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as Private Attorney General

Assigned for All Purposes:
Judge William D. Claster
Dept. CX101

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

FOR THE COUNTY OF ORANGE

STATE OF CALIFORNIA ex rel. ANTHONY WARD, as Private Attorney General

Plaintiff,

vs.

CAMDEN DEVELOPMENT, INC.; and DOES 1 to 100, inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No.: 30-2024-01445449-CU-OE-CXC

PAGA ACTION

1. COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL PENALTIES PURSUANT TO THE PRIVATE ATTORNEYS GENERAL ACT OF 2004 (“PAGA”), LABOR CODE SECTIONS 2698, ET SEQ.

COMES NOW Plaintiff STATE OF CALIFORNIA ex rel. ANTHONY WARD as Private Attorney General (“Plaintiff”), who alleges and complains against Defendants CAMDEN DEVELOPMENT, INC.; and DOES 1 to 100, inclusive (collectively “Defendants”) as follows:

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This is a Private Attorneys General Act of 2004, Labor Code §§ 2698, *et seq*. (“PAGA”) representative action brought by Plaintiff on behalf of the State of California, and current and former aggrieved employees of Defendants who worked as hourly non-exempt employees in California during the relevant time period seeking civil penalties associated with Defendants’ violation of the Labor Code based on Defendants’ failure to pay wages for all hours worked at

minimum wage and all overtime hours worked at the overtime rate of pay; failure to pay overtime wages at the proper overtime rate of pay; failure to authorize or permit all legally compliant meal periods or pay meal period premium wages; failure to authorize or permit all legally compliant rest periods or pay rest period premium wages; failure to indemnify for all necessary expenditures or losses incurred by employees in direct consequence of discharging their duties; failure to timely pay earned wages during employment; failure to provide accurate wage statements; failure to timely pay employees all wages due upon separation of employment. Plaintiff seeks on a representative basis, following notice to the Labor and Workforce Development Agency, civil penalties, reasonable attorneys' fees pursuant to Labor Code section 2699(g)(1) and costs brought on behalf of Plaintiff, the State of California, and others aggrieved.

II. JURISDICTION AND VENUE

2. This Court has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to the California Constitution, Article VI, § 10.

3. Venue is proper in this Court because this action arises from work performed in locations throughout California, including but not limited to 2801 Main Street, Irvine, CA 92614.

III. PARTIES

4. At all times mentioned herein, ANTHONY WARD ("Mr. Ward") is and was domiciled in, a resident of, and a citizen of California. Mr. Ward was employed by Defendants in an hourly position at Defendants' location in Orange County from in or around December 2023 until on or about June 26, 2024. Mr. Ward is not suing in his individual capacity; he is proceeding herein solely under the PAGA, on behalf of the State of California for all aggrieved employees, including himself and other aggrieved employees.

5. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that Defendant CAMDEN DEVELOPMENT, INC. is authorized to do business within the State of California and is doing business in the State of California and/or that Defendants DOES 1-50 are, and at all times relevant hereto were persons acting on behalf of Defendant CAMDEN DEVELOPMENT, INC. in the establishment of, or ratification of, the aforementioned illegal wage and hour practices or policies. Defendant CAMDEN DEVELOPMENT, INC. operates in Orange County and employed Plaintiff

and aggrieved employees in Orange County, including but not limited to, at 2801 Main Street, Irvine, CA 92614.

6. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that Defendants DOES 1 through 50 are corporations, or are other business entities or organizations of a nature unknown to Plaintiff that employed Plaintiff and aggrieved California non-exempt employees, permitted Plaintiff and aggrieved employees to work, and exercised control over the wages, hours and working conditions of employment of Plaintiff and aggrieved employees.

7. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that Defendants DOES 51 through 100 are individuals unknown to Plaintiff. Each of the individual defendants is sued individually and in his or her capacity as an agent, shareholder, owner, representative, manager, supervisor, independent contractor and/or employee of each defendant who violated or caused to be violated the minimum wage and overtime provisions of the Labor Code and/or any provision of the Industrial Welfare Commission's wage orders regulating hours and days of work.

8. Plaintiff is unaware of the true names of Defendants DOES 1 through 100. Plaintiff sues said defendants by said fictitious names, and will amend this complaint when the true names and capacities are ascertained or when such facts pertaining to liability are ascertained, or as permitted by law or by the Court. Plaintiff is informed and believes that each of the fictitiously named defendants is in some manner responsible for the events and allegations set forth in this complaint.

9. Plaintiff makes the allegations in this complaint without any admission that, as to any particular allegation, Plaintiff bears the burden of pleading, proving, or persuading and Plaintiff reserves all of Plaintiff's right to plead in the alternative.

FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION

CIVIL PENALTIES PURSUANT TO THE PRIVATE ATTORNEYS GENERAL ACT OF 2004, LABOR CODE SECTIONS 2698, ET SEQ.

(Against all Defendants by Plaintiff)

10. Plaintiff incorporates all paragraphs above as though fully set forth herein.

11. During Mr.Ward's employment and continuing through the present, Plaintiff alleges

Defendants violated Labor Code sections 201, 202, 203, 204, 223, 226, 226.7, 510, 512, 1194, 1197, 2802, and the applicable Wage Orders.

12. Specifically, Defendants have committed the following violations of California Labor Code:

13. **Failure to pay wages for all hours worked at the legal minimum wage:** Defendants employed many of their employees, including Mr. Ward, as hourly non-exempt employees. In California, an employer is required to pay hourly employees for all "hours worked," which includes all time that an employee is under control of the employer and all time the employee is suffered and permitted to work. This includes the time an employee spends, either directly or indirectly, performing services which inure to the benefit of the employer.

14. Labor Code sections 1194 and 1197 require an employer to compensate employees for all "hours worked" at least at a minimum wage rate of pay as established by the IWC and the Wage Orders.

15. In this case, Mr. Ward and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees worked more minutes per shift than Defendants credited them with having worked. Specifically, Defendants failed to pay Mr. Ward and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees all wages at the applicable minimum wage for all hours worked due to Defendants' policies, practices, and/or procedures including, but not limited to:

(a) Requiring Mr. Ward and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees to respond to calls while on-call within a certain time limit and if they reject a call while on call they are subject to discipline up to and including termination;

(b) Defendants only paid Mr. Ward and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees for the hours they worked attending to calls and failed to pay them all the hours they worked on-call not attending to calls.

16. Therefore, Defendants suffered, permitted, and required Mr. Ward and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees to be subject to Defendants' control without paying wages for that time. This resulted in Mr. Ward and other current and former

aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees working time for which they were not compensated any wages, in violation of Labor Code sections 1194 and 1197 and the applicable Wage Order.

17. **Failure to pay wages for overtime hours worked at the overtime rate of pay and/or failure to pay overtime wages at the proper rate of pay**: Defendants employed many of their employees, including Mr. Ward, as hourly non-exempt employees. In California, an employer is required to pay hourly employees for all "hours worked," which includes all time that an employee is under control of the employer and all time the employee is suffered and permitted to work. This includes the time an employee spends, either directly or indirectly, performing services that inure to the benefit of the employer.'

18. Labor Code sections 510 and 1194 require an employer to compensate employees a higher rate of pay for hours worked in excess of eight (8) hours in a workday, in excess of forty (40) hours in a workweek, and on any seventh consecutive day of work in a workweek:

> Any work in excess of eight (8) hours in one workday, any work in excess of forty (40) hours in any one (1) workweek, and the first eight (8) hours worked on the seventh day of work in any one (1) workweek, shall be compensated at the rate of no less than one-and-one-half (1.5) times the regular rate of pay for an employee. Any work in excess of twelve (12) hours in one (1) day shall be compensated at the rate of no less than twice the regular rate of pay for an employee. In addition, any work in excess of eight (8) hours on any seventh day of a workweek shall be compensated at the rate of no less than twice the regular rate of pay of an employee.

Labor Code section 510.

19. In this case, Defendants failed to pay Mr. Ward and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees overtime wages for all overtime hours worked due to Defendants' policies, practices, and/or procedures including, but not limited to:

(a) Requiring Mr. Ward and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees to respond to calls while on-call within a certain time limit and if they reject a call while on call they are subject to discipline up to and including termination;

(b) Defendants only paid Mr. Ward and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees for the hours they work attending to calls while working on call and failed to pay them all the hours they worked on-call not attending to calls.

20. The foregoing policies, practices, and/or procedures resulted in time during each workday that Mr. Ward and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees were under the control of Defendants but were not compensated. To the extent that the foregoing uncompensated time occurred when Mr. Ward and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees worked more than eight (8) hours in a workday, more than forty (40) hours in a workweek, and/or seven (7) days in a workweek, Defendants failed to pay them at their overtime rate of pay for overtime hours worked, in violation of Labor Code sections 510, 1194 and 1198, and the applicable Wage Order.

21. **Failure to pay wages to hourly non-exempt employees for workdays that Defendants failed to provide legally compliant meal periods and/or failure to pay period premium wages:** Mr. Ward and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees regularly worked shifts of more than five (5) hours in length and shifts of more than ten (10) hours in length.

22. California law requires an employer to authorize or permit an employee an uninterrupted meal period of no less than thirty (30) minutes in which the employee is relieved of all duties and the employer relinquishes control over the employee's activities prior to the employee's sixth hour of work. Labor Code sections 226.7, 512,and 1198; Wage Order 4 at §11; *Brinker Rest. Corp. v. Super Ct. (Hohnbaum)* (2012) 53 Cal.4th 1004. An employer may not employ an employee for a work period of more than ten (10) hours per day without providing the employee with a second such meal period of not less than thirty (30) minutes prior to the start of the eleventh hour of work. *Id.* If the employee is not relieved of all duty during a meal period, the meal period shall be considered an "on duty" meal period and counted as time worked. A paid "on duty" meal period is only permitted when: (1) the nature of the work prevents an employee from being relieved of all duty; and (2) the parties have a written agreement agreeing to on-duty meal periods.

23. If an employer fails to provide an employee a meal period in accordance with the law, the employer must pay the employee one (1) hour of pay at the employee's regular rate of pay for each workday that a legally required and compliant meal period was not provided. Labor Code sections 226.7 and 1198; Wage Order 4 at §11.

24. In this case, Defendants failed to authorize or permit legally required and compliant meal periods to Mr. Ward and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees due to Defendants' policies, practices, and/or procedures, including but not limited to:

(a) Failing to provide Mr. Ward and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees timely, uninterrupted, duty-free meal breaks of at least 30 minutes for every five hours worked if Mr. Ward and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees were working on-call.

25. Additionally, Plaintiff alleges that Defendants maintained a policy, practice, and/or procedure of failing to compensate Mr. Ward and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees one (1) hour of pay at their regular rate of pay for each workday that Mr. Ward and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees did not receive legally required and compliant meal periods, in violation of Labor Code section 226.7.

26. Defendants' foregoing policies, practices, and/or procedures resulted in Mr. Ward and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees not receiving wages to compensate them for workdays during which Defendants did not provide them with meal periods in compliance with California law.

27. **Failure to pay wages to hourly non-exempt employees for workdays that Defendants failed to provide legally required and compliant rest periods and/or failure to pay rest period premium:** Mr. Ward and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees regularly worked shifts of more than three-and-a-half (3.5) hours.

28. California law requires every employer to authorize and permit an employee a rest period of ten (10) net minutes for every four (4) hours worked or major fraction thereof. Labor Code section 226.7; Wage Order 4 at §12. Under California law, "[e]mployees are entitled to 10 minutes' rest for shifts from three and one-half to six hours in length, 20 minutes for shifts of more than six hours up to 10 hours, 30 minutes for shifts of more than 10 hours up to 14 hours, and so on." *Brinker Restaurant Corp. v. Sup. Ct. (Hohnbaum)* (2012) 53 Cal.4th 1004, 1029; Labor Code section 226.7;

Wage Order 4 at §12. Rest periods, insofar as practicable, shall be in the middle of each work period. Wage Order 4 at §12. Additionally, the rest period requirement "obligates employers to permit – and authorizes employees to take – off-duty rest periods." *Augustus v. ABM Security Services, Inc.*, (2016) 5 Cal.5th 257, 269. That is, during rest periods employers must relieve employees of all duties and relinquish control over how employees spend their time. *Id*.

29. If the employer fails to authorize or permit a required rest period, the employer must pay the employee one (1) hour of pay at the employee's regular rate of pay for each workday the employer did not authorize or permit a legally required rest period. Labor Code section 226.7; Wage Order 4 at § 12.

30. In this case, Defendants failed to authorize or permit all legally required and compliant rest periods to Mr. Ward and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees due to Defendants' policies, practices, and/or procedures including, but not limited to:

(a) Failing to provide Mr. Ward and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees with net ten (10) minute rest breaks for every four (4) hours worked or major fraction thereof while Mr. Ward and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees worked on-call.

31. Additionally, Plaintiff alleges that Defendants maintained a policy, practice, and/or procedure of failing to compensate Mr. Ward and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees with one (1) hour of pay at their regular rate of pay for each workday they did not receive legally required and compliant rest periods, in violation of Labor Code section 226.7.

32. Defendants' foregoing policies, practices, and/or procedures resulted in Mr. Ward and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees not receiving wages to compensate them for workdays in which Defendants did not provide them with rest periods in compliance with California law.

33. **Failure to Indemnify for Losses and Expenditures Incurred as Part of Employment:** California law requires that every employer must indemnify its employees for all

necessary expenditures or losses incurred by the employee in discharge of his or her duties or at the obedience of the directions of the employer. Moreover, an employer is prohibited from passing the ordinary business expenses and losses of the employer onto the employee. (Lab. Code, § 2802.)

34. Defendants have violated Labor Code Section 2802 by failing to indemnify Mr. Ward and other current and former aggrieved California-based non-exempt hourly employees' necessary expenditures they incurred in the discharge of their duties. Specifically, Defendants employed policies, practices, and/or procedures included, but not limited to requiring use of personal vehicle for work-related purposes without always reimbursing Mr. Ward and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees for such use.

35. Moreover, Defendants employed policies and procedures which ensured Mr. Ward and aggrieved employees would not receive indemnification for their employment related expenses. This practice resulted in Mr. Ward and aggrieved employees not receiving such indemnification in compliance with California law.

36. Therefore, Defendants are liable to Mr. Ward and aggrieved employees for their employment related expenses, including but not limited to costs related to use of their personal cell phones and costs associated with their uniforms pursuant to Labor Code section 2802.

37. **Failure to timely pay earned wages during employment:** In California, wages must be paid at least twice during each calendar month on days designated in advance by the employer as regular paydays, subject to some exceptions. Labor Code section 204(a). Wages earned between the 1st and 15th days, inclusive, of any calendar month must be paid between the 16th and the 26th day of that month and wages earned between the 16th and the last day, inclusive, of any calendar month must be paid between the 1st and 10th day of the following month. *Id*. Other payroll periods such as those that are weekly, biweekly, or semimonthly, must be paid within seven (7) calendar days following the close of the payroll period in which wages were earned. Labor Code section 204(d).

38. As a derivative of Plaintiff's claims above, Plaintiff alleges that Defendants failed to timely pay Mr. Ward and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees' earned wages (including minimum wages, overtime wages, meal period premium wages

and/or rest period premium wages), in violation of Labor Code section 204. Defendants' aforementioned policies, practices, and/or procedures resulted in their failure to pay Plaintiff's and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees' their earned wages within the applicable time frames outlined in Labor Code section 204.

39. **Secret payment of lower wages than designated by statute:** Labor Code section 223 provides that, where any statute or contract requires an employer to maintain the designated wage scale, it shall be unlawful to secretly pay a lower wage while purporting to pay the wage designated by statute or contract. By engaging in the unlawful conduct alleged herein, including by failing to: pay overtime wages at the applicable legal overtime rate, meal break premiums and lawful sick pay at the employees' regular rate of pay, as established by Labor Code sections 226.7, 246, 510, 1194 and sections 11 and 12 of the applicable IWC Wage Orders, as incorporated by Labor Code section 1198, the Defendant secretly paid a lower wage than designated by statute while purporting to pay the wages designated by statute, in violation of Labor Code section 223.

40. **Failure to provide complete and accurate wage statements:** Labor Code section 226, subdivision (a). Labor Code section 226(a) provides, *inter alia*, that, upon paying an employee his or her wages, the employer must "furnish each of his or her employees ... an itemized statement in writing showing (1) gross wages earned, (2) total hours worked by the employee, except for any employee whose compensation is solely based on a salary and who is exempt from payment of overtime under subdivision (a) of Section 515 or any applicable order of the Industrial Welfare Commission, (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 pay period for which the employee is paid, (7) the name of the employee and his or her social security number, (8) the name and address of the legal entity that is the employer, 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."

41. As a derivative of Plaintiff's allegations above, Defendants' failure to pay Mr. Ward and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees all wages

earned (including minimum wages, overtime wages, meal period premium wages, and/or rest period premium wages) rendered Mr.Ward's and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees' wage statements inaccurate, in violation of Labor Code section 226(a)(1, 2, 5 & 9).

42. **Failure to pay employees all wages due at time of termination/resignation**: An employer is required to pay all unpaid wages timely after an employee's employment ends. The wages are due immediately upon termination (Labor Code section 201) or within seventy-two (72) hours of resignation (Labor Code section 202).

43. As a derivative of Plaintiff's allegations above, because Defendants failed to pay Mr. Ward and other current and former aggrieved California-based hourly non-exempt employees all their earned wages (including minimum wages, overtime wages, meal period premium wages, and/or rest period premium wages), Defendants failed to pay those employees timely after each employee's termination and/or resignation, in violation of Labor Code sections 201, 202, and 203.

44. Labor Code sections 2699, subdivisions (a) and (g) authorize an aggrieved employee, on behalf of himself or herself and other current or former employees, to bring a civil action to recover civil penalties against all Defendants pursuant to the procedures specified in Labor Code section 2699.3.

45. Plaintiff has complied with the procedures for bringing suit specified in Labor Code section 2699.3. On October 2, 2024, Plaintiff filed a PAGA Claim Notice with the LWDA and provided notice to Defendants by certified mail which provided notice of the specific provisions of the Labor Code alleged to have been violated, including the facts and theories to support the violations alleged.

46. Pursuant to Labor Code section 2699.3, the LWDA must give written notice by certified mail to the parties that it intends to investigate the alleged violations of the Labor Code within 60 days of the date of the complainant's written notice. The LWDA failed to provide the parties notice within 60 days of the date of Plaintiff's PAGA Claim Notice that the LWDA intends to investigate Plaintiff's claims.

47. Pursuant to Labor Code sections 2699(a) and (f), Plaintiff is entitled to recover civil

penalties for Defendants' violations of Labor Code sections 201, 202, 203, 204, 223, 226(a), 226.7, 510, 512, and 1194, During Mr. Ward's employment and continuing through the present, preceding Plaintiff sending the initial PAGA Claim Notice to the LWDA to the present, in the following amounts:

a. For violations of Labor Code sections 201, 202, 203, 226(a), 226.7, and 2802; one hundred dollars ($100) for each aggrieved employee per pay period for the initial violation and two hundred dollars ($200) for each aggrieved employee per pay period for each subsequent violation [penalty amounts established by Labor Code section 2699(f)(2)].

b. For violations of Labor Code section 226(a), alternatively, two hundred fifty dollars ($250) for each employee for each pay period for the initial violation, and for each subsequent violation, one thousand dollars ($1000) for each underpaid employee for each pay period [penalty amounts established by Labor Code section 226.3].

c. For violations of Labor Code section 510 and 512, fifty dollars ($50) for each employee for each pay period for the initial violation, and for each subsequent violation, one hundred dollars ($100) for each underpaid employee for each pay period [penalty amounts established by Labor Code section 558].

d. For violations of Labor Code section 204, one hundred dollars ($100) for each failure to pay each employee in any initial violation, and for each subsequent violation, or any willful or intentional violation, two hundred dollars ($200) for each failure to pay each employee, plus 25 percent of the amount unlawfully withheld [penalty amounts established by Labor Code section 210].

e. For violations of Labor Code section 223, one hundred dollars ($100) for each failure to pay each employee in any initial violation, and for each subsequent violation, or any willful or intentional violation, two hundred dollars ($200) for each failure to pay each employee, plus 25 percent of the amount unlawfully withheld [penalty amounts established by Labor Code section 225.5].

48. Pursuant to Labor Code section 2699(g), Plaintiff is entitled to an award of reasonable attorneys' fees and costs in connection with his claims for civil penalties.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, PLAINTIFF, ON BEHALF OF HIMSELF AND ON BEHALF OF THE AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES, PRAYS AS FOLLOWS:

ON THE FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION:

1. That Defendants be found to have violated the provisions of the Labor Code and the IWC Wages Orders as to Mr. Ward and the other aggrieved employees;

2. For any and all legally applicable penalties during the relevant statute of limitations subject to any permissible tolling, including but not limited to those recoverable under the California Labor Code, including but not limited to sections 210, 225.5, 226.3, 558, and 2699(f);

3. For attorneys' fees and costs of suit, including but not limited to those recoverable under California Labor Code section 2699(g); and

4. For such and other further relief, in law and/or equity, as the Court deems just or appropriate.

Dated: December 9, 2024

Respectfully submitted,
LAVI & EBRAHIMIAN, LLP

/s/ Jincy Varughese

By: ______________________________

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