SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
Civil Division
Central District, Stanley Mosk Courthouse, Department 56

24STCV33734 February 26, 2026
EDGAR SORIANO vs TRIPALINK, CORP. 8:30 AM

Judge: Honorable Steven A. Ellis
Judicial Assistant: J. Aguayo
Courtroom Assistant: S. Hahn

CSR: None
ERM: None
Deputy Sheriff: None

APPEARANCES:

For Plaintiff(s): Lilit Tunyan, Tunyan via LACourtConnect

For Defendant(s): No Appearances

NATURE OF PROCEEDINGS: Hearing on Motion for Order approving settlement of claims brought pursuant to the Private Attorneys General Act of 2004

The matter is not called for hearing.

Plaintiff and Defendant both submit on the Court's tentative.

After reading and considering all moving documents, the Court rules as follows:

The Motion for Order Approving Settlement of Claims Brought Pursuant to the Private Attorneys General Act of 2004; Memorandum of Points and Authority filed by Edgar Soriano, Edgar Soriano on 01/30/2026 is Granted.

Background

On December 20, 2024, Edgar Soriano ("Plaintiff") filed a complaint against Tripalink Corp. ("Defendant") for civil penalties under PAGA (Cal. Lab. Code § 2699, *et seq*.).

On January 30, 2026, Plaintiff filed this motion for approval of settlement.

On February 3, 2026, Defendant filed a notice of non-opposition.

Legal Standard

Labor Code section 2699, part of the Private Attorneys General Act ("PAGA"), provides:¿

> "Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any provision of this code that provides for a civil penalty to be assessed and collected by the Labor and Workforce Development

> Agency or any of its departments, divisions, commissions, boards, agencies, or employees, for a violation of this code, may, as an alternative, be recovered through a civil action brought by an aggrieved employee on behalf of himself or herself and other current or former employees pursuant to the procedures specified in Section 2699.3."¿

(Lab. Code, § 2699, subd. (a).)¿¿

When a private party collects fees in the civil case:¿

> "Except as provided in subdivision (n), civil penalties recovered by aggrieved employees shall be distributed as follows: 65 percent to the Labor and Workforce Development Agency for enforcement of labor laws, including the administration of this part, and for education of employers and employees about their rights and responsibilities under this code, to be continuously appropriated to supplement and not supplant the funding to the agency for those purposes; and 35 percent to the aggrieved employees."¿¿

(Lab. Code, § 2699, subd. (m).)

"The superior court shall review and approve any settlement of any civil action filed pursuant to this part. The proposed settlement shall be submitted to the agency at the same time that it is submitted to the court." (Lab. Code, § 2699, subd. (s)(2).)¿

In *Nordstrom Commission Cases* (2010) 186 Cal.App.4th 576, the Court of Appeal stated that a court has discretion to approve any penalty amount, even $0.00. (*Id.*, at p. 589.)¿¿ The court also explained what a court should and may consider in determining the reasonableness of an award in a settlement with PAGA claims:

> "The trial court has broad discretion to determine whether the settlement is fair. It should consider relevant factors, such as the strength of plaintiffs' case, the risk, expense, complexity and likely duration of further litigation, the risk of maintaining class action status through trial, the amount offered in settlement, the extent of discovery completed and the stage of the proceedings, the experience and views of counsel, the presence of a governmental participant, and the reaction of the class members to the proposed settlement.... Due regard should be given to what is otherwise a private consensual agreement between the parties. The inquiry "must be limited to the extent necessary to reach a reasoned judgment that the agreement is not the product of fraud or overreaching by, or collusion between, the negotiating parties, and that the settlement, taken as a whole, is fair,

> reasonable and adequate to all concerned. [A] presumption of fairness exists where: (1) the settlement is reached through arm's-length bargaining; (2) investigation and discovery are sufficient to allow counsel and the court to act intelligently; (3) counsel is experienced in similar litigation; and (4) the percentage of objectors is small. Public policy generally favors the compromise of complex class action litigation.

(*Id.* at p. 581 [citations omitted].)

<u>Discussion</u>

Plaintiff has presented evidence that the agreement was reached in an arms-length negotiation during a mediation session after Plaintiff had conducted substantial investigation and informal discovery. (Tunyan Decl., ¶¶ 12-13, 18.)

Plaintiff's counsel provides a detailed factual basis for the claims asserted in the complaint. (Tunyan Decl., ¶¶ 18-25.) The maximum exposure in this case is $1,584,600, with a maximum realistic liability of $409,000.00. (Tunyan Decl., ¶ 25.) Plaintiff seeks to settle for $165,000, which is 40.3% of the maximum realistic liability and 10.5% of the maximum exposure in this matter. (Tunyan Decl., ¶ 21.) In reaching the agreement, Plaintiff's counsel took into consideration the difficult, burdensome, and time-consuming nature of further litigation, the risk that the court would reduce any penalty or conclude that there was no basis to award any penalty. (Tunyan Decl., ¶ 21.) Given the uncertain outcomes, and the discretionary nature of PAGA penalties, this settlement is within the "ballpark of reasonableness."

After deductions and the share of penalties provided to the LWDA, a total of $31,953.12 will remain for distribution to Aggrieved Employees. There are 213 aggrieved employees. (Tunyan Decl., ¶ 27; Exh. 1, ¶ 4.1.) A total of $59,341.51, 75%, will go to the LWDA. (Tunyan Decl., ¶ 27.)

Notice to the LWDA and the scope of the release are proper.

Plaintiff's counsel requests attorneys' fees of $55,000 and costs of $14,139.14. (Tunyan Decl., ¶¶ 41-42.) The fee request represents 33% of the maximum settlement amount and substantially less than the lodestar amount of $92,580. (Tunyan Decl., ¶¶ 39, 42 & Exh. 2.)

No service fee or incentive award is provided to Plaintiff. (Tunyan Decl., Exh. 1.)

The Settlement Agreement allows for $10,000 in administration fees; the fee for this administration is $4,566.23. (Moore Decl., ¶ 17.)

The settlement was negotiated and endorsed by Plaintiff's counsel who is experienced in PAGA litigation.

The Court finds that the proposed settlement is fair, adequate, and reasonable and that the proposed attorneys' fees, costs, and administrative expenses are fair and reasonable.

The motion is granted.

Conclusion

The Court GRANTS Plaintiff's Motion for Approval of PAGA Settlement.

On the Court's own motion, the Non-Appearance Case Review re: Dismissal After Settlement scheduled for 05/28/2026 is continued to 02/26/2027 at 10:30 AM in Department 56 at Stanley Mosk Courthouse.

Plaintiff is to give notice.