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September 24, 2024

LWDA
Attn. PAGA Administrator
1515 Clay Street, Ste. 801
Oakland, CA 94612
(Via Online Submission)

CSC - Lawyers Incorporating Service
Agent for Service of Process for
Viceroy Improvement LLC
2710 Gateway Oaks Drive
Sacramento, CA 95833
(Via Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested)

Corporation Service Company
Agent for Service of Process for
DaBella Exteriors LLC
1127 Broadway Street NE Ste 310
Salem, OR 97301
(Via Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested)

Re: ***Raymon Gavaldon v. Viceroy Improvement LLC, et al.***
Notice of Labor Code Violations and PAGA Penalties

To Whom It May Concern:

Please be advised that my office has been retained by Raymon Gavaldon ("Mr. Gavaldon" or "Employee") to pursue a Labor Code Private Attorneys General Act of 2004 ("PAGA") representative action (Cal. Lab. Code §§ 2699, et seq.) against Employee's former Employers Viceroy Improvement LLC and DaBella Exteriors, LLC (collectively, "Employers"). Employers jointly employed Employee and the Aggrieved Employees.

The purpose of this letter is to comply with PAGA and set forth the facts and theories of California Labor Code violations, which we allege Employers engaged in with respect to Employee and potentially all of Employers' Aggrieved Employees.

Employee wishes to pursue this action as an Aggrieved Employee, on behalf of the State of California, as well as on behalf of potentially all other persons who worked for Employers in California as a non-exempt or hourly-paid Employee at any time within the applicable statutory period (hereafter, the "Aggrieved Employees").

Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, suffered the Labor Code violations described below.

Employers own and operate an industry, business, and establishment within the State of California and is, therefore, subject to the California Labor Code, Wage Orders issued by the Industrial Welfare Commission ("IWC"), and the California Business & Professions Code.

During Employee's employment, Employers paid Employee an hourly wage and classified him as non-exempt from overtime. Employers typically scheduled Employee to work at least five days

in a workweek and at least eight hours per day, but Employee also worked more than eight hours in a workday and more than forty (40) hours in a workweek.

Throughout Employee's employment, Employers failed to pay for all hours worked (including minimum, straight time, and overtime wages, and reporting time pay), failed to provide legally compliant meal periods, failed to reimburse for business expenses, failed to furnish accurate wage statements, and failed to timely pay final pay. As discussed below, Employee's experience working for Employers was typical and illustrative.

Mr. Gavaldon's Employment with Employers

Employers are roofing and home remodeling contractors operating in California, among other states. Employee was an hourly, non-exempt worker of Employers. Mr. Gavaldon worked for Employers as a canvasser and a manager from approximately April 2023 to August 2024. His primary job function was leading the team marketing Employers' services door to door.

In performing Employee's duties, Employee was regularly required to perform work off-the-clock, without compensation, such as having work-related communications on his personal cell phone, driving back to the office from canvassing, filling out and scanning end-of-day reports, staying at the office for meetings past his usual shift end time, all without compensation. His managers pressured him to clock out and keep working. Employee was also sent home without having an opportunity to work at least half of this shift without being paid reporting time pay due on at least one occasion when his manager did not like Employee's performing managerial tasks.

Due to understaffing and high workloads, Employee was also frequently deprived of an opportunity to take timely and compliant meal breaks without the required premiums. For example, Employee and other members of his team had to clock out and then eat their lunch while driving to the next canvassing location. Even those on-duty meal breaks were frequently started late due to the demands of work and their quota.

Employee and the Aggrieved Employees also incurred unreimbursed business expenses that included, but were not limited to, having to use personal cell phone for work-related communications and buying their own supplies, such as clipboards. Employee also had to use personal vehicle to drive between job sites for at least two weeks without proper reimbursement. Further, Employee and the Aggrieved Employees' paystubs contained unauthorized deductions for their uniforms and a wrong legal entity name and address.

Employers further failed to pay full final wages timely by not paying all meal break penalties due and not paying for all hours worked.

These are just non-exhaustive examples of the facts and theories Employee asserts, which are described in more detail below.

Failure to Pay for All Hours Worked, Including Minimum, Straight Time, and Overtime Wages

Under California law, employers must pay for all hours worked by an employee. "Hours worked" is the time during which an employee is subject to the control of employer and includes all the time the employee is suffered or permitted to work, whether or not required to do so.

In addition, Labor Code § 510 provides that employee in California shall not be employed more than eight hours in any workday or forty (40) hours in a workweek unless they receive additional compensation beyond their regular wages in amounts specified by law.

Labor Code §§ 1194 and 1198 also provide that employee in California shall not be employed more than eight hours in any workday unless they receive additional compensation beyond their regular wages in amounts specified by law. Additionally, Labor Code § 1198 states that the employment of an employee for longer hours than those fixed by the IWC is unlawful.

Throughout the statutory period, Employers failed to pay Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for all hours worked, including minimum, straight time, and overtime wages. Employers, at times, required Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, to work “off-the-clock,” uncompensated, by, for example, requiring Employee and the Aggrieved Employees perform work during uncompensated meal periods and requiring Employee and the Aggrieved Employees to perform work before clocking in and/or after clocking out. Some of this unpaid work should have been paid at the overtime rate. California Labor Code § 510 requires that Employers compensate Employee 1.5 times their regular rate of pay when Employee work over eight hours per day, 40 hours per week, or when Employee work up to eight hours on any seventh day of a workweek. Employers failed to properly calculate Employee’s regular rate of pay when paying overtime, by failing to include all compensation in Employee’s overtime calculations. In failing to pay for all hours worked, Employers also failed to maintain accurate records of the hours Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them. Employers also altered, falsified, and manipulated the time records in order to pay them less.

As a result, Employers are liable to Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for the civil penalties provided for in Labor Code §§ 210, 1197.1, and 2699(f)(2) for failing to pay for all hours worked, including minimum, straight time, and overtime wages.

Failure to Provide Meal Periods

Under California law, employers have an affirmative obligation to relieve employee of all duty in order to take their first 30-minute, duty-free meal periods no later than the start of sixth hour of work in a workday, and to allow employee to take their second 30-minute, duty-free meal period no later than the start of the eleventh hour of work in the workday. Further, employees are entitled to be paid one hour of additional wages for each workday they were not provided with all required meal period(s).

Despite these legal requirements, Employers, at times, wrongfully failed to provide Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, with their legally mandated 30-minute, uninterrupted, and duty-free meal period in a manner required by law (and also including, but not limited to, failing, at times, to provide Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, an opportunity to leave the work premises to take meal periods). Employers also continued to assert control over Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, by, among other things, requiring, pressuring, or encouraging them to perform work tasks which could not be completed without working in lieu of taking mandatory meal periods, or by denying Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, permission to take a meal period under the conditions required by law, and without properly compensating Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for meal periods that were not provided as required by law. Employers also did not inform Employee of Employee’s right to, nor permitted Employee to take, all of Employee’s second meal periods when Employee worked at least ten hours of work in a workday and otherwise unlawfully pressured Employee to waive such breaks. Employers also prevented Employee from clocking out unless they confirmed that they took compliant meal periods even when they did not. Accordingly, Employers, at times, failed to provide meal periods to Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, in compliance with California law.

Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, are thus entitled to be paid one hour of additional wages for each workday they were not provided with all required meal period(s). Employers, however, at times, failed to pay Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of

them, the additional wages to which they were entitled for meal periods that were not provided.

As a result, Employers are liable to Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for the civil penalties provided for in Labor Code §§ 210 and 2699(f)(2) for failing to provide meal periods and pay meal period premium wages.

Failure to Pay All Earned Wages Twice Per Month

Based on Employers' failure, at times, to pay Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for all wages as discussed above, Employers also violated Labor Code § 204.

Labor Code § 204 requires employers to pay employee all earned wages two times per month. Throughout the statute of limitations period applicable to this cause of action, employees were entitled to be paid twice a month at their regular rates, including all meal period premium wages owed, and wages owed for overtime hours worked. However, at times, Employers failed and refused to pay the Employee all wages due, and failed to pay those wages twice a month, in that Employee was not paid all wages for all meal periods not provided by Employers, and all wages for all hours worked. As a result, Employers owe Employee the legally required wages for unpaid wages, and Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, suffered damages in those amounts.

Moreover, Employers are liable to Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for the civil penalties provided for in Labor Code § 210 for failing to pay all earned wages twice per month.

Failure to Maintain Accurate Records of Hours Worked and Meal Periods

Employee seeks penalties under California Labor Code § 1174(d). Pursuant to California Labor Code § 1174.5, any person, including any entity, employing labor, who willfully fails to maintain accurate and complete records required by California Labor Code § 1174 is subject to a penalty under § 1174.5. Pursuant to the applicable IWC Order § 7(A)(3), every employer shall keep time records showing when the Employee begins and ends each work period. Meal periods and total hours worked daily shall also be recorded.

Employers, however, at times, failed to maintain accurate records of hours worked and all meal periods taken or missed by Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them. Employers also altered, falsified, and manipulated these records.

Employers' failure to provide and maintain records required by the California Labor Code and the applicable IWC Wage Orders deprived Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, the ability to know, understand and question the accuracy and frequency of meal periods, and the accuracy of their hours worked stated in Employers' records. Therefore, Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, had no way to dispute the resulting failure to pay wages, all of which resulted in an unjustified economic enrichment to Employers. As a direct result, Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, have suffered and continue to suffer, substantial losses related to the use and enjoyment of such wages, lost interest on such wages and expenses and attorneys' fees in seeking to compel Employers to fully perform their obligation under state law, all to their respective damage in amounts according to proof at trial. As a result of Employers' knowing failure, at times, to comply with the California Labor Code and applicable IWC Wage Orders, Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, have also suffered an injury in that they were prevented from knowing, understanding, and disputing the wage payments paid to them.

Failure to Furnish Accurate Itemized Wage Statements

Labor Code § 226(a) provides that every employer shall, semimonthly or at the time of each payment of wages, furnish their employees an accurate itemized wage statement in writing showing nine pieces of information, including: (1) gross wages earned, (2) total hours worked by the employee, (3) the number of piece-rate units earned and any applicable piece rate if the employee is paid on a piece-rate basis, (4) all deductions, provided that all deductions made on written orders of the Employee may be aggregated and shown as one item, (5) net wages earned, (6) the inclusive dates of the period for which the Employee is paid, (7) the name of the employee and the last four digits of their social security number or an employee identification number other than a social security number, (8) the name and address of the legal entity that is the Employers, and (9) all applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay period and the corresponding number of hours worked at each hourly rate by the employee. An employee is presumed to suffer an injury if this information is missing. (Lab. Code § 226(e)(2)(B)(iii).)

The statute further provides: “An employee suffering injury as a result of a knowing and intentional failure by employers to comply with subdivision (a) is entitled to recover the greater of all actual damages or fifty dollars (\$50) for the initial pay period in which a violation occurs and one hundred dollars (\$100) per employee for each violation in a subsequent pay period, not to exceed an aggregate penalty of four thousand dollars (\$4,000), and is entitled to an award of costs and reasonable attorney’s fees.” (Lab. Code § 226(e)(1).)

In addition, California Labor Code § 246(i) required employers to provide an employee with written notice that sets forth the amount of paid sick leave available, or paid time off leave employer provides in lieu of sick leave, for use on either the employee’s itemized wage statement described in Section 226 or in a separate writing provided on the designated pay date with the employee’s payment of wages. If employer provides unlimited paid sick leave or unlimited paid time off to an employee, the employer may satisfy this section by indicating on the notice or the employee’s itemized wage statement “unlimited.”

Throughout the statutory period, Employers, at times, failed to, and continue, at times, to fail, to timely furnish Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, with accurate, itemized wage statements complying with all of the above requirements. For example, its paystubs did not list the accurate legal employing entity’s name and address and the remaining paid sick leave balance.

Accordingly, Employee and similarly Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, are entitled to recover from Employers the greater of their actual damages caused by Employers’ failure to comply with Labor Code § 226(a), or an aggregate penalty not exceeding four thousand dollars (\$4,000) per Employee. Moreover, Employers are liable to Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for the civil penalties provided for in Labor Code § 226.3 for failing to timely furnish accurate itemized wage statements.

Recordkeeping Requirement Violations

California Labor Code section 1174 requires employers to keep “accurate and complete” payroll records showing, among other things, the hours worked daily by Employee and Aggrieved Employees. All applicable IWC Wage Orders, section 7 similarly requires employers to keep accurate time records reflecting the times during which all owed meal periods were provided each day.

Based on information and belief, Employers, at times, failed, and continue, at times, to fail, to keep accurate and complete payroll records as required by law, including, but not limited to, the following records: total daily hours worked, applicable rates of pay, time records showing when

Employee and other Aggrieved Employees began and ended each work period, time records of meal periods, and accurate itemized wage statements.

Based on information and belief, Employers further failed at times, and continue, at times, to fail, to record the true start and end times of some of Employee's and Aggrieved Employees' shifts and meal periods.

Employers' failure to keep "accurate and complete" payroll records for Employee and Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, violates Labor Code sections 1174, 1198, 1199, and all applicable IWC Wage Orders, section 7. These violations subject Employers to civil penalties under Labor Code sections 558.1, 226.6, 1174.5 and 2699. Each violation of each Labor Code section and Wage Order provision, for each Aggrieved Employees (or some of them), results in a separate civil penalty.¹

Refusal to Make Payment

Labor Code section 216 declares unlawful employer's refusal to pay wages due and payable and/or denial of the validity of any claim to wages due.

Employers, at times, violated and continue, at times, to violate Labor Code section 216 by failing to pay Employee and Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for all hours worked at the proper wage rate and by failing to pay Employee and Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, an additional hour of pay for each meal and/or rest period not provided or that was invalid. *Gould v. Maryland Sound Industries, Inc.* (1995) 31 Cal.App.4th 1137, 1154-1155.

These violations subject Employers to civil penalties under Labor Code section 225.5. Each violation results in a separate civil penalty, for each Aggrieved Employees (or some of them) so affected, for each pay period (or some of them) during which the statute's provisions were violated.²

Statutory Wage Violations

Labor Code section 223 makes it unlawful for employers to secretly pay wages lower than required by statute while purporting to pay legal wages.

As described above, Employers, at times, willfully and systematically denied Employee and other Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, of minimum and overtime wage compensation for all hours worked which resulted in the payment of less than statutorily required wages owed to them. Employers, at times, acted with the intent to deprive some or all of them of statutory wages, including, but not limited to, overtime wages and minimum wages, to which they were entitled to under California law.

Thus, Employers, at times, paid Employee and other Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, lower wages than those to which they were entitled, while purporting that Employee and all Aggrieved Employees were properly paid. As such, Employee and Aggrieved Employees, or some

¹ See Lab. Code §2699(f)(2) (establishing that the civil penalty is "for each aggrieved employee per pay period").

² Labor Code § 225.5 (establishing that "[i]n addition to, and entirely independent and apart from, any other penalty provided in this article, every person who unlawfully withholds wages due any employee in violation of sections 212, 216, 221, 222, or 223 shall be subject to a civil penalty...for each failure to pay each employee") (emphasis added).

of them, are entitled to recover penalties, attorneys' fees, costs, and interest thereon, pursuant to Labor Code § 2699(f)-(g).

Failure to Indemnify for Necessary Expenditures

Labor Code § 2802(a) provides that employers shall indemnify their employees for all necessary business expenditures or losses that have been incurred by the employee in direct discharge of their duties. Throughout the statute of limitations period applicable to this cause of action, Employers, at times, wrongfully required Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, to pay expenses that they incurred in direct discharge of their duties for Employers. Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, at times, paid out-of-pocket for necessary employment-related expenses. Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, incurred substantial expenses as a direct result of performing their job duties for Employers, but Employers failed to indemnify Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for these employment-related expenses.

As a result, Employers are liable to Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for the civil penalties provided for in Labor Code §§ 2802 and 2699(f)(2) for failing to indemnify Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for necessary business expenditures.

Failure to Timely Pay All Wages at Termination

Labor Code §§ 201 and 202 provide that, if employers discharge an employee, the wages earned and unpaid at the time of discharge are due and payable immediately, and that if an employee voluntarily leaves their employment, their wages shall become due and payable not later than seventy-two (72) hours thereafter, unless the employee has given seventy-two (72) hours previous notice of their intention to quit, in which case the employee is entitled to their wages at the time of quitting. Direct deposits of wages to an employee's bank, saving and loan, or credit union account that were previously authorized by the employee are immediately terminated when an employee quits or is discharged, and the payment of wages upon termination of employment in the manner described above shall apply unless the employee has voluntarily authorized that deposit and provided that the employers comply with the provisions of Labor Code § 213(d) relating to the payment of wages upon termination or quitting of employment.

Within the applicable statute of limitations, the employment of Employee and many other Aggrieved Employees ended, i.e., was terminated by quitting or being discharged, and the employment of others will be terminated. However, during the relevant time period, Employers, at times, failed, and continue, at times, to fail, to pay Employee and terminated Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, without abatement, all wages required to be paid by Labor Code sections 201 and 202 either at the time of discharge, or within seventy-two (72) hours of their leaving Employers' employment. These unpaid wages include wages for unpaid work time (including minimum, straight time, and overtime wages), and missed meal premium wages.

Failure to Pay Reporting Time Pay

Reporting time pay constitutes wages. (*Murphy v. Kenneth Cole Productions, Inc.* (2007) 40 Cal. 4th 1094). Thus, failure to pay all reporting time pay due at the time of employment termination may be the basis for waiting time penalties pursuant to Labor Code § 203. The IWC's purpose in adopting reporting time pay requirements was two-fold: "to compensate employees" and "encourag[e] proper notice and scheduling." *Id.* at pp. 1111-1112. In *Ward v. Tilly's, Inc.* (2019) 31 Cal.App.5th 1167, the court held physical reporting was not required in order to come within the reporting time pay provision. Types of situations that trigger reporting time pay include:

1. Physically appearing at the workplace at the shift's start;
2. Presenting themselves for work by logging on to a computer remotely;
3. Appearing at a client's job site;
4. Setting out on a trucking route;
5. Or as in Tilly's, by telephoning the store two hours prior to the start of a shift.

Id. at p. 1185.

Exceptions to the requirement for reporting time pay found in IWC Orders 1-16, Section 5(C) are as follows:

When operations cannot begin or continue due to threats to employees or property, or when civil authorities recommend that work not begin or continue; or

When public utilities fail to supply electricity, water, or gas, or there is a failure in the public utilities, or sewer system; or

When the interruption of work is caused by an Act of God or other cause not within the employer's control, for example, an earthquake.

The reporting time pay provisions do not apply to employees on paid standby status or when an employee has a regularly scheduled shift of less than two hours, such as a relief cashier who works only during a one-hour period in the middle of the day.

Here, Employers failed to pay reporting time pay, as required, to Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, when it sent them home without having an opportunity to work at least half of their usual shifts.

Action for Civil Penalties Under PAGA

In light of the above, Employee alleges that Employers violated the foregoing provisions of the Labor Code with respect to Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them:

Therefore, on behalf of potentially Aggrieved Employees, Employee seeks applicable penalties related to the violations alleged above pursuant to the PAGA. These include, but are not limited to, penalties under Labor Code §§ 210, 226.3, 1174.5, 1197.1, and 2699.

Employee has placed Employers on notice by mailing a certified copy of this correspondence, as indicated on the first page. Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

WILSHIRE LAW FIRM



Molly DeSario, Esq.