. By actively pursuing this action, Plaintiffs furthered the California public policy goal of enforcing the State's wage and hour laws. *See Sav-On*, 34 Cal.4th at 340. The requested class representative service payment is reasonable and should be preliminarily approved. Plaintiffs have provided a declaration regarding their work performed to date and will provide additional information as requested or required by the Court at final approval.

D. The Requested Attorneys' Fees and Costs Are Reasonable

The purpose of an attorneys' fee award in class action litigation is to reward counsel who invested in a case despite the risk of non-payment and achieved a substantial positive result for the class. California courts routinely award attorneys' fees equaling one-third or more of the potential value of the common fund. *See Chavez*, 162 Cal.App.4th at 66, fn. 11 ("Empirical studies show that, regardless of whether the percentage method or the lodestar method is used, fee awards in class actions average around one-third of the recovery.").

Plaintiffs seek appointment of Wilshire Law Firm as Class Counsel. The attorneys performed significant work and expended litigation costs in prosecuting this matter with no guarantee of payment. Amended Yslas Decl. at ¶ 19. Plaintiffs' Counsel seeks preliminary approval for $166,666.67 in attorneys' fees, which is up to one-third of the Gross Settlement Amount, and up to $25,000.00 in reimbursement of litigation costs. Given the work performed in this matter, the extensive information exchange, and the substantial recovery obtained on behalf of the Class, Plaintiffs' Counsel achieved a settlement through efficient and diligent work. *See generally*, Amended Yslas Decl. At final approval, Plaintiffs' Counsel will fully brief the merits of its request for the award of attorneys' fees and litigation costs.

V. CONCLUSION

The Parties have negotiated a fair and reasonable settlement of the class claims in light of the risks presented in this case. Plaintiffs have presented the materials and information necessary to demonstrate that the requirements for preliminary approval have been met, and therefore respectfully requests that the Court preliminarily approve the Settlement and schedule a date for the final approval hearing.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: February 27, 2026 **WILSHIRE LAW FIRM**

By:______________________________

John Y. Yslas
Emily Borman
Diego Aviles
Harry Erganyan
Mariam Nazaretyan
Attorneys for Plaintiffs Jessica Marie Jones and Aundrae Allen Soto