

John G. Yslas (SBN 187324)
john.yslas@wilshirelawfirm.com
Arrash T. Fattahi (SBN 333676)
arrash.fattahi@wilshirelawfirm.com
Lisa B. Iturriaga (SBN 339678)
lisa.iturriaga@wilshirelawfirm.com
Arman A. Salehi (SBN 351112)
arman.salehi@wilshirelawfirm.com
WILSHIRE LAW FIRM, PLC
660 S. Figueroa St., Sky Lobby
Los Angeles, California 90017
Telephone: (213) 381-9988
Facsimile: (213) 381-9989

Attorneys for *Plaintiff*

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FOR THE COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE

DOMINIC PIOTROWSKI, individually, and on
behalf of the State of California and other
aggrieved persons,

Plaintiff,

v.

MORENO VALLEY SNF, LLC, a limited liability
company; and DOES 1 through 10, inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No.: CVRI2400503

Assigned for all purposes to:
Hon. Harold W. Hopp
Dept. 1

**PLAINTIFF'S NOTICE OF MOTION
AND MOTION TO APPROVE PAGA
SETTLEMENT**

APPROVAL HEARING:

Date: April 7, 2026
Time: 8:30 a.m.
Dept.: 1
Reservation # 393049066878

1 **NOTICE OF MOTION AND MOTION**

2 **TO THE COURT, ALL PARTIES, AND THEIR COUNSEL OF RECORD:**

3 **PLEASE TAKE NOTICE** that on April 7, 2026 at 8:30 a.m. in Department 1 of the
4 Riverside County Superior Court, Historic Courthouse, located at 4050 Main Street, Riverside, CA
5 92501, the Honorable Harold W. Hopp presiding, Plaintiff Dominic Piotrowski (“Plaintiff”) will,
6 and hereby does, move for an order under Labor Code section 2699(1)(2) approving the Private
7 Attorneys General Act (“PAGA”) Settlement Agreement (“Settlement”) entered into by Plaintiff
8 and Defendant Moreno Valley SNF, LLC (“Defendant”).

9 Pursuant to Labor Code § 2699(1)(2), the settlement of Plaintiff’s PAGA claims requires
10 the Court’s approval. The basis for this motion is that Plaintiff and Defendant reached and fully
11 executed a Settlement of the above-entitled case, Case No. CVRI2400503, that disposes of the
12 matter entirely and is fair, reasonable, and serves the purposes of the PAGA statute. The Settlement
13 includes all persons employed by Defendant in California and classified as a non-exempt or hourly-
14 paid employee who worked for Defendant during the PAGA Period (March 6, 2023 to December
15 23, 2024). The Settlement is fair, adequate, and reasonable, and it provides for civil penalties to
16 be distributed to Plaintiff, other aggrieved employees, and the California Labor & Workforce
17 Development Agency.

18 This motion is based on this Notice, the attached Memorandum of Points and Authorities,
19 the Declaration of Arrash T. Fattahi (along with the attached exhibits), the Declaration of Plaintiff
20 Dominic Piotrowski, as well as the records on file in this action and any argument the Court is
21 presented with at the time of the hearing.

22 Respectfully submitted,

23 Dated: December 23, 2025

WILSHIRE LAW FIRM, PLC

24 By: 
25 Lisa B. Iturriaga

26 *Attorneys for Plaintiff*

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1 **MEMORANDUM OF POINTS AND AUTHORITIES**

2 **I. INTRODUCTION.**

3 On January 30, 2024, Plaintiff Dominic Piotrowski (“Plaintiff”) filed a Class Action
4 Complaint against Defendant for: failure to pay minimum and straight time wages; failure to
5 pay overtime wages; failure to timely pay final wages at termination; failure to provide accurate
6 itemized wage statements; failure to indemnify employees for expenditures; and unfair business
7 practices.

8 On March 6, 2024, Plaintiff provided a written notice to the California Labor &
9 Workforce Development Agency (“LWDA”) and Defendant Moreno Valley SNF, LLC
10 (“Defendant,” and collectively with Plaintiff, the “Parties”) of his intention to file a Private
11 Attorneys General Act of 2004 (“PAGA”) (Cal. Lab. Code §§ 2698, *et seq.*) claim against
12 Defendant. On July 21, 2025, Plaintiff filed a First Amended Complaint, dismissing the class
13 claims due to the existence of an arbitration agreement, adding a cause of action for civil
14 penalties under PAGA. Plaintiff and Defendant engaged in vigorous, arms-length negotiations
15 regarding the resolution of this matter. After an all-day mediation presided over by Monique
16 Ngo-Bonnici, Esq., the Parties ultimately agreed to settle Plaintiff’s PAGA claim for
17 \$300,000.00, which will provide significant civil penalties to the aggrieved employees and
18 LWDA.

19 Labor Code § 2699(1)(2) provides that “[t]he superior court shall review and approve any
20 settlement of any civil action filed pursuant to this part. The proposed settlement shall be
21 submitted to the [LWDA] at the same time that it is submitted to the court.” Plaintiff submitted
22 the proposed Settlement to the LWDA on December 19, 2025, pursuant to Labor Code §
23 2699(1)(2). (Declaration of Arrash T. Fattahi [“Fattahi Decl.”], ¶ 8, Ex. 2.) The Parties now
24 seek Court approval of the Settlement. For the reasons discussed in detail below, the Court
25 should issue an order approving the Settlement.

26 **II. FACTUAL AND PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND.**

27 Plaintiff worked for Defendant in Moreno Valley, California as an hourly-paid, non-
28 exempt employee from approximately May 2023 through approximately December 2023.

(Declaration of Dominic Piotrowski [“Piotrowski Decl.”], ¶ 3.); (Fattahi Decl., at ¶ 3.).

Plaintiff’s PAGA claim stems from Defendant’s failure to pay for all hours worked (minimum, straight time, and overtime wages), failure to provide meal periods, failure to authorize and permit rest periods, failure to pay all earned wages twice per month, failure to maintain accurate records of hours worked and meal periods, failure to timely pay final wages, failure to furnish accurate wage statements, and failure to indemnify for necessary expenditures. (*Id.* at ¶ 4.)

On March 6, 2024, Plaintiff provided notice to the LWDA and Defendant of the violations described above, as required by Labor Code § 2699.3(a)(1). (*Id.* at ¶ 5, Ex. 1.) Pursuant to Labor Code § 2699.3(a)(2)(A), the LWDA had 65 calendar days to notify Plaintiff and Defendant whether it intended to investigate the alleged violations. (*Id.*) However, the LWDA did not do so. (*Id.*)

After Plaintiff filed his complaint, the Parties engaged in extensive settlement discussions. (*Id.* at ¶ 6.) To facilitate settlement, Defendant provided Plaintiff with timekeeping and payroll data for a sampling of the aggrieved employees, and the applicable policies in effect during the relevant time period. (*Id.*) Thereafter, the Parties engaged in extensive discussions about the factual and legal strengths (and weaknesses) of the claims and defenses. (*Id.*)

On October 23, 2024, the Parties and their counsel participated in private mediation with Monique Ngo-Bonnici, Esq. (*Id.* at ¶ 7.) The settlement negotiations were at arm’s length and, although conducted in a professional manner, were adversarial. The Parties went into the mediation willing to explore the potential for a settlement of the dispute, but each side was also prepared to litigate their own position through trial and appeal if a settlement had not been reached. (*Id.*) Ultimately, after an all-day mediation, the Parties agreed to settle the PAGA claim for \$300,000.00, which includes all persons employed by Defendant in California and classified as a non-exempt or hourly-paid employee who worked for Defendant during the PAGA Period (March 6, 2023 to December 23, 2024). (*Id.* at ¶ 8.) There are approximately 336 aggrieved employees covered by the settlement. (*Id.*) Plaintiff submitted the Settlement to the LWDA on December 19, 2025, pursuant to Labor Code § 2699(1)(2). (Fattahi Decl., ¶ 8,

Ex. 2.) A true and correct copy of the Settlement executed by the Parties, along with the confirmation that the Settlement was submitted to the LWDA is attached to the Declaration of Arrash T. Fattahi as **Exhibit 2**. (Fattahi Decl., ¶ 8.) Additionally, attached as **Exhibit 3** to the Declaration of Arrash T. Fattahi is the Settlement Notice that will be sent to the aggrieved employees with payment after the Court enters a Judgment on its Order Approving the PAGA Settlement.

III. ARGUMENT.

PAGA permits an aggrieved employee to sue an employer for civil penalties associated with the employer's alleged violations of the Labor Code. (Cal. Lab. Code § 2699(a).) Under the statute, of the amount paid to settle a claim for PAGA penalties, twenty-five percent (25%) is payable to the aggrieved employees and seventy-five percent (75%) is payable to the LWDA. (Cal. Lab. Code § 2699(i).)

A. The Terms of the PAGA Settlement.

The Settlement provides for a Gross Settlement Amount of \$300,000.00 to be distributed to all aggrieved employees. (Settlement, ¶ 3.1). Aggrieved employee means a person employed by Defendant in California and classified as a non-exempt or hourly-paid employee who worked for Defendant during the PAGA Period (March 6, 2023 to December 23, 2024).¹ (Settlement, ¶¶ 1.4, 1.19). Of that amount, \$105,000.00 is allocated to Attorneys' Fees, up to \$30,000.00 is allocated to litigation costs (of which a litigation costs reimbursement of only \$12,905.05 is being requested), and up to \$4,550.00 is allocated to Settlement Administrator Costs. (Settlement, ¶ 3.2.) The remaining \$177,544.95 will be allocated as PAGA penalties, with 75% (\$133,158.71) allocated to the LWDA PAGA Payment and 25% (\$44,386.24) allocated to the Individual PAGA Payments. (Settlement, ¶ 3.2.3).

Settlement Administration. Defendant shall fully fund the Gross Settlement Amount in two equal installments: the first installment of \$150,000 shall be made within 30 days of

¹ Under the Settlement's "escalator" provision, if the total number of pay periods during the PAGA Period exceeds 8,509 by more than ten percent (meaning 9,360 or more), the Gross Settlement Amount shall be increased as provided in the Settlement, or Defendant may elect to end the PAGA Period applicable to the Released Claims when the total pay periods reach 9,360. (Settlement, ¶ 8).

1 approval of the Settlement, and the second and final installment of \$150,000 shall be made
2 within 90 days of the first installment. (Settlement, ¶ 4.3). Within 14 days after Defendant
3 fully funds the Gross Settlement Amount, the Administrator will mail checks for all Individual
4 PAGA Payments, the LWDA PAGA Payment, the Administration Expenses Payment, the
5 PAGA Counsel Expenses Payment, and PAGA Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment.
6 Disbursement of the PAGA Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment shall not precede
7 disbursement of Individual PAGA Payments. (Settlement, ¶ 4.4.).

8 The Administrator will issue checks for the Individual PAGA Payments and send them
9 to the aggrieved employees via First Class Mail, postage prepaid. The face of each check shall
10 prominently state the date (not less than 180 days after the date of mailing) when the check will
11 be voided. The Administrator will cancel all checks not cashed by the void date. Before mailing
12 any checks, the Settlement Administrator must update the recipients' mailing addresses using
13 the National Change of Address Database. (Settlement, ¶ 4.4.1.) The Administrator must
14 conduct an Aggrieved Employee Address Search for all aggrieved employees whose checks are
15 returned as undelivered without USPS forwarding address. Within 7 days of receiving a
16 returned check, the Administrator must re-mail checks to the USPS forwarding address provided
17 or to an address ascertained through the Aggrieved Employee Address Search. (Settlement, ¶
18 4.4.2.) For any aggrieved employee whose Individual PAGA Payment check is uncashed and
19 canceled after the void date, the Administrator shall transmit the funds represented by such
20 checks to the California Controller's Unclaimed Property Fund in the name of the aggrieved
21 employee. (Settlement, ¶ 4.4.3.)

22 **B. The Terms of the PAGA Settlement Are Fair and Should Be Approved.**

23 The settlement of a PAGA claim requires court approval pursuant to the operative PAGA
24 statute, which states that the "court shall review and approve any penalties sought as part of a
25 proposed settlement agreement pursuant to this part." (See Cal. Lab. Code § 2699(l).)

26 As with any settlement, the Court must be mindful in conducting its inquiry that
27 "[s]ettlement is a compromise, which balances the possible recovery against the risks inherent
28 in litigating further." (See *In re TD Ameritrade Account Holder Litig.* (N.D. Cal. Sept. 13, 2011))

1 2011 WL 4079226, *9.) Indeed, “the very essence of a settlement is ... ‘a yielding of absolutes
2 and an abandoning of highest hopes,’” as “it is the very uncertainty of outcome in litigation and
3 avoidance of wasteful and expensive litigation that induce consensual settlements.” (*See*
4 *Officers for Justice v. Civil Service Com.* (9th Cir. 1982) 688 F.2d 615, 624-25.) As such, “the
5 settlement or fairness hearing is not to be turned into a trial or rehearsal for trial on the merits”
6 or “judged against a hypothetical or speculative measure of what might have been achieved by
7 the negotiators.” (*Id.*)

8 Although the operative PAGA statute does not set forth the criteria by which a PAGA
9 settlement is to be judged, it is presumed that a reviewing court may utilize some of the factors
10 for review of a class action settlement. However, “a PAGA claim asserted on a non-class
11 representative basis...is not considered a class action but a law enforcement action, and
12 therefore does not have to meet the requirements of [a class action].” (*See Casida v. Sears*
13 *Holdings Corp.* (E.D. Cal. Jan. 26, 2012) 2012 WL 253217, *3; *Thomas v. Aetna Health of Cal.,*
14 *Inc.* (E.D. Cal. June 2, 2011) 2011 WL 2173715, *13 ; *Mendez v. Tween Brands, Inc.* (E.D. Cal.
15 July 1, 2010) 2010 WL 2650571, *4.) Based thereon, a court’s review of a PAGA settlement
16 necessarily implicates the following unique features that render the approval process distinct
17 from approval of a class action settlement under Code of Civil Procedure § 382 and California
18 Rules of Court (Cal. Rule), Rule 3.769.

19 First, in evaluating the adequacy of the settlement amount, the Court’s focus is not
20 concerned with the amount(s) that “aggrieved employees” are to receive, but rather, must focus
21 on the total settlement amount in achieving PAGA’s objective. Indeed, “[t]he remedy sought
22 in a PAGA suit consists of civil penalties, not individual or class damages.” (*Mendez, supra,*
23 2010 WL 2650571 at *4.) “Unlike class actions, these civil penalties are not meant to
24 compensate unnamed employees because the action is fundamentally a law enforcement action.”
25 (*Ochoa-Hernandez v. Cjaders Foods, Inc.* (N.D. Cal. Apr. 2, 2010) 2010 WL 1340777, *4.
26 Moreover, while a PAGA action “is ... designed to protect the public and penalize the employer
27 for past illegal conduct,” a reviewing Court must take into account the fact that settlement of a
28 PAGA claim – like any settlement – involves a “compromise” that stops short of rendering

1 findings of liability and damages. (*Mendez*, 2010 WL 2650571 at p. *4) As such, the Court
2 must not lose sight of the fact that “[u]nlike a class action seeking damages or injunctive relief
3 for injured employees, the purpose of PAGA is to incentivize private parties to recover civil
4 penalties for the government that otherwise may not have been assessed and collected by
5 overburdened state enforcement agencies.” (*See Ochoa-Hernandez*, 2010 WL 1340777 at p.
6 *4.)

7 Second, consistent with the fact that unnamed employees have no property interest in a
8 PAGA claim,² “[u]nnamed employees need not be given notice of the PAGA claim, nor do they
9 have the ability to opt-out of the representative PAGA claim.” (*See Ochoa-Hernandez, supra*,
10 2010 WL 1340777 at p. *4.) This renders the approval process of a PAGA settlement distinct
11 from a class action settlement, as there is no need for the Court to employ the “two-step approval
12 process” required under Federal Rules of Civil Procedure (“FRCP”), Rule 23(e) and Cal. Rule
13 3.769.³

14 Finally, unlike a class action settlement under FRCP 23(e) and Cal. Rule 3.769, the scope
15 of release permitted in a PAGA settlement is limited. While “judgment in [a PAGA] action is
16 binding not only on the named employee plaintiff but also on government agencies and any
17 aggrieved employee not a party to the proceeding...the non-party employees, because they were
18 not given notice of the action or afforded any opportunity to be heard, would not be bound by
19 the judgment as to remedies other than civil penalties.” (*See Arias v. Super. Ct.* (2009) 46
20 Cal.4th 969, 986-87.) Thus, with the exception of the named Plaintiff, the scope of a release in
21 a PAGA settlement is necessarily strictly confined to the PAGA penalties alleged in the
22

23 ² As held by the California Supreme Court, “[t]he Labor Code Private Attorneys General Act of 2004 does
24 not create property rights or any other substantive rights” as “[i]t is simply a procedural statute allowing an aggrieved
25 employee to recover civil penalties—for Labor Code violations—that otherwise would be sought by state labor law
26 enforcement agencies.” (*Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 1756, AFL-CIO v. Super. Ct.* (2009) 46 Cal.4th 993,
27 1003.)

28 ³ Significantly, the “two-step” approval process of FRCP Rule 23(e) is required to facilitate “notice” to absent
class members, as FRCP 23(e) expressly requires notice and an opportunity for absent class members to exclude
themselves or object. (*See* FRCP 23(e) [“The following procedures apply to a proposed settlement ... (1) The court
must direct notice in a reasonable manner to all class members who would be bound by the proposal.... (4) ... the
court may refuse to approve a settlement unless it affords a new opportunity to request exclusion to individual class
members.... (5) Any class member may object to the proposal if it requires court approval under this subdivision”].)
Cal. Rule 3.769 contains similar rules for state court class actions.

1 complaint, and claims that were or could have been alleged pursuant to PAGA based on the
2 factual allegations in the complaint. In the case at hand, as the only claims at issue are PAGA
3 claims, those will be the only claims extinguished as a result of this Settlement, with the
4 exception of Plaintiff's much broader, general release against Defendant.

5 California courts have a strong policy in favor of settlement. (*See, e.g., Stamburgh v.*
6 *Super. Ct.* (1976) 62 Cal.App.3d 231, 236.) Unlike individual settlements, class action
7 settlements (and representative PAGA settlements) involve a court approval process that exists
8 to prevent fraud, collusion, and unfairness to absent individuals. (*Malibu Outrigger Bd. of*
9 *Governors v. Super. Ct.* (1980) 103 Cal.App.3d 573, 578-79.) In the class action context, there
10 is a presumption of fairness of a class action settlement when: (1) the settlement is reached as a
11 result of arm's length negotiations; (2) there has been sufficient investigation and discovery; (3)
12 counsel is experienced in similar litigation; and (4) the percentage of objectors is small. (*Dunk*
13 *v. Ford Motor Co.* (1996) 48 Cal.App.4th 1794, 1802.) Before approving a class action
14 settlement, a trial court must develop an understanding "of the amount that is in controversy
15 and the realistic range of outcomes of the litigation." (*Kullar v. Foot Locker Retail, Inc.* (2008)
16 168 Cal.App.4th 116, 120.).

17 The proposed settlement meets all of these factors.

18 **1. The Settlement Was Reached Through Arms-Length Bargaining.**

19 The Parties reached the Settlement after an all-day mediation presided over by Monique
20 Ngo-Bonnici, Esq. (Fattahi Decl., ¶¶ 7, 8.) The settlement negotiations were at arm's length
21 and, although conducted in a professional manner, were adversarial. (*Id.* at ¶ 7.) The Parties
22 went into the mediation willing to explore the potential for a settlement of the dispute, but each
23 side was also prepared to litigate their or its position through trial and appeal if a settlement had
24 not been reached. (*Id.*)

25 **2. The Settlement Is Based on Sufficient Investigation and Discovery.**

26 Before the Settlement, Plaintiff's counsel conducted an investigation into the claims
27 alleged by Plaintiff, conducted legal research, and engaged in informal discovery. Based upon
28 the information obtained through informal discovery, Plaintiff's counsel was able to act

1 intelligently and effectively in negotiating the proposed Settlement. (*Id.* at ¶ 9.)

2 **3. Plaintiff's Counsel Have Extensive Experience in PAGA Actions.**

3 Highly capable and experienced counsel conducted the settlement negotiations.
4 Plaintiff's counsel are respected members of the bar with a strong record of vigorous and
5 effective advocacy for their clients, and they are experienced in handling complex wage and
6 hour class action litigation and PAGA actions. (*Id.* at ¶¶ 23-37.) Although Plaintiff and counsel
7 were prepared to litigate the claims in this action, they support the proposed Settlement as being
8 in the best interests of the State of California and the aggrieved employees. (*Id.* at ¶ 7.)

9 **4. Assessing the Amount in Controversy and the Risks of Trial.**

10 Plaintiff and his counsel remain confident of the merits of Plaintiff's claims. (*Id.* at ¶
11 10.) However, Plaintiff does acknowledge that his position includes risk and uncertainty, as
12 described in more detail below. For instance, Plaintiff's allegation that Defendant failed to pay
13 Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees all of their owed wages is based on Defendant's failure
14 to pay employees for work performed "off-the-clock." (*Id.*) With respect to the meal period
15 allegation, Plaintiff alleges that Defendant lacked compliant policies providing meal periods
16 during the PAGA Period. (*Id.*) Although Plaintiff contends that this allegation is meritorious,
17 there is risk with this underlying claim, particularly because Defendant issued meal period
18 premiums to its employees and implemented meal period waivers throughout the covered
19 period. (*Id.*) With respect to the rest period allegation, Plaintiff contends that employees,
20 including himself, were not provided with California-compliant rest periods. (*Id.*) Again,
21 despite Plaintiff's contention that this allegation is credible, proving rest period allegations is
22 particularly difficult because rest periods do not have to be recorded and Defendant can argue
23 that the aggrieved employees chose to voluntarily forego their rest periods. (*Id.*) With respect
24 to the unreimbursed business expenses allegation, Plaintiff alleges that Defendant required him
25 and the other aggrieved employees to purchase work attire (e.g., uniforms) and use their
26 personal cell phone for work-related purposes (e.g., communicating with managers and co-
27 workers), without reimbursement from Defendant. (*Id.*) Defendant disputes this claim. (*Id.*)
28 Lastly, with regard to Plaintiff's wage statement claim, Defendant argues that the wage

1 statements issued to employees meet the requirement of Labor Code § 226(a). (*Id.*)

2 Additionally, Plaintiff faced a significant risk that even if the Court did award PAGA
3 penalties, the Court could drastically reduce the penalties based on the discretionary factors
4 contained in Labor Code § 2699(e)(2) (“In action by an aggrieved employee..., a court may
5 award a lesser amount than the maximum civil penalty amount specified by this part if, based
6 on the facts and circumstances of the particular case, to do otherwise would result in an award
7 that is unjust, arbitrary and oppressive, or confiscatory.”). Plaintiff believed there was a
8 legitimate risk of the Court significantly reducing penalties given the technical nature of the
9 alleged violations. (Fattahi Decl., ¶ 11.)

10 Without this settlement, the Parties face preparation for trial, as well as extensive formal
11 discovery efforts and depositions. (*Id.*) As a result, the Parties would incur considerably more
12 attorneys’ fees and costs through trial. (*Id.*) This settlement avoids those risks and the
13 accompanying expense. Thus, this factor favors settlement approval. (*Id.*)

14 As described above, the proposed Settlement provides a fair and reasonable monetary
15 recovery for the aggrieved employees and the LWDA in the face of the contested claims.
16 Plaintiff estimated Defendant’s realistic exposure for the PAGA penalties as follows:

17 PAGA Penalties for Unpaid Wages, Meal Period Violations, Rest Period Violations, and
18 Unreimbursed Business Expenses: \$553,085.00

19 Plaintiff’s expert determined that there were 8,509 pay periods during the relevant time
20 period which presented issues with regard to unpaid wages, meal period violations, rest period
21 violations, and unreimbursed business expenses. (Fattahi Decl., ¶ 12.) Plaintiff acknowledges
22 that when evaluating Defendant’s potential exposure, it is likely that the Court would impose
23 only the initial \$100 violation for all PAGA violations. (*See Amaral v. Cintas Corp. No. 2*
24 (*2008*) 163 Cal.App.4th 1157, 1207 [finding that the “initial” violation rate applies until the
25 employer has been notified that it is violating a Labor Code provision].) Applying the \$100
26 “initial violation” penalty for each of these pay periods, Defendant’s potential PAGA exposure
27 is \$850,900.00 (based on 8,509 pay periods). (Fattahi Decl., ¶ 12.) However, Plaintiff applying
28 a 35% risk discount to account for Defendant’s contention that the underlying allegations lacked

merit, Defendant's compliant policies, Defendant's issuance of meal period premiums to the aggrieved employees, Defendant's implementation of meal period waivers throughout the liability period, the risk of not prevailing on the merits, and the Court's discretion in reducing penalties, for a total of \$553,085.00. (*Id.*)

PAGA Penalties for Wage Statement Violations: \$100,092.00

Plaintiff's expert determined that there were 8,509 pay periods at issue with regard to the wage statement violations claim. (*Id.* at ¶ 13.) Because Plaintiff's wage statement theory of liability is predicated on Defendant's issuance of facially deficient wage statements – each of the wage statements issued would carry a potential PAGA penalty. (*Id.*) As Labor Code § 226(e) specifies what penalties are recoverable for violations of § 226(a) (\$50 penalty per initial violation and a \$100 penalty per subsequent violation, up to an aggregate penalty of \$4,000 per employee), the PAGA penalties recoverable through this section mirror the penalties available through § 226(e). (*See* Cal. Lab. Code § 2699(a).) Accordingly, Defendant's maximum exposure for its wage statement violations is \$834,100.00 ([336 “initial” violations x \$50 per violation] + [8,173 “subsequent” violations x \$100 per violation]). (Fattahi Decl., ¶ 13.)

However, based on Defendant's counterarguments (as explained more thoroughly above) and because the Court maintains discretion to reduce these penalties, Plaintiff discounted that figure by 88% for a risk of not prevailing on the merits and to account for the Court's discretion to reduce the penalties (given the highly technical nature of the alleged violations). (*Id.*; *see also Fleming v. Covidien Inc.* (C.D. Cal., Aug. 12, 2011, No. (OPX)) 2011 WL 7563047, at *4 [reducing PAGA penalties from \$2.8 million to \$500,000]; *Thurman v. Bayshore Transit Management, Inc.* (2012) 203 Cal.App.4th 1112, 1136 [affirming trial court's finding that awarding maximum PAGA penalties would be unjust].)

Using these estimated figures, Plaintiff predicted that the realistic total potential recovery for the aggrieved employees and the LWDA would be approximately \$653,177.00. (Fattahi Decl., ¶ 14.) The proposed Settlement of \$300,000.00 therefore represents approximately 46% of Plaintiff's reasonably forecasted total recovery. (*Id.*) “The fact that a proposed settlement may only amount to a fraction of the potential recovery does not, in and of

1 itself, mean that the proposed settlement is grossly inadequate and should be disapproved.”
2 (*Linney v. Cellular Alaska Partnership* (9th Cir. 1998) 151 F.3d 1234, 1242 [internal quotations
3 omitted].) In this case, continued litigation would delay payment to the LWDA and the
4 aggrieved employees as they await trial and, most likely, appellate proceedings. (Fattahi Decl.,
5 ¶ 14.) Furthermore, while Plaintiff is confident in the merits of the case, a legitimate
6 controversy exists as to each of the predicate Labor Code violations. (*Id.*) The possibility that
7 the Court finds no liability at the PAGA bench trial is also a risk. (*Id.*) In sum, when the risks
8 of litigation, the burdens of proof necessary to establish liability, and the probability of appeal
9 of a favorable judgment are balanced against the merits of Plaintiff’s claims, it is clear that the
10 Settlement amount is fair. (*Id.*) Further, because of the proposed Settlement, the aggrieved
11 employees will receive timely, guaranteed relief and will avoid the risk of an unfavorable
12 judgment. (*Id.*) Plaintiff also recognizes that proving the amount of wages due to each
13 employee would be an expensive, time-consuming, and uncertain proposition. (*Id.*)

14 If the Court approves the terms of the Settlement, each aggrieved employee’s payment
15 will be approximately \$132.10 and approximately \$133,158.71 will go to the LWDA. (*Id.* at ¶
16 15.) In reality, some employees will likely receive more, and others may receive less depending
17 on the length of their employment with Defendant. (*Id.*)

18 **C. The Requested Attorneys’ Fees and Costs Are Reasonable.**

19 A prevailing party in a PAGA action is entitled to recover his attorneys’ fees and costs
20 for his claims. (Cal. Lab. Code § 2699(g) [“Any employee who prevails in any action shall be
21 entitled to an award of reasonable attorney’s fees and costs.”].) A fee award is justified where
22 the legal action has produced its benefits by way of a voluntary settlement. (*See, e.g., Maria P.*
23 *v. Riles* (1987) 43 Cal.3d 1281, 1290-91; *Westside Community for Independent Living, Inc. v.*
24 *Obledo* (1983) 33 Cal.3d 348, 352-53.)

25 Fee awards of roughly thirty-five percent (35%) of the settlement fund are comparable
26 to fee awards routinely awarded in California state and federal courts in class and representative
27 PAGA actions. “[F]ee awards in class actions average around one-third of the recovery.”
28 (*Chavez v. Netflix, Inc.* (2008) 162 Cal.App.4th 43, 66, fn. 11 ; *see also In re Pacific Enterprises*

1 *Securities Litig.* (9th Cir. 1995) 47 F.3d 373, 379 [affirming 33% fee award]; *Williams v. MGM-*
2 *Pathe Communications Co.* (9th Cir. 1997) 129 F.3d 1026, 1027 [holding that class counsel’s
3 fee award should have been calculated as one-third of the gross settlement fund]; *Chavez v.*
4 *Saticoy Lemon Ass’n* (Cal. Super. Ct. Ventura Cty. Aug. 10, 2015) Case No. 56-2015-00468600-
5 CU-OE-VTA, 2015 WL 5561118 [approving attorneys’ fees of one-third of settlement fund in
6 representative PAGA settlement]; *Clavel v. Lupe’s Thousand Oaks Mexican Restaurant, Inc.*
7 (Cal. Super. Ct. Ventura Cty. Mar. 25, 2016) Case No. 56-2015-00467353-CU-OE-VTA, 2016
8 WL 1601221 [same].)

9 The fee award requested here (\$105,000.00, representing thirty-five percent (35%) of the
10 \$300,000.00 Gross Settlement Amount) is justified because Plaintiff’s counsel achieved a
11 significant monetary recovery for the aggrieved employees and the LWDA in an uncertain and
12 risky case while bearing the substantial burdens of representation on a contingency basis, and
13 the fees requested are in line with the market rates described above. Plaintiff’s counsel
14 expended significant time and resources in litigating this case, which resulted in a favorable
15 result for the LWDA, Plaintiff, and the aggrieved employees. Plaintiff’s counsel elected to bear
16 the contingency risk of this litigation for the benefit of the aggrieved employees, as well as for
17 the State of California (who elected not to take the case after receiving the PAGA notice).
18 (Fattahi Decl., ¶ 38.)

19 Critically, this settlement exceeds other PAGA awards approved by courts. (*See, e.g.,*
20 *Aguirre v. DSW, Inc.* (C.D. Cal. Nov. 29, 2012) 2012 WL 11875296, *3 [approving \$10,000
21 PAGA payment]; *Garcia v. Gordon Trucking, Inc.* (E.D. Cal. Oct. 31, 2012) 2012 WL 5364575,
22 *7 [“GTI agrees to allocate \$10,000 to Plaintiffs’ PAGA claims, and will pay \$7,500 to the
23 LWDA, and \$2,500 to participating Class Members on a pro-rata basis. This comports with
24 settlement approval of PAGA awards in other cases. [Citations.] Therefore, the Court will
25 approve the allocation of the Settlement to Plaintiffs’ PAGA claim.”]; *Boyd v. Bank of America*
26 *Corp.* (C.D. Cal. Nov. 18, 2014) 2014 WL 6473804, *8 [approving \$18,750 PAGA payment];
27 *Franco v. Ruiz Food Prods.* (E.D. Cal. Nov. 27, 2012) 2012 WL 5941801, *14 [approving
28 \$10,000 PAGA payment]; *Chu v. Wells Fargo Investments, LLC* (N.D. Cal. Feb. 16, 2011) 2011

1 WL 672645, *1 [approving \$10,000 PAGA payment]; *cf. Nordstrom Comm’n Cases* (2010) 186
2 Cal.App.4th 576, 589 [holding that trial court did abuse its discretion in approving wage and
3 hour class action settlement that involved PAGA claims even though no settlement money was
4 allocated to the PAGA claims and paid to the LWDA].) The fact that Plaintiff’s counsel
5 achieved these results without engaging in a protracted legal battle, in the face of serious defense
6 challenges and an uncertain legal landscape, confirms the strength of the results achieved.

7 As discussed above, this case carried substantial risk as to the merits as well as the
8 potential of the Court drastically reducing penalties in the context of a contested trial or
9 summary judgment proceeding. Accordingly, it is fair and reasonable to account for these risks
10 in compensating Plaintiff’s counsel. Since undertaking this representation, Plaintiff’s counsel
11 has dedicated substantial resources to this litigation, including approximately \$12,905.05 in
12 costs, without receiving any compensation to date. (Fattahi Decl., ¶¶ 17-22.) Plaintiff’s counsel
13 conducted extensive legal research regarding the merits of Plaintiff’s claims, his ability to
14 recover penalties under the PAGA, and Defendant’s potential defenses. (*Id.* at ¶ 9.) Plaintiff’s
15 counsel expended significant additional effort in preparing formal settlement documents and
16 this Motion to Approve PAGA Settlement. (*Id.* at ¶ 17.) Given the considerable potential for
17 adverse outcomes in this case, including, but not limited to, Defendant defeating Plaintiff’s
18 claims on the merits, and/or facing a drastic reduction to potential PAGA penalties, the
19 contingent risk borne by Plaintiff’s counsel was great. The quality of Plaintiff’s counsel’s work,
20 and the efficiency and dedication with which it was performed, should be compensated.

21 Plaintiff’s counsel’s previous experience in litigating similar class and representative
22 actions also supports the reasonableness of the fee request. Plaintiff’s counsel brings extensive
23 plaintiff-side wage and hour class, collective, and representative action experience. (*Id.* at ¶¶
24 23-37.) They have been found to be adequate counsel in numerous cases alleging wage and
25 hour claims. (*Id.*) Practice in the narrow field of wage and hour litigation requires skill and
26 knowledge concerning the rapidly evolving substantive state and federal law, as well as the
27 procedural law of class and representative action litigation. Because it is reasonable to
28 compensate Plaintiff’s counsel commensurate with its skill, reputation, and experience, a fee

award of thirty-five percent (35%) of the Gross Settlement Amount is reasonable.

Plaintiff's request for reimbursement of actual litigation costs of \$12,905.05 is also fair and reasonable. As the evidence submitted herewith shows, all of Plaintiff's litigation costs are documented and reasonably incurred. (*See* Fattahi Decl., Ex. 4. [Expense Summary].)

D. Settlement Administrator Costs Are Reasonable.

The Settlement Administrator Costs in the amount of \$4,550.00 are reasonable, given the tasks to be performed by the Settlement Administrator, including, but not limited to, the following duties: mailing and re-mailing (if necessary) checks to approximately 336 aggrieved employees and the LWDA; establishing a gross settlement fund; preparing and submitting to aggrieved employees and government entities all appropriate tax filings and forms; distributing the attorneys' fees and costs; keeping the Parties timely apprised of the performance of all obligations under the Settlement; and voiding uncashed or undeliverable checks to issue those funds to the California Controller's Unclaimed Property Fund. (Settlement, ¶ 4.4.3.) Plaintiff respectfully requests that the Court approve the requested costs.

IV. CONCLUSION.

For the reasons set forth above, Plaintiff requests that the Court grant this Motion and approve the Parties' PAGA Settlement.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: December 23, 2025

WILSHIRE LAW FIRM, PLC

By: 
Lisa B. Iturriaga

Attorneys for Plaintiff