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County of Alameda

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By: Danielle Harbour,
Deputy Clerk

Eric K. Yaeckel [CSB No. 274608]

yaeckel@sullivanlawgroupapc.com

Ryan T. Kuhn [CSB No. 324538]

ryan@sullivanlawgroupapc.com

Karoline D. Kitlowski [CSB No. 347692]

karoline@sullivanlawgroupapc.com

SULLIVAN & YAECKEL LAW GROUP, APC

2330 Third Avenue

San Diego, California 92101

(619) 702-6760 * (619) 702-6761 FAX

Orlando Villalba (SBN 232165)

Orlando.Villalba@capstonelawyers.com

Helga Hakimi (SBN 257381)

Helga.Hakimi@capstonelawyers.com

Joseph D. Parsons (SBN 340074)

Joey.Parsons@capstonelawyers.com

Capstone Law APC

1875 Century Park East, Suite 1000

Los Angeles, California 90067

Telephone:(310) 556-4811 Facsimile:(310) 943-0396

Attorneys for Plaintiff MANPREET KAUR in a Representative capacity only, and on behalf of other members of the general public similarly situated

**SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF ALAMEDA**

MANPREET KAUR in a Representative capacity only, and on behalf of other members of the general public similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

v.

RUSSELL CELLULAR, INC., a Missouri Corporation; and DOES 1-10, inclusive

Defendants

CASE NO. **24CV087654**

COMPLAINT FOR:

1. **MEAL AND REST PERIOD VIOLATIONS PURSUANT TO LABOR CODE § 2698 et seq.**
2. **MINIMUM WAGE VIOLATIONS PURSUANT TO LABOR CODE § 2698 et seq.**
3. **OVERTIME VIOLATIONS PURSUANT TO LABOR CODE § 2698 et seq.**
4. **WAGE STATEMENT VIOLATIONS PURSUANT TO LABOR CODE § 2698 et seq.**
5. **FAILURE TO REIMBURSE PURSUANT TO LABOR CODE § 2698 et seq.**
6. **FAILURE TO PAY WAGES UPON SEPARATION PURSUANT TO LABOR CODE § 2698 et seq.**
7. **FAILURE TO PRODUCE PERSONNEL RECORDS PURSUANT TO LABOR CODE § 2698 et seq.**

COMES NOW Plaintiff MANPREET KAUR ("Plaintiff"), in a Representative capacity only, on behalf of all aggrieved employees, and on behalf of other members of the general public similarly situated, and alleges for her complaint as follows:

PARTIES, JURISDICTION, AND VENUE

1. This Court has jurisdiction over this matter in that all parties are residents of, or do business within, the State of California and the amount in controversy exceeds the statutory minimum limit of this Court. The monetary damages and restitution sought by Plaintiff exceed the minimal jurisdiction limits of the Superior Court and will be established according to proof at trial. Furthermore, there is no federal question at issue as Wage and Hour protections and remedies related thereto are based solely on California Law and Statutes, including the Labor Code, Civil Code, and IWC Wage Order(s). Also, the Ninth Circuit has recently held that, for purposes of establishing federal diversity jurisdiction, penalties pursuant to the Private Attorneys General Act of 2004 ("PAGA") may **not** be aggregated. *Urbino v. Orkin Servs. of California, Inc.*, 726 F.3d 1118, 1122 (9th Cir. 2013).
2. Venue before this Court is proper in that certain wrongful acts which gave rise to Plaintiff's injuries occurred in the County of Alameda, State of California.
3. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that at all relevant times mentioned herein, Defendant RUSSELL CELLULAR, INC., (Referred to herein as "Defendant" or "RCI"), was and is a Missouri Corporation doing business throughout the state, including the County of Alameda, State of California. Accordingly, Plaintiff will seek leave of court to amend this complaint to allege their true names and capacities after the same have been ascertained.
4. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that each of the fictitiously named Defendants is responsible in some manner for the wrongs and damages as herein alleged, and in so acting was functioning as the agent, servant, partner, and employee of the co-defendants, and in doing the actions mentioned below, was acting within the course and scope of his or her authority as such agent, servant, partner, and employee with the permission and consent of the co-defendants. Plaintiff's injuries as herein alleged were proximately caused by said

defendants. Wherever it is alleged herein that any act or omission was done or committed by any specially named Defendant or Defendants, Plaintiff intends thereby to allege and does allege that the same act or omission was also done and committed by each and every defendant named as a DOE, both separately and in concert with the named Defendant or Defendants.

5. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that Defendants, and each of them, including DOES 1 through 10, are and at all times herein mentioned were either individuals, sole proprietorships, partnerships, registered professionals, corporations, alter egos or other legal entities which were licensed to do and/or were doing business in the County of Alameda, State of California at all times relevant to the subject matter of this action.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

6. Plaintiff was employed by Defendants from approximately May 2023, through October 2023. Throughout her employment with Defendants, Plaintiff performed her job in a capable, and competent manner.
7. Throughout the term of their employment, Plaintiff and all other aggrieved employees were, and currently are, denied the benefits and protections of the Labor Code due to Defendants' institutionalized pay practices, standard as to all of Defendants' California-based employees.
8. On June 10, 2024, counsel for Plaintiff prepared and submitted via online filing a letter to the California Labor & Workforce Development Agency ("LWDA"). A copy of the letter was mailed to Defendants, via USPS Certified Mail. The letter contained the specific provisions of the California Labor Code and Business and Professions Code violated by Defendants, as well as the facts and theories in support of Plaintiff's claims. (Please see **Exhibit 1**, a true and correct copy of this letter.)
9. The statutory time period for the LWDA to investigate and/or respond, and for the employer to respond, has concluded.

REPRESENTATIVE ALLEGATIONS

10. As more specifically set forth below, Plaintiff brings this action in a representative capacity on behalf of all current and former aggrieved employees of Defendants. Code Civ. Proc. § 2699; *Arias v. Superior Court* (2009) 46 Cal. 4th 969, 980-981. Plaintiff is proceeding in a

representative capacity under PAGA only. Plaintiff is not seeking individual relief. Throughout the operative limitations period, Plaintiff and all other aggrieved employees were denied the protections and benefits of the Labor Code due to Defendants' standard practices. Throughout their employment, Plaintiff and all other aggrieved employees were and are denied full and accurate compensation, including overtime compensation, in violation of, *inter alia*, Labor Code sections 510, 1194, and 1197. Plaintiff and the other aggrieved employees were and are denied Meal and Rest Periods and Meal and Rest Period payments, in violation of, *inter alia*, Labor Code sections 226.7 and 512. Defendants failed to furnish accurate itemized wage statements in violation of, *inter alia*, Labor Code section 226. Defendants failed to reimburse Plaintiff and other aggrieved employees for necessary business expenditures in violation of, *inter alia*, Labor Code section 2802. Defendants failed to provide all compensation due at termination of employment in violation of, *inter alia*, Labor Code sections 201 through 203.

11. Plaintiff brings this action on the grounds that she and other current and former aggrieved employees of Defendants were and are improperly denied the mandated wages resulting from the above-referenced violations. Code Civ. Proc. § 2699; *Arias*, 46 Cal. 4th at 980-981. The number of current and former aggrieved employees is believed to exceed One Hundred (100) members.

12. The approximately One Hundred (100) aggrieved employees are comprised of Defendants' current or former California-based employees.

13. The questions of law and fact common to all aggrieved employees arising from Defendants' actions include, among others, the following:

- a. Whether Defendants failed to pay its employees the proper straight-time, overtime, and double time wages due and owing to them;
- b. Whether Defendants failed to pay its employees all compensation due and owing at termination of employment;
- c. Whether Defendants failed to provide its employees with statutorily-compliant Meal and/or Rest Periods, in violation of, *inter alia*, California Labor Code section 512 and 226.7, in that Defendants' written policies are not compliant with California law, and

- 1 Defendants do not allow its employees duty-free Meal and/or Rest Periods on occasion;
- 2 d. Whether Defendants failed to properly provide Meal and Rest Period Premiums in
- 3 accordance with law;
- 4 e. Whether Defendants failed to properly calculate and pay its employees overtime
- 5 compensation or Meal and Rest Period Premiums in accordance with law by failing to
- 6 properly calculate, into the Regular Rate of Pay, the value of all employee benefits and
- 7 other non-discretionary compensation; and
- 8 f. Whether Defendants failed to properly reimburse its employees for necessary business
- 9 expenditures for, *inter alia*, cell phone costs and other work supplies, in violation of
- 10 Labor Code section 2802.
- 11 14. At all times mentioned herein, Defendants were subject to the Labor Codes and Industrial
- 12 Welfare Commission Wage Orders of the State of California, including, but not limited to,
- 13 California Labor Code section 2698 *et seq.*
- 14 15. At all times mentioned herein, Defendants are and were “employers” as that term is used
- 15 within the relevant sections of the California Labor Code.
- 16 16. Plaintiff has exhausted her administrative remedies and pre-filing requirements pursuant to
- 17 California Labor Code section 2699.3, and has also fulfilled all notice requirements under the
- 18 statute.
- 19 17. Throughout the operative limitations period, Plaintiff and all other aggrieved employees were
- 20 denied the protections and benefits of the Labor Code and IWC Wage Order(s) due to
- 21 Defendants’ standard practices. Said violations are set forth below.

22 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

23 **Meal and Rest Period Violations Pursuant to Labor Code § 2698 *et seq.***

24 **Representative Action**

25 **(By Plaintiff against Defendants and DOES 1 through 10)**

- 26 18. Plaintiff hereby incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 17 as though fully set forth
- 27 herein.

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1 19. Labor Code section 1198 states:

2 The maximum hours of work and the standard conditions of labor fixed
3 by the commission shall be the maximum hours of work and the
4 standard conditions of labor for employees. The employment of any
employee for longer hours than those fixed by the order or under
conditions of labor prohibited by the order is unlawful.

5 Defendants violated this section by establishing working conditions below the standard of the
6 applicable Wage Order.

7 20. Under applicable California law, “An employer may not employ an employee for a work period
8 of more than five hours per day without providing the employee with a Meal Period of not less
9 than 30 minutes [...] An employer may not employ an employee for a work period of more than
10 10 hours per day without providing the employee with a second Meal Period of not less than
11 30 minutes” Lab. Code § 512(a); see also 8 Cal. Code Regs. § 11070 (11)(A).

12 21. Unless the employee is relieved of all duty during a thirty (30) minute Meal Period, the Meal
13 Period shall be considered an “on duty” Meal Period and counted as time worked. 8 Cal. Code
14 Regs. § 11070 (11).

15 22. California law requires employers to provide nonexempt employees with a 10-minute Rest
16 Period for every four hours worked, or “major fraction thereof.” 8 Cal. Code Regs. § 11070
17 (11).

18 23. An employer who fails to provide Meal or Rest Periods as required by an applicable Wage
19 Order must pay the employee one additional hour of pay at the employee’s regular rate of pay
20 for each workday that the Meal or Rest Period was not provided. Lab. Code § 226.7(b); 8 Cal.
21 Code Regs. § 11070 (11), (12).

22 24. Within the operative time period, Defendants failed to possess compliant Meal and Rest Period
23 policies.

24 25. For example, Defendants do not possess a legal Meal Period policy or legal Rest Period policy,
25 and makes no attempt to ensure that its employees are either timely or wholly provided Meal
26 Periods or Rest Periods.

27 26. Defendants would also pressure employees to either skip, or cut short, Meal Periods and Rest
28 Periods, based on workload volume and coverage issues.

- 1 27. In addition, Defendants had notice of Plaintiff working outside of her scheduled and/or
2 reported hours, as well as within Meal and Rest Periods, but failed to provide any
3 compensation for this work-time.
- 4 28. Defendants willfully failed and refused to pay Plaintiff and all other aggrieved employees one
5 additional hour of pay at their regular rate of pay for all workdays that a Meal or Rest Period
6 was not provided, as required by Labor Code section 226.7 and IWC Wage Order 7 § (11),
7 (12).
- 8 29. Any payments made by Defendants for non-compliant Meal Periods were not paid at the
9 employee's regular rate in violation of Labor Code section 226.7 and the operative IWC Wage
10 Orders. Instead, these payments were made at an employee's base rate and did not include the
11 value of, *inter alia*, all actual compensation owed, and/or all employee benefits such as, for
12 example, non-discretionary compensation and other employee benefits.
- 13 30. As a direct result of Defendants' failure to comply with the foregoing provisions of the Labor
14 Code, Plaintiff and all other aggrieved employees have been damaged in an amount to be
15 proven at trial.
- 16 31. As California Labor Code Section 2699 provides for civil penalties recoverable by Plaintiff on
17 behalf of herself and all other aggrieved employees by and through Labor Code section 2699.3,
18 and as Plaintiff has complied with all pre-filing requirements, Plaintiff may recover these
19 penalties pursuant to Labor Code section 2699, as more specifically set forth in the below
20 Prayer For Relief.
- 21 32. Plaintiff seeks an award of statutory civil penalties for each underpaid employee of Defendants
22 pursuant to Labor Code sections 2699(a) for each of these employees.
- 23 33. Plaintiff also seeks an award of reasonable attorneys' fees and costs pursuant to Labor Code
24 section 2699(g)(1).

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SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION
Minimum Wage Violations Pursuant to Labor Code § 2698 et seq.
Representative Action
(By Plaintiff against Defendants and DOES 1 through 10)

34. Plaintiff hereby incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 33 as though fully set forth herein.

35. Defendants failed to pay its employees all compensation due in violation of, among other statutes, Labor Code section 1197. California law holds that the failure to pay for any work time constitutes a violation of minimum wage laws. *Armenta v. Osmose, Inc.*, (2005) 135 Cal. App.4th 314, 323. These violations were caused by and through Defendants' failure to maintain accurate Time Records (as required by California law), to the detriment of the employees. Specifically, although Defendants would receive "to-the-minute" start and end times (from their employees' mandated timekeeping practices), Defendants would thereafter alter - and deduct time from - the Time Records, prior to payment of compensation to the employees. Additionally, the right to receive the proper minimum wage compensation was impacted by Defendants knowingly failing to consider other work performed by the employees, including all time employees were under Defendants' control. These actions, and instructions, caused the employees to lose compensation, including proper minimum wage compensation and overtime compensation.

36. As a result of Defendants' failure to comply with the provisions of the Labor Code, Plaintiff and all other aggrieved employees have been damaged in an amount to be proven at trial.

37. As California Labor Code Section 2699 provides for civil penalties recoverable by Plaintiff on behalf of herself and all other aggrieved employees by and through Labor Code section 2699.3, and as Plaintiff has complied with all pre-filing requirements, Plaintiff may recover these penalties pursuant to Labor Code section 2699, as more specifically set forth in the below Prayer For Relief.

38. Plaintiff seeks an award of statutory civil penalties for each underpaid employee of Defendants pursuant to Labor Code sections 2699(a) for each of these employees.

39. Plaintiff also seeks an award of reasonable attorneys' fees and costs pursuant to Labor Code

section 2699(g)(1).

THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION
Overtime Violations Pursuant to Labor Code § 2698 et seq.
Representative Action
(By Plaintiff against Defendants and DOES 1 through 10)

40. Plaintiff hereby incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 39 as though fully set forth herein.
41. Defendants failed to pay Plaintiff and all other aggrieved employees all compensation, including overtime compensation, due in violation of, among other statutes, Labor Code section 510. These violations occurred due to Defendants' illegal policies, referenced above, whereby employees experienced monetary under-compensation. The systematic failure to provide proper overtime compensation is a violation of California law.
42. Additionally, Defendants also failed to provide the actual Overtime Rate of Pay by ignoring certain compensation when calculating the Regular Rate of Pay including, but not limited to, various forms of bonus and/or incentive pay, and the value of employee benefits and employee discounts, in violation of Labor Code section 510.
43. As a direct result of Defendants' failure to comply with the foregoing provisions of the Labor Code, Plaintiff and all other aggrieved employees have been damaged in an amount to be proved at trial.
44. As California Labor Code Section 2699 provides for civil penalties recoverable by Plaintiff on behalf of herself and all other aggrieved employees by and through Labor Code section 2699.3, and as Plaintiff has complied with all pre-filing requirements, Plaintiff may recover these penalties pursuant to Labor Code section 2699, as more specifically set forth in the below Prayer For Relief.
45. Plaintiff seeks an award of statutory civil penalties for each underpaid employee of Defendants pursuant to Labor Code sections 2699(a) for each of these employees.
46. Plaintiff also seeks an award of reasonable attorneys' fees and costs pursuant to Labor Code section 2699(g)(1).

FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION
Wage Statement Violations Pursuant to Labor Code § 2698 et seq.
Representative Action
(By Plaintiff against Defendants and DOES 1 through 10)

47. Plaintiff hereby incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 46 as though fully set forth herein.

48. Defendants failed to provide Plaintiff and all other aggrieved employees with accurate itemized wage statements in violation of, among other statutes, Labor Code section 226. These violations include, but are not limited to, Defendants' failure to accurately identify all applicable regular and overtime (including double-time) rates of pay in violation of section 226(a)(9), and providing inaccurate representations of both "gross" and "net wages." Defendants also failed to accurately list "all applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay period and the corresponding number of hours worked at each hourly rate," in violation of 226(a)(9). Defendants also failed to provide an accurate showing of the "total hours worked," in violation of Labor Code section 226(a)(2). For example, Defendants had notice of employees working outside of their scheduled and/or reported hours, as well as within Meal and Rest Periods, but did not provide compensation.

49. Further, the Defendants' wage statement listings are confusing and employees cannot readily ascertain their total hours worked, applicable rates, and all gross and net wages. As one example, Defendants are apparently using a time calculating system other than "minutes", but without explanation to the employees within the wage statement.

50. As a direct result of Defendants' failure to comply with the foregoing provisions of the Labor Code, Plaintiff and all other aggrieved employees have been damaged in an amount to be proven at trial.

51. As California Labor Code Section 2699 provides for civil penalties recoverable by Plaintiff on behalf of herself and all other aggrieved employees by and through Labor Code section 2699.3, and as Plaintiff has complied with all pre-filing requirements, Plaintiff may recover these penalties pursuant to Labor Code section 2699, as more specifically set forth in the below Prayer For Relief.

1 52. Plaintiff seeks an award of statutory civil penalties for each underpaid employee of Defendants
2 pursuant to Labor Code sections 2699(a) for each of these employees.

3 53. Plaintiff also seeks an award of reasonable attorneys' fees and costs pursuant to Labor Code
4 section 2699(g)(1).

5 **FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION**
6 **Failure to Reimburse Pursuant to Labor Code § 2698 et seq.**
7 **Representative Action**
8 **(By Plaintiff against Defendants and DOES 1 through 10)**

9 54. Plaintiff hereby incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 53 as though fully set forth
10 herein.

11 55. Defendants failed to reimburse their employees for all necessary business expenditures
12 incurred in direct consequence of the discharge of their duties in violation of, among other
13 statutes, Labor Code section 2802. These expenditures are the result of, *inter alia*, Defendants'
14 standard policies which require its employees to incur mileage and to use their own cell phones
15 for work-related purposes, without reimbursement.

16 56. As a direct result of Defendants' failure to comply with the foregoing provisions of the Labor
17 Code, Plaintiff and all other aggrieved employees have been damaged in an amount to be
18 proven at trial.

19 57. As California Labor Code Section 2699 provides for civil penalties recoverable by Plaintiff on
20 behalf of herself and all other aggrieved employees by and through Labor Code section 2699.3,
21 and as Plaintiff has complied with all pre-filing requirements, Plaintiff may recover these
22 penalties pursuant to Labor Code section 2699, as more specifically set forth in the below
23 Prayer For Relief.

24 58. Plaintiff seeks an award of statutory civil penalties for each underpaid employee of Defendants
25 pursuant to Labor Code sections 2699(a) for each of these employees.

26 59. Plaintiff also seeks an award of reasonable attorneys' fees and costs pursuant to Labor Code
27 section 2699(g)(1).

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SIXTH CAUSE OF ACTION
Failure to Pay Wages Upon Separation Pursuant to Labor Code § 2698 et seq.
Representative Action
(By Plaintiff against Defendants and DOES 1 through 10)

60. Plaintiff hereby incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 59 as though fully set forth herein.

61. Defendants failed to provide Plaintiff and other aggrieved employees with all wages earned and unpaid at termination in violation of, among other statutes, Labor Code sections 201 through 203. These violations resulted from, among other unlawful actions, Defendants' willful failure to provide accurate and complete compensation to aggrieved employees under Labor Code sections 226.7, 510, 512, 1197, and 2802, as set forth above.

62. As a direct result of Defendants' failure to comply with the foregoing provisions of the Labor Code, Plaintiff and all other aggrieved employees have been damaged in an amount to be proven at trial.

63. As California Labor Code Section 2699 provides for civil penalties recoverable by Plaintiff on behalf of herself and all other aggrieved employees by and through Labor Code section 2699.3, and as Plaintiff has complied with all pre-filing requirements, Plaintiff may recover these penalties pursuant to Labor Code section 2699, as more specifically set forth in the below Prayer For Relief.

64. Plaintiff seeks an award of statutory civil penalties for each underpaid employee of Defendants pursuant to Labor Code sections 2699(a) for each of these employees.

65. Plaintiff also seeks an award of reasonable attorneys' fees and costs pursuant to Labor Code section 2699(g)(1), and interest, pursuant to Labor Code section 218.6.

SEVENTH CAUSE OF ACTION
Failure to Produce Personnel Records Pursuant to Labor Code § 2698 et seq.
Representative Action
(By Plaintiff Representative against Defendant and DOES 1 through 10)

66. Plaintiff hereby incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 65 as though fully set forth herein.

67. Labor Code section 1198.5(a) provides that every current and former employee has the right

- 1 to inspect and receive a copy of the personnel records that the employer maintains relating to
2 the employee's performance or to any grievance concerning the employee.
- 3 68. The employer has the duty to make these records available within 30 days of receipt of a
4 written request. Labor Code § 1198.5(b).
- 5 69. If an employer fails to permit a current or former employee, or his or her representative, to
6 inspect or copy personnel records within the times specified the current or former employee
7 or the Labor Commissioner may recover a penalty. Labor Code § 1198.5(k).
- 8 70. Pursuant to the PAGA statute "any provision of this code that provides for a civil penalty to
9 be assessed and collected by the Labor and Workforce Development Agency or any of its
10 departments, divisions, commissions, boards, agencies, or employees, for a violation of this
11 code, may, as an alternative, be recovered through a civil action brought by an aggrieved
12 employee." Labor Code § 2699.
- 13 71. Plaintiff made a written request to inspect her personnel file, by certified mail, to Defendants
14 on December 22, 2023. (See **Exhibit 1:Ex. A attached thereto**). No acknowledgment or
15 response was ever received from Defendants.
- 16 72. As a direct result of Defendants failure to comply with the foregoing provisions of the Labor
17 Code, Plaintiff and all other aggrieved employees have been damaged in an amount to be
18 proven at trial.
- 19 73. As California Labor Code Section 2699 provides for civil penalties recoverable by Plaintiff on
20 behalf of all aggrieved employees by and through Labor Code section 2699.3, and as Plaintiff
21 has complied with all pre-filing requirements, Plaintiff may recover these penalties pursuant
22 to Labor Code section 2699, as more specifically set forth in the below Prayer For Relief.
- 23 74. Plaintiff also seeks an award of reasonable attorney's fees and costs pursuant to Labor Code
24 section 2699(g)(1).

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PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff, on behalf of all aggrieved employees, prays for judgment as follows:

1. For an award of attorneys' fees and costs of suit herein pursuant to Labor Code section 2699(g)(1);
2. For an award of statutory civil penalties pursuant to Labor Code section 2699(f)(2); and
3. For such other relief as the Court deems just and proper.

Dated: August 16, 2024

SULLIVAN & YAECKEL LAW GROUP, APC



Eric K. Yaeckel
Ryan T. Kuhn
Karoline D. Kitlowski
Attorneys for Plaintiff MANPREET KAUR in a
Representative capacity only, and on behalf of other
members of the general public similarly situated

Exhibit 1

SULLIVAN & YAECKEL

LAW GROUP

A PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION

2330 THIRD AVENUE
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92101

PHONE 619-702-6760
FACSIMILE 619-702-6761

June 10, 2024

Labor and Workforce Development Agency
Attn. PAGA Administrator

Submitted Via Online Filing

Re: **Manpreet Kaur v. Russell Cellular, Inc.**
Our File No.: 7428

Dear Administrator:

Please allow this correspondence to serve as “written notice,” as required by California Labor Code section 2699.3(a)(1), of the specific provisions of the California Labor Code believed to have been violated by Russell Cellular, Inc. (hereinafter referred to as “RCI”), in the above referenced matter. This “written notice” is filed on behalf of Ms. Kaur, and all current and former non-exempt employees employed by RCI. Thank you for your assistance and instruction on this issue.

Please Note: In providing said notice, Plaintiff intends to proceed in a “representative capacity only.” Plaintiff is not seeking individual relief.

The specific provisions alleged to have been violated by RCI are as follows:

CALIFORNIA LABOR CODE SECTIONS 201-203, 204, 226, 226(a), 226.7, 510, 512, 1194, 1197.1, 1198.5 and 2802, as well as IWC Wage Order 7, and any other applicable wage orders, codified as Title 8, California Code of Regulations, section 11070 *et seq.*

Facts and theories supporting the allegations: Ms. Kaur was employed as a non-exempt employee for RCI from May 2023, through October 2023.

Throughout the term of Ms. Kaur’s employment, RCI required Ms. Kaur and all other non-exempt employees to experience actions illegal under the California Labor Code, including the following:

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Minimum Wage and Overtime Violations

- RCI failed to provide all compensation, including minimum wage and overtime compensation, as well as compensation for work performed inside of Meal and Rest Periods, to its employees in violation of, *inter alia*, Labor Code sections 1194, 204, 510, IWC Wage Order 7, and any other applicable wage orders. This illegal action is due, in part, to RCI's policies of (1) failing to properly retain accurate Time Records, in violation of California law, and (2) failing to provide compensation (including both minimum and overtime compensation) for all time worked by the employees, or in control of the employer. For instance, RCI would instruct Ms. Kaur to report scheduled (as opposed to *actual*) work hours, resulting in a loss of compensation. Additionally, RCI would often require Ms. Kaur to work extended hours (beyond scheduled hours), without compensation. Further, RCI would regularly contact Ms. Kaur outside of normal work hours (*i.e.*, "after hours" or during lunch) without compensation.
- Additionally, among other issues, RCI has notice of Ms. Kaur, and others, working outside of their scheduled and/or reported hours, as well as *within* Meal and Rest Periods, but fails to provide any compensation for this work-time. Ms. Kaur was frequently scheduled to be "On Call" outside of when his work shifts ended, but was never compensated for this time. Further, RCI failed to properly calculate and pay overtime at the actual overtime rate of pay, as RCI ignores certain compensation when calculating the Regular Rate of Pay. More specifically, RCI failed to properly calculate the legal Overtime Rate of Pay, by (among other issues) failing to consider certain non-discretionary forms of compensation (including, but not limited to bonuses, commissions, and/or other non-discretionary compensation).

Failure to Provide Compliant Meal Periods

- RCI failed to provide compliant Meal Periods or requisite Meal Period penalty payments, in violation of, *inter alia*, Labor Code sections 226.7, 512, and IWC Wage Order 7, or any other applicable wage orders. For example, RCI does not possess a legal Meal Period policy and makes no attempt to ensure that its employees are either timely or wholly provided Meal Periods. The employees would often either miss a Meal Period entirely, or be provided a short or untimely Meal Period. Whether or not an employee was provided a Meal Period was often contingent upon the how busy or understaffed the employees were on a given day.
- RCI would pressure its employees to either skip, or cut short, a Meal Period as employees were expected to respond to supervisors and/or customers at all times. RCI has never provided a compliant Meal Period penalty payment to any employee as to the above referenced issues. Finally, on the rare occasions when employees *were* paid Meal Period penalties (*i.e.* California Meal Period Premiums), such

payments do not “cure” the stated Labor Code violation under section 226.7. The California Supreme Court held that “An employer’s failure to provide an additional hour of pay does not form part of a section 226.7 violation, and an employer’s provision of an additional hour of pay does not excuse a section 226.7 violation. The failure to provide required meal and rest breaks is what triggers a violation of section 226.7.” (*Kirby v. Immoos Fire Protection, Inc.* (2012) 53 Cal.4th 1244, 1256, italics added.). Even more recently, a 2020 California Supreme Court ruling stated that, “The remedy for a Labor Code violation, through settlement or other means, is distinct from the fact of the violation itself. For example, employers can pay an additional hour of wages as a remedy for failing to provide meal and rest breaks. (§ 226.7, subd. (c).) But we have held that payment of this statutory remedy ‘does not excuse a section 226.7 violation.’” *Kim v. Reins International California, Inc.*, (2020) 9 Cal.5th 73. To be clear, payment of a Meal Period penalty to employees does not rectify the violation, it is in fact an admission of a Labor Code violation. Finally, RCI failed to pay Meal Period Premiums at the proper rate, as RCI fails to either (1) pay a full hours worth of pay, or (2) properly calculate the regular rate of pay for purposes of determining the premium rate owed. *Ferra v. Loews Hollywood Hotel, LLC*, (2021) 11 Cal.5th 858.

- RCI required its employees to constantly monitor their cell phones and be “on-call” at all times, specifically during Meal Periods. On occasion, RCI would interrupt, or cut short, its employees’ Meal Periods and require them to return to work.
- RCI illegally retained control over its employees during Meal Periods. For example, RCI required its employees to “remain on the premises,” and to remain “On Call” (*i.e.* monitor their phones) at all times, including during Meal Periods.

Failure to Provide Compliant Rest Periods

- RCI failed to provide compliant Rest Periods or requisite Rest Period penalty payments, in violation of, *inter alia*, Labor Code sections 226.7, 512, and IWC Wage Order 7, and any other applicable wage orders. For example, RCI does not possess a legal Rest Period policy, as its Rest Period policy lacks required language under California law. RCI makes no attempt to ensure that its employees are either timely or wholly provided Rest Periods. The employees would often either miss a Rest Period entirely, be provided a short or untimely Rest Period, or be provided only one Rest Period, even when they were working in excess of 6.5 hours a day. RCI would pressure its employees to either skip, or cut short, a Rest Period as employees were expected to respond to supervisors and/or customers at all times. Ms. Kaur often was required to work during Rest Periods in order to complete her daily duties before she ended her shift for the day. RCI has never provided a compliant Rest Period penalty payment to any employee as to the above referenced issues. Finally, on the rare occasions in which RCI would provide a Rest Period penalty, it would pay said

penalty at an improper (and *lesser*) rate, due to the failure to properly calculate the Regular Rate of Pay.

- RCI required its employees to constantly monitor their cell phones and be “on-call” at all times, specifically during Rest Periods. On occasion, RCI would interrupt, or cut short, its employees’ Rest Periods and require them to return to work.
- Finally, RCI illegally retained control over its employees during Rest Periods. For example, RCI required its employees to “remain on the premises,” and to remain “On Call” (*i.e.* monitor their telephones) at all times, including during Rest Periods.

Wage Statement Violations

- RCI violated Labor Code section 226(a)(2) by failing to furnish an accurate showing of all hours worked at each hourly rate by the employee. Ms. Kaur, and other employees were not compensated for all hours worked (due in part to RCI’s requirement that employees list only *scheduled* work-times, not actual work-times.)
- RCI violated Labor Code section 226(a)(5) by failing to furnish an accurate showing of the net wages earned by its employees. For example, RCI **(a)** would not provide compensation for all hours and minutes worked, **(b)** would use an improper (and lesser) Overtime Rate of Pay, and **(c)** would fail to pay Meal and/or Rest Period penalties when due. Further, on the rare occasions in which RCI would provide a Meal or Rest Period penalty, it would pay said penalty at an improper (and lesser) rate, due to the failure to properly calculate the Regular Rate of Pay.
- RCI violated Labor Code section 226(a)(9) by failing to furnish an accurate showing of all applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay period and the corresponding number of hours worked at each hourly rate by the employee. Ms. Kaur, and the other employees were not compensated for all hours worked (due in part to RCI requiring employees to list only *scheduled* work-times, not actual work-times to include “on-call” hours). RCI does not explain how its system describes “time worked” on the Wage Statement itself. As such, Ms. Kaur cannot “readily ascertain” what these figures mean. This is because RCI is apparently using a time-calculating system other than “minutes,” but without explanation to the employees within the wage statement. As minutes are measured on a scale of 1 through 60, it is not apparent what these figures (*i.e.* “.71”) are meant to represent. Without an explanation for how these figures were arrived at, employees cannot “readily ascertain” their total hours worked. Therefore, RCI failed to provide an accurate showing of the “total hours worked” by its employees pursuant to section 226(a)(2), due to all the aforesaid reasons.

Failure to Provide Compliant Expense Reimbursement Payments

- RCI failed to provide compliant expense reimbursement payments in violation of, *inter alia*, Labor Code section 2802, by failing to provide payments for expenses incurred by Ms. Kaur, and other non-exempt employees, including expenses for cell-phone costs, necessary work supplies, and mileage.

Willful Failure to Provide All Compensation to Ex-Employees

- RCI failed to provide all compensation upon termination of employment in violation of Labor Code sections 201-203, due, in part, to the fact that RCI failed to provide proper compensation for all hours worked, and failed to pay full Meal or Rest Period penalties, as discussed above.

Failure to Comply with Personnel File Request

- RCI failed to provide a copy of Plaintiffs' personnel files. On February 7, 2024, Ms. Kaur made a request for her personnel files. (Please see **Exhibit A**). On March 11, 2024, Ms. Kaur made a second Request for her personnel files. As of the current date it has been **111 days** since Plaintiff has requested a copy of her personnel files. Accordingly, RCI is liable to Plaintiffs under Cal. Civ. Code section 1198.5.

To confirm, RCI is a "person" as defined within California Labor Code section 18.

Again, thank you for your assistance and instruction throughout this matter. Should you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Very Truly Yours,



Karoline D. Kitlowski, Esq.

cc: *Via Certified U.S. Mail*

CSC-LAWYERS INCORPORATING SERVICE

Agent for service of process for
RUSSELL CELLULAR, INC.
2710 Gateway Oaks Drive #150
Sacramento, CA 95833

Exhibit A



1875 Century Park East, Suite 1000
Los Angeles, California 90067
310.556.4811 Main | 310.943.0396 Fax

**AUTHORIZATION FOR RELEASE OF
PERSONNEL FILE AND WAGE RECORDS**

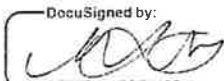
To Whom It May Concern:

I, Manpreet Kaur [print your full name]:

request that Russell Cellular Inc. and any related entities send copies of the following to my attorneys, Capstone Law APC, located at 1875 Century Park East, Suite 1000, Los Angeles, California 90067 as soon as practicable, **but no later than 21 calendar days after the date this request** has been submitted:

- a) My entire employee personnel file, including, but not limited to, my employment application, new hire packet, any dispute resolution and/or arbitration agreement, and any documents I signed, as required by Labor Code sections 432 and 1198.5;
- b) Time records and/or electronic punch data showing hours worked and meal periods taken, as required by the applicable Industrial Wage Order; and
- c) All of my time, wage and payroll records, including my wage stubs in their entirety, as required by Labor Code section 226(b)-(c).

I hereby expressly authorize and appoint Capstone Law APC as my representative to act on my behalf and in my place to obtain my personnel file and time, wage and payroll records by any and all means necessary and available.

DocuSigned by:

3EEFD4113C00493
Manpreet Kaur

12/22/2023

Date

Christian Yorke Struckmeyer

From: Mao Shiokura <Mao.Shiokura@capstonelawyers.com>
Sent: Monday, March 11, 2024 3:12 PM
To: jmarquis@fmglaw.com
Cc: Ninel Kocharyan; Anthony Castillo
Subject: RE: Manpreet Kaur / Russell Cellular, Inc.
Attachments: 2023 12-22 RET re Authorization and Release Form - DOCUSIGNED.pdf

Hi Julie,

Following up on this. Can you confirm whether your client will be producing Ms. Kaur's personnel file and wage records?

Attached is a signed authorization our firm obtained from her for the release of these records.

-Mao

From: Jamie Greene <Jamie.Greene@capstonelawyers.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2024 1:27 PM
To: jmarquis@fmglaw.com
Cc: Mao Shiokura <Mao.Shiokura@capstonelawyers.com>; Ninel Kocharyan <Ninel.Kocharyan@capstonelawyers.com>
Subject: RE: Manpreet Kaur / Russell Cellular, Inc.

Hi Julie:

Can you confirm whether your client will be producing Ms. Kaur's personnel file and wage records?

Attached is a signed authorization our firm obtained from her for the release of these records.

Best,

Jamie



Jamie Greene
310.556.4165 Direct | Jamie.Greene@capstonelawyers.com
1875 Century Park East, Suite 1000
Los Angeles, California 90067
[310.556.4811](tel:310.556.4811) Main | [310.943.0396](tel:310.943.0396) Fax
www.capstonelawyers.com

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From: Colette Mahon <cmahon@lfecr.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2024 1:23 PM
To: jmarquis@fmglaw.com
Cc: Jamie Greene <Jamie.Greene@capstonelawyers.com>
Subject: RE: Manpreet Kaur / Russell Cellular, Inc.

Hi Ms. Marquis,

Capstone Law APC, copied here, has taken over representation of Mr. Kaur. Please direct your future communications on this matter to them. Thank you.

Kindly,
Colette

From: jmarquis@fmglaw.com
To: Katherine Hogue <KHogue@lfecr.com>
Cc:
Subject: Manpreet Kaur / Russell Cellular, Inc.
Received: Wednesday February 7, 2024 10:13 am

Counsel:

Please be advised our firm represents Russell Cellular with regard to the above matter. Please direct all communications on this matter to us and do not communicate directly with our client.

Julie A. Marquis

Partner

Freeman Mathis & Gary, LLP

1010 B Street | Suite 400 | San Rafael, CA 94901-2952

D: 415-352-6434 | C: 415-385-0755

jmarquis@fmglaw.com | [LinkedIn](#) | [Bio](#)

www.fmglaw.com | [Instagram](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#)



Freeman
Mathis & Gary^{LLP}

AZ | CA | CO | CT | FL | GA | IL | IN | KY | MA | NJ | NM | NV | NY | OH | PA | RI | TN | TX
[Please read this important notice and confidentiality statement](#)