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SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

FOR THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES – SPRING STREET COURTHOUSE

EDDIE LOPEZ, individually, ANTHONY GONZALEZ, individually, on behalf of all others similarly situated, the State of California, and other aggrieved persons,

Plaintiffs,

v.

BRIO WATER TECHNOLOGY, INC., a California corporation; and DOES 1 through 10, inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No.: 24STCV05176

[Assigned for All Purposes to the Honorable William F. Highberger, Dept. 10]

DECLARATION OF BENJAMIN H. HABER IN SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFFS' MOTION FOR FINAL APPROVAL OF CLASS ACTION AND PAGA SETTLEMENT

Final Approval Hearing:
Date: December 8, 2026
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Dept.: 10

Complaint filed: February 29, 2024
FAC filed: June 28, 2024
SAC filed: April 9, 2026
Trial date: None set

DECLARATION OF BENJAMIN H. HABER

I, Benjamin H. Haber, declare as follows:

1. I am an attorney at law licensed to practice before all courts of the State of California. I am a Partner at Wilshire Law Firm, PLC ("WLF" or "Class Counsel"), counsel of record for Plaintiffs Eddie Lopez and Anthony Gonzalez ("Plaintiffs"). I have personal knowledge of the facts set forth in this declaration and could and would competently testify to them under oath if called as a witness.

2. I submit this declaration in support of Plaintiffs' Motion for Final Approval of Class Action and PAGA Settlement (the "Motion").

3. Plaintiffs are represented by WLF. The attorneys at WLF performed significant work and expended litigation costs in prosecuting this matter with no guarantee of payment.

4. WLF was selected by Best Lawyers and U.S. News & World Report as one of the nation's Best Law Firms since 2020 and is comprised of more than 100 attorneys and over 600 employees. WLF is actively and continuously practicing in employment litigation, representing employees in both individual and class actions in both state and federal courts throughout California.

5. WLF is qualified to handle this litigation because its attorneys are experienced in litigating individual, class, and representative actions involving employment and wage-and-hour law. WLF has handled, and is currently handling, many wage and hour class actions, as well as class actions involving consumer rights and data privacy litigation.

6. I am a Partner at WLF. I graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles, in 2012 and received my Juris Doctor from the University of California, Hastings College of the Law (now the University of California College of Law, San Francisco) in 2016. During law school, I was a member of the executive board for the *Hastings Law Journal*, a student mediator at the San Francisco Superior Court, Small Claims Division, and a managing editor for *SCOCAblog,* which continues to be a leading online publication for the analysis of trends and cases before the California Supreme Court. Since I graduated from law school, my legal work has focused primarily on wage-and-hour class and representative action litigation, and I have helped obtain more than

one hundred class and representative action settlements on behalf of tens of thousands of workers in California. I was also selected as a "Southern California Rising Star" for each year between 2024 and 2027.

7. I have been appointed as class counsel in numerous wage-and-hour class and representative actions throughout California. Below is a non-exhaustive list of cases where I was appointed or I and other members of WLF were appointed as class counsel:

a. *Colter v. Propulsion Controls Engineering*, San Diego County, Case No. 37-2020-00030682-CU-OE-CTL; Motion for Final Approval granted on October 28, 2022;

b. *Rodriguez v. Modesto Restaurant Group, LLC*, Stanislaus County, Case No. CV-21-000269; Motion for Final Approval granted on January 10, 2023;

c. *Kingsbury v. Caravan Foods II, Inc.*, Alameda County, Case No. RG21096357; Motion for Final Approval granted on January 31, 2023;

d. *Frias-Estrada v. Trek Retail Corporation*, Contra Costa County, Case No. MSC20-01916; Motion for Final Approval granted on March 3, 2023;

e. *Varez v. Valley Connection, LLC dba Carl's Jr.*, Merced County, Case No. 22CV-00985; Motion for Final Approval granted on April 27, 2023;

f. *Reyes v. Everytable, PBC, et al.*, Los Angeles County, Case No. 21STCV35987; Motion for Final Approval granted on May 3, 2023;

g. *Ortiz v. Tara Materials, Inc.*, San Diego County, Case No. 37-2021-0001473-CU-OE-CTL; Motion for Final Approval granted on May 30, 2023;

h. *Cruz-Sanchez v. Eagle Lath & Plaster, Inc.*, Sacramento County, Case No. 34-2021-00293739-CU-OE-GDS; Motion for Final Approval granted on May 30, 2023;

i. *Garduno v. New Generation Framing, Inc., et al.*, Stanislaus County, Case No. CV-21-000544; Motion for Final Approval granted on August 11, 2023;

j. *Hernandez, et al. v. Burford Farming Company, Inc.*, Fresno County, Case No. 21CECG03817; Motion for Final Approval granted on August 21, 2023;

k. *Barajas v. Final Phase Construction, Inc.*, San Bernardino County, Case No.

CIVSB2118622; Motion for Final Approval granted on September 13, 2023;

l. *Jaimes, et al. v. Infiniti Health LLC*, Los Angeles County, Case No. 22STCV07261; Motion for Final Approval granted on October 17, 2023;

m. *Nunez v. Gabriel Container*, Los Angeles County, Case No. 21STCV09787; Motion for Final Approval granted on November 2, 2023;

n. *Gutierrez v. Next Level Door & Millwork, Inc.*, Riverside County, Case No. CVRI2105455; Motion for Final Approval granted on January 11, 2024;

o. *Lupercio v. Western CNC, Inc.*, San Diego County, Case No. 37-2021-00010314-CU-OE-CTL; Motion for Final Approval granted on January 26, 2024;

p. *Jackson, et al. v. Apple Valley Communications, Inc.*, *et al.*, San Bernardino County, Case No. CIVSB2124721; Motion for Final Approval granted on February 1, 2024;

q. *Cuadras, et al. v. Guinn Corporation*, Kern County, Case No. BCV-21-101520; Motion for Final Approval granted on February 22, 2024;

r. *Canton, et al v. John B. Sanfilippo & Sons, Inc.*, Merced County, Case No. 22-CV-01145; Motion for Final Approval granted on March 15, 2024;

s. *Williams v. Total Longterm Care, Inc., et al.*, San Bernardino County, Case No. CIVSB2213347; Motion for Final Approval granted on April 2, 2024;

t. *Espinoza v. Delallo's Italian Foods, Inc.*, Butte County, Case No. 21CV02640; Motion for Final Approval granted on April 24, 2024;

u. *Meza v. Argus Management Company, LLC*, *et al.*, Los Angeles County, Case No. 21STCV31612; Motion for Final Approval granted on May 20, 2024;

v. *Wade v. Mallory Safety and Supply LLC*, Siskiyou County, Case No. 23CV00951; Motion for Final Approval granted on July 11, 2024;

w. *Abarca-Rueda, et al. v. Foley Family Wines, Inc., et al.*, Sonoma County, Case No. S-CV-268148; Motion for Final Approval granted on August 21, 2024;

x. *Aguilar v. American Pasteurization Company, Inc., et al.*, Sacramento County, Case No. 34-2021-00312027-CU-OE-GDS; Motion for Final Approval granted

on September 3, 2024;

y. *Hayes, et al. v. Gonzales Park, LLC, et al.*, Butte County, Case No. 21CV02456; Motion for Final Approval Granted on May 1, 2024;

z. *Hernandez v. KW California, et al.*, Kern County, Case No. BCV-23-100346; Motion for Final Approval Granted on December 4, 2024;

aa. *Arias v. The Shyft Group GTB, LLC, et al.,* Los Angeles County, Case No.22STCV37390; Motion for Final Approval granted on December 3, 2024; and

bb. *Barajas Maya v. United Facilities Group, Inc., et al.*, Santa Clara County, Case No. 22CV397353; Motion for Final Approval granted on November 22, 2024;

8. Daniel J. Kramer is a tenth-year Senior Attorney at Wilshire Law Firm, PLC. He was admitted to practice law in the State of California and the Central, Eastern, Southern, and Northern Districts of California. He graduated from Stanford University with a Bachelor of Arts in History and Political Science, and received his Juris Doctor from Loyola Law School, Los Angeles in 2016. During law school, Mr. Kramer was a research editor for the Loyola of Los Angeles International and Comparative Law Review. Before joining Wilshire Law Firm, he practiced briefly at a firm that focused on municipal law and code enforcement and then moved to a respected plaintiff-side firm to practice wage and hour class and representative action litigation. Mr. Kramer currently bills at an hourly rate of $850.00.

9. He has several years of work experience litigating wage and hour class and representative actions and has been appointed as class counsel in numerous cases, including:

a. *Hayes, et al. v. Gonzales Park, LLC, et al*., Butte County, Case No. 21CV02456; Motion for Final Approval granted on May 1, 2024;

b. *Hernandez v. KW California, et al*., Kern County, Case No. BCV-23-100346; Motion for Final Approval granted on December 4, 2024;

c. *Petrossian v. The Testing Company LLC*, Los Angeles County, Case No. 22STCV34526; Motion for Final Approval granted on December 23, 2024;

d. *Conchas Jimenez v. The Castine Group*, Santa Clara County, Case No. 21CV375173; Motion for Final Approval granted on February 6, 2025;

e. *Svay v. Certainteed, LLC*, Madera County, Case No. MCV093066; Motion for Final Approval granted on May 20, 2025;

f. *Chavira, et al. v. Mark III Construction, Inc*., Sacramento County, Case No. 34-2021-00308972-CU-OE-GDS; Motion for Final Approval granted on January 30, 2026; and

g. *Mendoza, et al. v. OSI Industries, LLC*, Riverside County, Case No. CVRI2203101; Motion for Final Approval granted on February 27, 2026.

10. Chase Stern is an Associate Attorney at WLF. He has more than a decade of complex litigation experience, which has been largely dedicated to representing individual and corporate entity plaintiffs in complex class action and commercial litigation in state and federal courts throughout the country. He is admitted to practice law before all courts in the State of California, the United States District Courts for the Northern, Southern, and Central Districts of California, and the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Over the course of his career, he has been appointed as class counsel in numerous class action matters throughout California, including wage-and-hour cases. He holds a B.S. in Finance and Entrepreneurship & Emerging Enterprises from Syracuse University and a J.D. from California Western School of Law, graduating from both institutions with honors. Mr. Stern currently bills at an hourly rate of $800.00.

11. Karen L. Wallace is a Senior Attorney at WLF. She earned a Ph.D. in English at the University of California, Los Angeles, and taught literature and writing for many years. She returned to school in 2007 and earned a J.D. with a public service distinction from Southwestern Law School in 2010, when she was admitted to the California State Bar. Her practice has focused on complex wage and hour and consumer cases on behalf of plaintiffs, and she has litigated class and representative actions in both state and federal courts throughout California. Ms. Wallace currently bills at an hourly rate of $950.00.

12. Justin F. Marquez is a former Senior Partner at WLF who was actively involved in the litigation and resolution of this Action from its inception through December 2024. He graduated magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa from University of California, Los Angeles's

College Honors Program in 2004 with Bachelor of Arts degrees in History and Japanese. He graduated from Notre Dame Law School with a Juris Doctorate. He was admitted to the State Bar of California in February 2009. His practice focused primarily on advocating for the rights of consumers and employees in class action and appellate litigation. He received numerous awards for his legal work: from 2017 to 2020, Super Lawyers selected him as a "Southern California Rising Star" and from 2022 to 2025, he was selected as a "Southern California Super Lawyer"; he was selected as one of the "Best Lawyers in America" from 2023 to 2025; and in 2024, he, along with his colleagues at WLF, received a CLAY (California Lawyer Attorneys of the Year) award for their work on a false advertising case against Apple, which ultimately led to a $25 million settlement. He was also selected to speak at multiple CELA conferences throughout his career; in 2019, he spoke on the topic of manageability of class actions at CELA's 2019 Advanced Wage & Hour Seminar, and in 2024, he spoke on the topic of dealing with multiple cases against the same defendant at CELA's 2024 Advanced Wage & Hour Seminar. He served as lead or co-lead in negotiating class action settlements worth over $10 million in gross recovery to class members for each year since 2020 through 2024, including over $37.5 million in 2022 and over $75 million in 2023. Mr. Marquez billed at an hourly rate of $1,500.00 during the pendency of the Action.

13. Alan Wilcox was a Senior Attorney at WLF. He obtained his Bachelor's degree from the University of California, Berkeley in 2007. He graduated from Pepperdine University's School of Law and became a member of the California State Bar in 2012. Throughout his career up until his employment at WLF, Mr. Wilcox worked as a civil litigation attorney at multiple law firms. He has represented clients in both state and federal Courts in a wide variety of matters, including contract disputes, wrongful foreclosure, unlawful detainer, divorce, product defect, tort, and employment. Mr. Wilcox billed at an hourly rate of $950.00 during the pendency of the Action.

14. Conor J.D. Gomez was an Attorney at WLF. He was responsible for finalizing resolved class action and PAGA matters, ensuring that they were carried out efficiently through the approval and distribution process in compliance with court orders. He graduated from the

University of California, Los Angeles School of Law in May 2020. Mr. Gomez passed the California Bar Examination on his first attempt and was admitted to practice in May 2021. He is admitted to practice law in the State of California and before the Northern District of California. Mr. Gomez billed at an hourly rate of $575.00 during the pendency of the Action.

15. In support of the reasonableness of WLF's hourly rates, a true and correct copy of an excerpt from the *2025 Real Rate Report* published by Wolters Kluwer is attached as **Exhibit 1**. The Real Rate Report is widely relied upon in the legal industry because it is derived from anonymized billing data taken from actual law firm invoices that were submitted to clients and approved for payment, rather than from voluntary surveys or self-reported rates. Although the report refers to "2025" rates, the data reflects rates charged by law firms during the first half of 2024 and therefore represents the most recent available objective evidence of prevailing market rates.

a. The report provides rate information filtered by geographic market, practice type, and timekeeper role. Page 33 of the report reflects rates drawn from 565 partners and 518 associates practicing in Los Angeles. In that dataset, the third-quartile hourly rate is $1,365 for partners and $982 for associates. These figures confirm that Los Angeles is a high-rate legal market and that experienced litigation partners routinely bill in excess of $1,300 per hour based on rates actually paid by clients in 2024.

b. The 2025 Real Rate Report's practice-area-specific data further supports this conclusion. Page 81 provides third-quartile rates for the detailed practice category "Employment and Labor: Other Litigation," which is directly analogous to the type of work performed in this case. That dataset includes 24 partners and 14 associates and shows a third-quartile rate of $1,252 per hour for partners and $564 per hour for associates. These figures demonstrate that even within the specialized employment litigation market, partners regularly bill well above $1,200 per hour based on rates actually charged to clients. When this practice-specific benchmark is considered together with the broader regional market data,

it confirms that WLF's hourly rate for highly experienced counsel in a representative employment action falls within the upper range of prevailing market rates rather than outside it.

16. The Real Rate Report does not provide 4th quartile rates, presumably to provide a sense of the average attorney billing rates. Importantly, the third quartile represents the point below which 75% of rates fall; it is not a cap on reasonable rates. By definition, a substantial portion of partners in the relevant benchmark market routinely bill above that level, particularly those with extensive experience, specialized expertise, and/or leadership roles in complex litigation. Courts evaluating fee requests recognize that lead counsel in complex or representative actions may reasonably bill above median or third-quartile benchmarks where their experience, results obtained, and responsibility justify higher rates.

17. We firmly believe WLF belongs in the 4th quartile of attorney billing rates in Los Angeles. As previously discussed, WLF is a nationally recognized employment litigation firm that has been named one of the nation's *Best Law Firms* by U.S. News & World Report and Best Lawyers since 2020, and its attorneys regularly litigate complex wage-and-hour class and representative actions throughout California.

18. In an article entitled "Big Law Rates Topping $2,000 Leave Value 'In Eye of Beholder,'" published by Bloomberg Law on June 9, 2022, author Roy Strom describes how Big Law firms have crossed the $2,000-per hour rate. Mr. Strom also notes that law firm rates have been increasing by just under 3% per year. A true and correct copy of the Strom article is attached as **Exhibit 2**.

19. WLF's hourly rates are comparable to those charged by other class action plaintiffs' counsel and the firms defending class actions and are well within the range of hourly rates that the Los Angeles legal marketplace would compensate counsel for similar services accomplishing similar results. For example, in *Bronshteyn v. State of California*, Los Angeles County Superior Ct. No. 19SMCV00057, Order Granting Plaintiff's Motion for Statutory Attorneys' Fees and Costs filed March 30, 2023, an employment action brought by two law firms (Levy, Vinick, Burrell & Hyams LLP and Law Offices of Wendy Musell), the court found that counsel's 2022 hourly rates

of $1,100 and $1,000 per hour were reasonable for the plaintiff's five senior attorneys, including $1,000 per hour for the plaintiff's lead counsel and $850 per hour for a senior associate. (*Bronshteyn v. Department of Consumer Affairs* (2025) 114 Cal.App.5th 537, 542 [337 Cal.Rptr.3d 113, 117], review denied (Dec. 17, 2025).) These rates were then augmented by a 1.75 lodestar multiplier and affirmed by the California Court of Appeals. The rates (and multiplier) requested here are well in line with those found reasonable in *Bronshteyn*. In *Tran v. Golden State FC LLC, et al*. (LASC Case No. BC699931), Fee Order filed 4/8/2022, the court found hourly rates of $1,300 per hour reasonable for plaintiff's lead attorney and $1,000 per hour reasonable for a 14-year attorney. The negative multiplier here is even more compelling given that Class Counsel represents approximately 269 Class Members.

20. WLF has performed significant work and incurred litigation costs in prosecuting this matter with no guarantee of any payment. The efforts expended by Class Counsel to achieve this result include the following:

a. investigating the claims and defenses at issue, including reviewing Plaintiffs' personnel files, a representative sampling Class Members' time and payroll records, and Defendant's Brio Water Technology, Inc. ("Defendant") written policies in effect during the relevant period and researching Defendant's organizational structure;

b. communicating with Plaintiffs;

c. filing the Action;

d. meeting and conferring with Defendant regarding case progress and attending status conferences;

e. responding to Defendant's Motion to Compel Arbitration, as well as to Defendant's appeal from the Court's January 17, 2025 ruling denying said Motion;

f. drafting and filing multiple amended complaints;

g. meeting and conferring with Defendant regarding mediation, including with respect to the Parties' informal discovery;

h. analyzing Defendant's informal production with the aid of a consultant regarding the extent of Defendant's liability and exposure;

i. preparing the mediation brief and damages model for use at mediation;

j. attending the mediation;

k. negotiating and finalizing the Agreement;

l. drafting and filing the Motion for Preliminary Approval and supporting documents;

m. attending the hearing on Motion for Preliminary Approval;

n. preparing and providing additional information for Class Members regarding the Settlement; and

o. drafting and filing the instant Motion for Final Approval and supporting documents.

21. WLF's current lodestar reflects the efficiencies achieved by attorneys experienced in this practice area with **179.6** hours of work resulting in **$152,210.00** in fees. The chart below shows the calculation of hours spent by each of WLF's attorneys on this case:

Attorney	**Hours**	**Hourly Rate**	**Total**
Benjamin H. Haber	49.5	$950.00	$47,025.00
Daniel J. Kramer	24.2	$850.00	$20,570.00
Chase M. Stern	72.6	$800.00	$58,080.00
Karen L. Wallace	19.7	$950.00	$18,715.00
Conor J.D. Gomez	13.6	$575.00	$7,820.00
TOTAL	**179.6**		**$152,210.00**

22. This amount surpasses the requested fee award of $136,666.67, resulting in a negative multiplier, and Class Counsel's lodestar does not include the time Class Counsel will spend at the Final Approval Hearing and assisting the Administrator following final approval.

Class Counsel dedicated significant resources to this case by dividing the tasks required according to skill level. The hours expended by each attorney were not duplicative and reflect the extensive investigation and analysis that was required to achieve this Settlement. This time could have been spent on other potentially lucrative cases.

23. Moreover, WLF has assumed the risk and costs of litigation purely on a contingency basis, and, while Plaintiffs are confident in the merits of their claims, a legitimate controversy exists as to each cause of action, posing an actual risk that Plaintiffs may not certify a class or prevail at trial. Such risks create obstacles that could have prevented recovery completely, meaning Class Counsel would have been left with no compensation for the resources invested in this case. Despite these risks, WLF took this case on a contingency basis to ensure that Class Members (a particularly vulnerable group of hourly paid workers) received compensation for their unpaid wages. As a result, Class Counsel were precluded from focusing on, or accepting, other cases that could have resulted in greater, and less risky, monetary gain.

24. WLF has incurred litigation costs of $26,997.79, including items such as fees for filing, service, mediation, and consultation. A true and correct copy of WLF's itemized list of costs incurred is attached as **Exhibit 3**. Because Class Counsel's actual costs exceed the agreed-upon maximum of $25,000.00, Class Counsel seek final approval of the full amount requested.

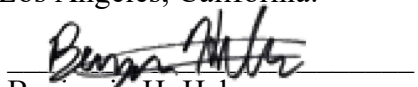
25. Class Counsel have negotiated a Settlement that they believe is fair, adequate, and reasonable based on their extensive experience litigating complex wage-and-hour cases.

26. On August 11, 2026, my office provided the LWDA notice of this Settlement and a copy of the Agreement. A true and correct copy of the LWDA email confirming receipt is attached as **Exhibit 4**.

27. To date, the LWDA has not responded or objected to the proposed Settlement.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on November 10, 2026 at Los Angeles, California.



Benjamin H. Haber

EXHIBIT 1



ELM Solutions

2025 Real Rate Report® powered by LegalVIEW® DynamicInsights

The industry's leading analysis of law firm rates, trends, and practices

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Solution:
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- Restart Acrobat and reopen the PDF.

A Letter to Our Readers

Welcome to the latest edition of the Real Rate Report®, the legal industry's most trusted benchmark for legal billing rates.

Since 2010, the Real Rate Report has helped legal departments and law firms make smarter decisions about pricing, resourcing, and vendor management. That hasn't changed. What has changed is how we deliver those insights.

This year, the Real Rate Report is powered by LegalVIEW® DynamicInsights—our new digital-first platform that brings the same trusted LegalVIEW data to life in a more interactive, flexible, and timely way. Leveraging Wolters Kluwer's LegalVIEW database, with over $200B in anonymized, approved, invoice data, LegalVIEW DynamicInsights offers dynamic filters, quarterly updates, and calendar-year alignment to help users tailor benchmarks to their unique needs, on demand.

The Real Rate Report remains a vital snapshot of the market, and we know many of you rely on it as a reference tool. But DynamicInsights goes further. It enables deeper exploration of rate trends by role, experience, geography, practice area, industry, and more. Whether you're negotiating rates, evaluating law firm performance, or planning budgets, DynamicInsights gives you the agility and precision today's legal environment demands.

As always, we welcome your feedback and thank our data contributors for making this work possible. We're proud to be your partner in legal analytics and look forward to continuing to deliver insights that drive better business outcomes.

Sincerely,



Brian Jorgenson
Vice President, Product Management
Wolters Kluwer ELM Solutions

Real Rate Report Overview

The Real Rate Report is powered by LegalVIEW DynamicInsights, a web-based solution that delivers dynamic, invoice-backed insights through approved legal billing rates. It enables legal professionals to analyze rate trends by role, experience, industry, geography, practice area, and more using the world's largest repository of legal spend data.

DynamicInsights leverages the same trusted LegalVIEW database that has powered the Real Rate Report for years, now encompassing over $200B+ in anonymized, approved legal invoice data. As with previous Real Rate Reports, our data is sourced from corporations' and law firms' e-billing and time management solutions. We have included lawyer and paralegal rate data filtered by specific practice and sub-practice areas, metropolitan areas, and types of matters. This level of granularity gives legal departments and law firms the precision they need to identify areas of opportunity.

What's different with DynamicInsights?

Same source, same methodology: DynamicInsights uses the same rigorous data validation and methodology as the Real Rate Report.

- **Enhanced flexibility:** With dynamic filters, DynamicInsights enables users to tailor benchmarks to their unique needs and on demand.
- **Full year data:** DynamicInsights now aligns to a calendar year view—January through December—replacing the previous July-to-June format used in the Real Rate Report, reducing confusion and improving consistency across reporting periods.
- **More up to date:** Unlike the annual and static Real Rate Report, DynamicInsights is refreshed quarterly, offering more timely insights.
- **Digital-first access:** Delivered via a secure online interface, users can interact with the data, bookmark views, and share insights in real time.

DynamicInsights provides the same level of credibility and analytical power long trusted in the Real Rate Report with more agility and transparency for today's legal environment.

2025 Real Rate Report use considerations

- Examines law firm rates over time
- Identifies rates by location, experience, firm size, areas of expertise, industry, and timekeeper role (i.e., partner, associate, and paralegal)
- Itemizes variables that drive rates up or down

All the analyses included in DynamicInsights and this report are derived from the actual rates charged by law firm professionals as recorded on invoices submitted and approved for payment.

Examining real, approved rate information, along with the ranges of those rates and their changes over time, highlights the role these variables play in driving aggregate legal cost and income. The analyses can energize questions for both corporate clients and law firm principals.

Legal departments might ask whether they are paying the right amount for different types of legal services, while law firm principals might ask whether they are charging the right amount for legal services and whether to modify their pricing approach.

Examples of data to consider when reviewing rates:

- **Industry** – Compare spend and rate trends across various industries
- **Practice area** – Analyze cost variations in different legal practice areas
- **Detailed practice area** – Drill down into niche legal specialties for precise benchmarking
- **Am Law** – Benchmark against top-ranked law firms for competitive rate analysis
- **City** – Understand rate trends in specific metropolitan areas
- **Country** – Gain a global perspective on legal costs and spend management
- **Role** – Assess legal spend distribution across different law firm roles

Real Rate Report Overview

Understanding key statistical terms

To help interpret the legal rate data presented in DynamicInsights and this report, it's important to understand the statistical measures used. Below are definitions of the core metrics:

- **Mean (average):** The sum of all rate values divided by the total number of values added. It provides a general sense of the central tendency of the rates but can be influenced by extreme values (outliers).
- **Median:** The middle value when all rates are arranged in ascending order. If there is an even number of rates being analyzed, the median is the average of the two middle rates. It is a robust measure of central tendency of rates that is less affected by outliers.
- **First quartile (Q1):** The value below which 25% of the rates fall. It marks the lower boundary of the middle 50% of the rates and helps identify the lower range of typical values.
- **Third quartile (Q3):** The value below which 75% of the rates fall. It marks the upper boundary of the middle 50% of the rates and helps identify the upper range of typical values.
- **n:** The number of unique timekeepers contributing to the data.

These metrics are used to provide a more nuanced view of legal rates, helping users identify trends, outliers, and benchmarks across various dimensions.

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- Increased efficiencies free up time for more value-add work

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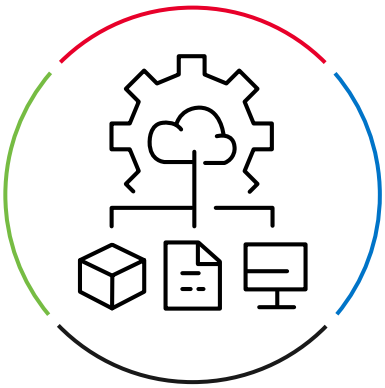
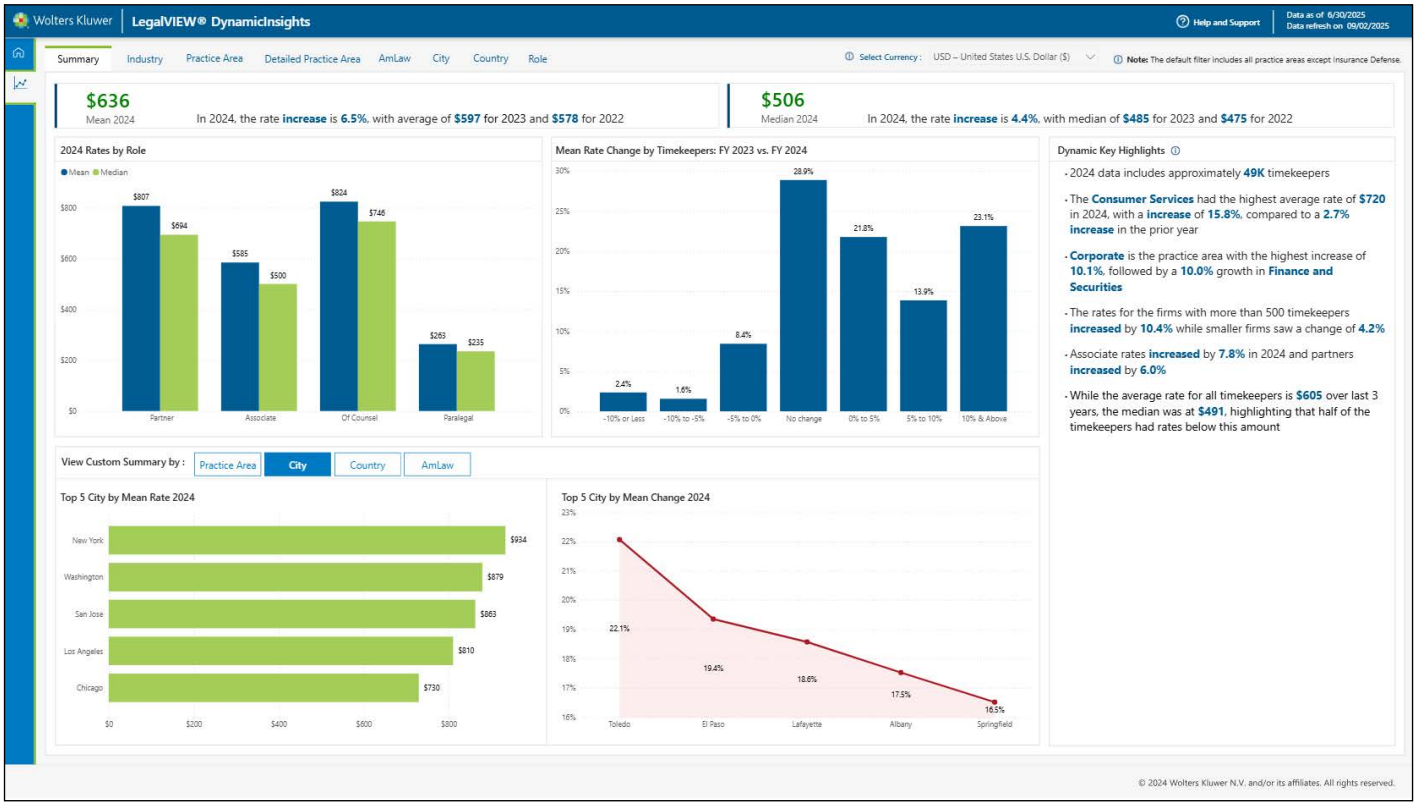
- **Enhanced Transparency & Collaboration:** Strengthens law firm-client relationships through data-driven transparency and benchmarking.
- **Insight-Driven Decision Making:** Enables analysis across key dimensions to support strategic negotiations and financial optimization.





Wolters Kluwer

Section I: High-Level Data Cuts

All data and analysis based on data collected thru Q2 2025

Section I: High-Level Data Cuts

Cities
By Role

2025 Real Rates for Associate and Partner **Trend Analysis - Mean**

City	Role	n	First Quartile	Median	Third Quartile	2025	2024	2023
Los Angeles CA	Partner	565	$517	$925	$1,365	$993	$979	$913
	Associate	518	$485	$720	$982	$761	$741	$684
Louisville KY	Partner	32	$291	$395	$500	$411	$395	$380
	Associate	19	$275	$290	$342	$304	$274	$268
Madison WI	Partner	10	$275	$420	$491	$420	$443	$563
Memphis TN	Partner	22	$325	$394	$470	$404	$428	$387
Miami FL	Partner	191	$250	$525	$733	$547	$570	$575
	Associate	128	$175	$330	$479	$357	$389	$393
Milwaukee WI	Partner	32	$364	$459	$649	$524	$581	$525
	Associate	18	$322	$455	$690	$498	$462	$404
Minneapolis MN	Partner	138	$475	$694	$918	$692	$673	$637
	Associate	111	$333	$450	$620	$485	$467	$432

Section I: High-Level Data Cuts

Cities
By Years of Experience

2025 Real Rates for Partner **Trend Analysis - Mean**

City	Years of Experience	n	First Quartile	Median	Third Quartile	2025	2024	2023
Phoenix AZ	21 or More Years	25	$350	$490	$674	$559	$499	$540
Pittsburgh PA	Fewer Than 21 Years	41	$501	$600	$810	$669	$658	$599
	21 or More Years	72	$480	$691	$860	$705	$733	$669
Portland ME	21 or More Years	18	$386	$435	$484	$418	$421	$381
Portland OR	Fewer Than 21 Years	17	$402	$465	$525	$599	$536	$509
	21 or More Years	32	$470	$525	$639	$594	$607	$553
Raleigh NC	21 or More Years	12	$396	$475	$510	$489	$477	$477
Richmond VA	Fewer Than 21 Years	10	$604	$703	$855	$707	$746	$687
	21 or More Years	24	$431	$713	$1,084	$739	$756	$726
Salt Lake City UT	Fewer Than 21 Years	12	$395	$447	$459	$422	$445	$412
	21 or More Years	16	$350	$463	$521	$480	$433	$407
San Diego CA	21 or More Years	33	$438	$785	$1,334	$894	$898	$882

Section II: Industry Analysis

All data and analysis based on data collected thru Q2 2025

Section II: Industry Analysis

Consumer Services

By Detailed Practice Area and Matter Type

2025 - Real Rates for Associate and Partner **Trend Analysis - Mean**

Practice Area	Matter Type	Role	n	First Quartile	Median	Third Quartile	2025	2024	2023
Employment and Labor: Discrimination, Retaliation and Harassment / EEO	**Litigation**	Partner	27	$393	$495	$613	$509	$463	$436
		Associate	19	$400	$475	$493	$437	$387	$370
Employment and Labor: Other	**Litigation**	Partner	24	$564	$692	$1,252	$956	$782	$683
		Associate	14	$384	$469	$564	$553	$484	$458
	Non-Litigation	Partner	25	$450	$574	$695	$579	$573	$548
		Associate	25	$397	$450	$525	$465	$472	$456
Intellectual Property: Patents	**Non-Litigation**	Partner	41	$350	$595	$691	$605	$652	$634
		Associate	51	$208	$373	$517	$382	$378	$389
Real Estate: Leasing	**Non-Litigation**	Partner	17	$410	$539	$865	$616	$664	$667
		Associate	10	$278	$404	$617	$482	$444	$478
Real Estate: Other	**Non-Litigation**	Partner	58	$480	$626	$940	$694	$612	$540
		Associate	39	$320	$460	$733	$503	$468	$415

EXHIBIT 2

Free Newsletter Sign Up

Business & Practice

Big Law Rates Topping $2,000 Leave Value ‘In Eye of Beholder’

By Roy Strom

Column
June 9, 2022, 2:30 AM

Welcome back to the Big Law Business column on the changing legal marketplace written by me, Roy Strom. Today, we look at a new threshold for lawyers’ billing rates and why it’s so difficult to put a price on high-powered attorneys. Sign up to receive this column in your inbox on Thursday mornings. Programming note: Big Law Business will be off next week.

Some of the nation’s top law firms are charging more than $2,000 an hour, setting a new pinnacle after a two-year burst in demand.

Partners at Hogan Lovells and Latham & Watkins have crossed the threshold, according to court documents in bankruptcy cases filed within the past year.

Other firms came close to the mark, billing more than $1,900, according to the documents. They include Kirkland & Ellis, Simpson Thacher & Bartlett, Boies Schiller Flexner, and Sidley Austin.

Simpson Thacher & Bartlett litigator Bryce Friedman, who helps big-name clients out of jams, especially when they’re accused of fraud, charges $1,965 every 60 minutes, according to a court document.

In need of a former acting US Solicitor General? Hogan Lovells partner Neal Katyal bills time at $2,465 an hour. Want to hire famous litigator David Boies? That’ll cost $1,950 an hour (at least). Reuters was first to report their fees.

Eye-watering rates are nothing new for Big Law firms, which typically ask clients to pay higher prices at least once a year, regardless of broader market conditions.

“Value is in the eye of the beholder,” said John O’Connor, a San Francisco-based expert on legal fees. “The perceived value of a good lawyer can reach into the multi-billions of dollars.”

Kirkland & Ellis declined to comment on its billing rates. None of the other firms responded to requests to comment.

Charge It Up

Big Law firms are crossing the $2,000-an-hour threshold after two years of surging rates driven by an increase in demand for lawyers.

Firm	Highest Billing Rate
Hogan Lovells	$2,465
Latham & Watkins	$2,075
Kirkland & Ellis	$1,995
Simpson Thacher & Bartlett	$1,965
Boies Schiller Flexner	$1,950
Sidley Austin	$1,900

Source: Court documents

Bloomberg Law

Law firms have been more successful raising rates than most other businesses over the past 15 years.

Law firm rates rose by roughly 40 percent from 2007 to 2020, or just short of 3 percent per year, Thomson Reuters Peer Monitor data show. US inflation rose by about 28% during that time.

The 100 largest law firms in the past two years achieved their largest rate increases in more than a decade, Peer Monitor says. The rates surged more than 6% in 2020 and grew another 5.6% through November of last year. Neither level had been breached since 2008.

The price hikes occurred during a once-in-a-decade surge in demand for law services, which propelled profits at firms to new levels. Fourteen law firms reported average profits per equity partner in 2021 over $5 million, according to data from The American Lawyer. That was up from six the previous year.

The highest-performing firms, where lawyers charge the highest prices, have outperformed their smaller peers. Firms with leading practices in markets such as mergers and acquisitions, capital markets, and real estate were forced to turn away work at some points during the pandemic-fueled surge.

Firms receive relatively tepid pushback from their giant corporate clients, especially when advising on bet-the-company litigation or billion-dollar deals.

The portion of bills law firms collected—a sign of how willingly clients pay full-freight—rose during the previous two years after drifting lower following the Great Financial Crisis. Collection rates last year breached 90% for the first time since 2009, Peer Monitor data show.

Professional rules prohibit lawyers from charging “unconscionable” or “unreasonable” rates. But that doesn’t preclude clients from paying any price they perceive as valuable, said Jacqueline Vinaccia, a San Diego-based lawyer who testifies on lawyer fee disputes.

Lawyers’ fees are usually only contested when they will be paid by a third party.

That happened recently with Hogan Lovells’ Katyal, whose nearly $2,500 an hour fee was contested in May by a US trustee overseeing a bankruptcy case involving a Johnson & Johnson unit facing claims its talc-based powders caused cancer.

The trustee, who protects the financial interests of bankruptcy estates, argued Katyal’s fee was more than $1,000 an hour higher than rates charged by lawyers in the same case at Jones Day and Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom.

A hearing on the trustee’s objection is scheduled for next week. Hogan Lovells did not respond to a request for comment on the objection.

Vinaccia said the firm’s options will be to reduce its fee, withdraw from the case, or argue the levy is reasonable, most likely based on Katyal’s extensive experience arguing appeals.

Still, the hourly rate shows just how valuable the most prestigious lawyers’ time can be—even compared to their highly compensated competitors.

“If the argument is that Jones Day and Skadden Arps are less expensive, then you’re already talking about the cream of the crop, the top-of-the-barrel law firms,” Vinaccia said. “I can’t imagine a case in which I might argue those two firms are more reasonable than the rates I’m dealing with.”

Worth Your Time

On Cravath: Cravath Swaine & Moore is heading to Washington, opening its first new office since 1973 by hiring former heads of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission and Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. Meghan Tribe reports the move comes as Big Law firms are looking to add federal government expertise as clients face more regulatory scrutiny.

On Big Law Promotions: It’s rare that associates get promotions to partner in June, but Camille Vasquez is now a Brown Rudnick partner after she shot to fame representing Johnny Depp in his defamation trial against ex-wife Amber Heard.

On Working From Home: I spoke this week with Quinn Emanuel’s John Quinn about why he thinks law firm life is never going back to the office-first culture that was upset by the pandemic. Listen to the podcast here.



00:00:00

That's it for this week! Thanks for reading and please send me your thoughts, critiques, and tips.

To contact the reporter on this story: Roy Strom in Chicago at rstrom@bloomberglaw.com

To contact the editors responsible for this story: Chris Opfer at copfer@bloomberglaw.com; John Hughes at jhughes@bloombergindustry.com

Documents

Trustee's Objection

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EXHIBIT 3

Wilshire Law Firm, PLC

Transaction Detail by Account

All Transactions

Accrual Basis

Type	Date	Num	Memo	Description	Amount	Balance
Mediation Fees						
	05/07/2025	662888	Mediation Fee - Judicate West	50% Mediation Fee	$12,450.00	$12,450.00
	11/04/2025	679077	Mediation Fee - Judicate West	Post Mediation Fee	$3,600.00	$16,050.00
Total MEDIATION FEES					$16,050.00	$16,050.00
Consultant Fees						
	09/04/2025	13648	Consultant Fee - Berger Consulting Group LLC	7.90 hours of work	$5,332.50	$5,332.50
	01/31/2025	INV116506-01-...	USA Express Legal & Investigative SVCS		$85.00	$5,417.50
	08/28/2025	INV141278-01	USA Express Legal & Investigative SVCS	Asset Stage 1 - : Brio Water Technology, Inc. & Frank Melkonian (CEO of Brio Water Technology, Inc.)	$660.00	$6,077.50
Total CONSULTANT FEES					$6,077.50	$6,077.50
Filing Fees						
	03/01/2024	22345436	Filing Fee - One Legal LLC	Complaint	$1,497.05	$1,497.05
	03/28/2024		Department of Industrial Relations	PAGA Notice	$75.00	$1,572.05
	04/26/2024	75080	Process Serve Fee - Valpro Attorney Services, LLC	Summons	$144.00	$1,716.05
	04/29/2024	75131	Filing Fee - Valpro Attorney Services, LLC	POS	$45.00	$1,761.05
	05/07/2024	22841141	Filing Fee - One Legal LLC	Notice	$20.74	$1,781.79
	05/13/2024	22886698	Filing Fee - One Legal LLC	Jury Fees	$175.17	$1,956.96
	06/21/2024	23176669	Filing Fee - One Legal LLC	CMC	$16.42	$1,973.38
	06/24/2024	23181328	Filing Fee - One Legal LLC	JSC	$20.74	$1,994.12
	07/01/2024	23233739	Filing Fee - One Legal LLC	Amended Complaint	$20.74	$2,014.86
	08/01/2024	337676	Service Fee - Case Anywhere, LLC		$153.24	$2,168.10
	09/03/2024	23644758	Filing Fee - One Legal LLC	Opposition	$20.74	$2,188.84
	09/11/2024	23707472	Filing Fee - One Legal LLC	Notice	$20.74	$2,209.58
	09/17/2024	23742369	Filing Fee - One Legal LLC	Notice	$20.80	$2,230.38
	11/05/2024	349228	Service Fee - Case Anywhere, LLC		$171.00	$2,401.38
	12/11/2024	85260	Valpro Attorney Services, LLC	Deliver Courtesy Copies	$141.00	$2,542.38
	12/23/2024	114485	Jilio-Ryan Hunter & Olsen, Inc.	Certified Copies	$234.55	$2,776.93
	02/03/2025	361319	Case Anywhere, LLC		$147.00	$2,923.93
	02/21/2025	24763648	Filing Fee - One Legal LLC	SCR	$23.44	$2,947.37
	02/24/2025		Los Angeles Superior Court	Document Purchase	$8.00	$2,955.37
	03/05/2025	372344	Service Fee - Case Anywhere, LLC		$85.00	$3,040.37
	04/04/2025	385053	Service Fee - Case Anywhere, LLC		$49.00	$3,089.37
	06/01/2025	396978	Service Fee - Case Anywhere, LLC		$49.00	$3,138.37
	06/02/2025	409027	Service Fee - Case Anywhere, LLC		$49.00	$3,187.37
	07/01/2025	421330	Service Fee - Case Anywhere, LLC		$49.00	$3,236.37
	08/04/2025	433920	Service Fee - Case Anywhere, LLC		$49.00	$3,285.37
	08/27/2025	CC083125TA-3037	Filing Fee - One Legal LLC	Notice	$23.44	$3,308.81
	08/28/2025	CC083125TA-2940	Filing Fee - One Legal LLC	Notice	$25.81	$3,334.62
	08/28/2025	INV141266-01	USA Express Legal & Investigative SVCS	Locate - Eddie Joe Lopez & Anthony Gonzales	$170.00	$3,504.62
	09/02/2025	446403	Service Fee - Case Anywhere, LLC		$55.00	$3,559.62
	09/24/2025	CC093025TA-2726	Filing Fee - One Legal LLC	SCR	$23.44	$3,583.06
	10/01/2025	459099	Service Fee - Case Anywhere, LLC		$55.00	$3,638.06
	11/03/2025	472008	Service Fee - Case Anywhere, LLC		$49.00	$3,687.06
	12/01/2025	484873	Service Fee - Case Anywhere, LLC		$49.00	$3,736.06
	01/02/2026	497848	Service Fee - Case Anywhere, LLC		$49.00	$3,785.06

	02/01/2026	511075	Service Fee - Case Anywhere, LLC		$49.00	$3,834.06
	03/02/2026	524387	Service Fee - Case Anywhere, LLC		$49.00	$3,883.06
	03/27/2026	CC033126TA-2501	Filing Fee - One Legal LLC	Stip and Order	$46.26	$3,929.32
	04/01/2026	537789	Service Fee - Case Anywhere, LLC		$55.00	$3,984.32
	04/06/2026	CC043026TA-0689	Filing Fee - One Legal LLC	Stip and Order	$46.26	$4,030.58
	04/09/2026	CC043026TA-0852	Filing Fee - One Legal LLC	Amended Complaint	$24.53	$4,055.11
	04/10/2026	CC043026TA-0916	Filing Fee - One Legal LLC	MPA	$87.66	$4,142.77
	04/10/2026	CC043026TA-0923	Filing Fee - One Legal LLC	Declaration	$24.53	$4,167.30
	04/13/2026	CC043026TA-1070	Filing Fee - One Legal LLC	MPA	$93.15	$4,260.45
	05/01/2026	551240	Service Fee - Case Anywhere, LLC		$97.00	$4,357.45
	05/11/2026	CC053126TA-0960	Filing Fee - One Legal LLC	SCR	$24.53	$4,381.98
	06/01/2026	564581	Service Fee - Case Anywhere, LLC		$55.00	$4,436.98
	06/30/2026	CC063026TA-2352	Filing Fee - One Legal LLC	Declaration	$24.53	$4,461.51
	06/30/2026	CC063026TA-2356	Filing Fee - One Legal LLC	Declaration	$77.63	$4,539.14
	07/01/2026	577835	Service Fee - Case Anywhere, LLC		$67.00	$4,606.14
	08/01/2026	591026	Service Fee - Case Anywhere, LLC		$49.00	$4,655.14
	08/12/2026	CC083126TA-0934	Filing Fee - One Legal LLC	Order	$24.53	$4,679.67
	08/12/2026	CC083126TA-0944	Filing Fee - One Legal LLC	Declaration	$24.53	$4,704.20
	08/18/2026	CC083126TA-1562	Filing Fee - One Legal LLC	Notice	$24.53	$4,728.73
	09/01/2026	604338	Service Fee - Case Anywhere, LLC		$85.00	$4,813.73
	10/01/2026	617676	Service Fee - Case Anywhere, LLC		$49.00	$4,862.73
Total FILING FEES					$4,862.73	$4,862.73
Other Costs						
	2/16/2024	E-3190521	Docusign envelope		$1.89	$1.89
	8/29/2024	E-3235495	Docusign envelope		$1.89	$3.78
	9/11/2024	E-3240502	Docusign envelope		$1.89	$5.67
	9/16/2024	E-3240500	Docusign envelope		$1.89	$7.56
Total OTHER COSTS					$7.56	$7.56
TOTAL					**$26,997.79**	**$26,997.79**

EXHIBIT 4

Outlook

Thank you for your Proposed Settlement Submission

From no-reply@formassembly.com <no-reply@formassembly.com>
Date Tue 8/11/2026 9:05 AM
To Giancarlo Recinos' Team <GiancarloRecinosTeam@wilshirelawfirm.com>

08/11/2026 09:04:58 AM

Thank you for your submission to the Labor and Workforce Development Agency.

Item submitted: Proposed Settlement

On 08/11/2026 09:04:58 AM your Proposed Settlement was successfully processed for case number LWDA-CM-1018627-24

If you have questions or concerns regarding this submission or your case, please send an email to pagainfo@dir.ca.gov.

DIR PAGA Unit on behalf of
Labor and Workforce Development Agency

Website: https://nam12.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Flabor.ca.gov%2FPrivate_Attorneys_General_Act.htm&data=05%7C02%7Cdariane.rose%40wilshirelawfirm.com%7C84a15a7aae3148eef70a08def7c26678%7C9ada260a4f194da187b814d372333753%7C1%7C0%7C639220611554573363%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=dBoMLmzgp%2FsZqE1nZnY6JpvKbTSVUf1LdUhODjlPXoo%3D&reserved=0