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SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

FREDDIE BUNCH, ARNULFO LABIOS, and ASHLEY NICOLE ELLIOTT on behalf of themselves and all others similarly situated,

Plaintiffs,

vs.

NAPHCARE U.S., INC., an Alabama corporation; NAPHCARE OF SAN DIEGO LLC, a California limited liability company; NAPHCARE PHARMACY, LLC, an Alabama limited liability company, NAPHCARE US DE, LLC, a Delaware limited liability company; NAPHCARE WHOLESALE DISTRIBUTION, LLC, an Alabama limited liability company; NAPHCARE, INC., an Alabama corporation; and DOES 1 through 10, inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No.: 37-2024-00002535-CU-NP-CTL

[Assigned for All Purposes to the Honorable Judge Matthew C. Braner, Dept. C-60]

DECLARATION OF TYLER J. WOODS IN SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFFS' MOTION FOR FINAL APPROVAL OF CLASS ACTION AND PAGA SETTLEMENT

Final Approval Hearing:
Date: December 4, 2026
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Dept.: C-60

Complaint filed: January 19, 2024
Trial date: Not Set

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DECLARATION OF TYLER J. WOODS

I, Tyler J. Woods, declare as follows:

1. I am an attorney at law licensed to practice before all of the courts of the State of California. I am a Senior Partner at Wilshire Law Firm, PLC ("Class Counsel"), counsel of record for Plaintiffs Arnulfo Labios, Ashley Nicole Elliott, and Freddie Bunch (collectively, the "Plaintiffs"). I have personal knowledge of the facts set forth in this declaration and could and would competently testify to them under oath if called as a witness.

2. I submit this declaration in support of Plaintiffs' Motion for Final Approval of Class Action and PAGA Settlement.

3. Plaintiffs are represented by Wilshire Law Firm, PLC, Otkupman Law Firm, and Rist Law Office, LC. The attorneys at WLF performed significant work and expended litigation costs in prosecuting this matter with no guarantee of payment.

4. WLF was selected by Best Lawyers and U.S. News & World Report as one of the nation's Best Law Firms since 2020 and is comprised of more than 100 attorneys and over 600 employees. WLF is actively and continuously practicing in employment litigation, representing employees in both individual and class actions in both state and federal courts throughout California.

5. WLF is qualified to handle this Litigation because its attorneys are experienced in litigating Labor Code violations in individual, class action, and representative action cases. WLF has handled, and is currently handling, numerous wage and hour class action lawsuits, as well as class actions involving consumer rights and data privacy litigation.

6. I graduated from the University of California, Davis in 1999 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications with minors in Spanish and Psychology. I received by Juris Doctor from USC Gould School of Law in 2004.

7. Upon graduating from law school in 2004, I worked for international firm McDermott Will & Emery LLP practicing general litigation which included employment law matters. Since 2010, and exclusively since 2013, my practice has focused on labor and employment matters including handling wage and hour class, collective, and representative actions

(including the California Private Attorneys general Act or "PAGA"), including at the law firms of McDermott Will & Emery LLP (where I was a partner), Pacific Trial Attorneys (where I was a partner), and labor and employment powerhouse Fisher Phillips (where I was a partner and head of Fisher Phillips Class Action Practice Group). At these law firms, I was the lead trial counsel or took a major leading role in defending employers on numerous wage and hour class, collective, and representative actions. Under my leadership as lead counsel during my tenure as defense counsel, I successfully defeated class certification of a potential 10,000 plus class as lead counsel on behalf of a nationwide quick service restaurant during my time as defense counsel and negotiated several wage and hour class actions that were subsequently approved by the Courts.

8. In late March 2024, I left Fisher Phillips and joined WLF to represent plaintiff employees. I have been and is handling many wage and hour class and representative actions litigating such matters on behalf of plaintiff employees in numerous Superior Courts. From matters representing both plaintiff and defendants, I have successfully mediated the resolution of many wage and hour class, collective, and representative actions.

9. In July 2025, I obtained a jury verdict in excess of $6,000,000 in a wage and hour case in Los Angeles Superior Court against Javier's Cantina & Grill (Los Angeles Superior Court Case No. 19STCV36438).

10. I have received numerous awards for his legal work. For example, from 2009-2011 and 2014, I was listed as a Rising Star in Los Angeles Super Lawyers (Thomas Reuters). I have also served on numerous prominent boards and in other leadership positions, including currently serving on the board of the Orange County Chapter of the California Restaurants Association.

11. I have also presented monthly webinars on labor and employment issues to hundreds of participants since 2022, including on wage and hour issues. For example, I presented "10 Reasons Employers Get Sued (and How to Avoid These Mistakes" (while a partner with Fisher Phillips) and "Key Insights for Hospitality Employers: Arbitration Agreements 101" (while a partner with Fisher Phillips). My current contingent billing rate of $1,200 per hour.

12. James Yoo is a Senior Attorney at WLF. He graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles with a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy and earned his Juris Doctor degree

from UCLA School of Law. He was admitted to practice law in the State of California in 2016. Before joining Wilshire Law Firm, he served as head of the Wage and Hour Department at Warmuth Law, where he gained extensive experience managing wage and hour matters and negotiating settlements on behalf of employees. As a Senior Attorney at WLF, he leads and manages multiple complex wage and hour class and representative actions under the California Private Attorneys General Act ("PAGA"). He is currently overseeing more than one hundred active class action and PAGA representative matters pending in courts throughout the State of California. Mr. Yoo currently bills at an hourly rate of $800.00.

13. Lucy H. Nguyen is a Settlement Attorney at WLF. She graduated from San Francisco State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Management and earned her Juris Doctor from John F. Kennedy University, School of Law in 2011. Ms. Nguyen was admitted to practice law in the State of California in 2021. Prior to joining WLF, Ms. Nguyen practiced employment and family law litigation and handled a high-volume statewide docket involving wage-and-hour disputes and complex litigation matters. Since joining WLF, Ms. Nguyen has focused her practice on wage-and-hour class actions and representative actions under the California Private Attorneys General Act ("PAGA"), including drafting and negotiating class and PAGA settlements, approval motions, and related settlement documents. In this and other matters, Ms. Nguyen has performed work including analyzing exposure, drafting settlement agreements and approval papers, coordinating settlement administration issues, and assisting with class and PAGA settlement approval proceedings. Ms. Nguyen currently bills at an hourly rate of $650.00.

14. Giancarlo A. Recinos is a Senior Attorney at WLF. He was admitted to practice law in the State of California in 2012 and is an active member in good standing with the State Bar of California. Mr. Recinos graduated from San Francisco State University with a Bachelor of Arts in Communications and received his Juris Doctor from Southwestern Law School. For over a decade, his practice has focused on employment law and wage -and-hour compliance. Mr. Recinos currently bills at an hourly rate of $950.00.

15. WLF's hourly rates are comparable to those charged by other class action

plaintiffs' counsel and the firms defending class actions. WLF's rates are well within the range of hourly rates that the Los Angeles legal marketplace would compensate counsel for similar services accomplishing similar results. For example, in *Bronshteyn v. State of California*, Los Angeles County Superior Ct. No. 19SMCV00057, Order Granting Plaintiff's Motion for Statutory Attorneys' Fees and Costs filed March 30, 2023, an employment action brought by two small law firms (Levy, Vinick, Burrell & Hyams LLP and Law Offices of Wendy Musell), the court found that counsel's 2022 hourly rates of $1,100 and $1,000 per hour were reasonable for the plaintiff's five senior attorneys, including $1,000 per hour for the plaintiff's 23-year lead counsel and $850 per hour for a senior associate. These rates were then augmented by a 1.75 lodestar multiplier and affirmed by the California Court of Appeals. The rates (and multiplier) requested here are well in line with those found reasonable in *Bronshteyn*. In *Tran v. Golden State FC LLC*, *et al*. (LASC Case No. BC699931), Fee Order filed 4/8/2022, the court found hourly rates of $1,300 per hour reasonable for plaintiff's 32-year attorney and $1,000 per hour reasonable for a 14-year attorney.

16. In support of the reasonableness of WLF's hourly rates, attached as **Exhibit 1** is a true and correct excerpt from the *2025 Real Rate Report* published by Wolters Kluwer. The Real Rate Report is widely relied upon in the legal industry because it is derived from anonymized billing data taken from actual law firm invoices that were submitted to clients and approved for payment, rather than from voluntary surveys or self-reported rates. Although the report refers to "2025" rates, the data reflects rates charged by law firms during the first half of 2024 and therefore represents the most recent available objective evidence of prevailing market rates.

a. The Real Rate Report further shows that in the San Diego market, partners with 21 or more years of experience command third-quartile billing rates of approximately $1,334 per hour, confirming that highly experienced litigators in major Southern California markets routinely bill at the upper end of the rate spectrum.

b. The 2025 Real Rate Report's practice-area-specific data further supports this conclusion. Page 81 provides third-quartile rates for the detailed practice category "Employment and Labor: Other Litigation," which is directly analogous to the type of work

performed in this case. That dataset includes 24 partners and 14 associates and shows a third-quartile rate of $1,252 per hour for partners and $564 per hour for associates. These figures demonstrate that even within the specialized employment litigation market, partners regularly bill well above $1,200 per hour based on rates actually charged to clients. When this practice-specific benchmark is considered together with the broader regional market data, it confirms that WLF's hourly rate for highly experienced counsel in a representative employment action falls within the upper range of prevailing market rates rather than outside it.

c. The Real Rate Report does not provide 1st quartile or 4th quartile rates, presumably to provide a sense of the average attorney billing rates. Importantly, the third quartile represents the point below which 75% of rates fall; it is not a cap on reasonable rates. By definition, a substantial portion of partners in the relevant benchmark market routinely bill above that level, particularly those with extensive experience, specialized expertise, or leadership roles in complex litigation. Courts evaluating fee requests recognize that leading counsel in complex or representative actions may reasonably bill above median or third-quartile benchmarks where their experience, results obtained, and responsibilities justify higher rates. We firmly believe WLF belongs in the 4th quartile of attorney billing rates in Southern California. As previously discussed, WLF is a nationally recognized employment litigation firm that has been named one of the nation's *Best Law Firms* by U.S. News & World Report and Best Lawyers since 2020, and its attorneys regularly litigate complex wage-and-hour class and representative actions throughout California.

20. In an article entitled "Big Law Rates Topping $2,000 Leave Value 'In Eye of Beholder,'" written by Roy Strom and published by Bloomberg Law on June 9, 2022, the author describes how Big Law firms have crossed the $2,000-per hour rate. The article also notes that law firm rates have been increasing by just under 3% per year. A true and correct copy of this article is attached hereto as **Exhibit 2**.

21. WLF has performed significant work and incurred litigation costs in prosecuting this matter with no guarantee of any payment. The efforts expended by Plaintiffs' counsel to achieve this result include, but are not limited to, the following:

a. the investigation of the matter, including meeting with Plaintiffs, reviewing Defendants NaphCare U.S., Inc., NaphCare of San Diego LLC, NaphCare Pharmacy, LLC, NaphCare US DE, LLC, NaphCare Wholesale Distribution, LLC, and NaphCare, Inc. (collectively, the "Defendants") policies, and requesting and reviewing Plaintiffs' time and pay records, personnel file, and exploring the corporate structure of Defendants;

b. filing the Action;

c. attending status conferences and meeting and conferring with Defendants regarding the case;

d. meeting and conferring with Co Counsel;

e. meeting and conferring with Defendants regarding mediation, exchange of informal discovery beforehand, and negotiating with opposing counsel regarding the parameters thereof;

f. selecting a mediator and mediation date;

g. working with opposing counsel for the receipt of a representative sampling and analyzing the same with the aid of a consultant and Plaintiffs to perform analyses of liability and exposure prior to attendance of the mediation in this matter;

h. reviewing policy documents from Defendants and researching applicable defenses;

i. preparing the mediation brief and damages model for use at mediation;

j. attending the mediation;

k. communicating with Plaintiffs;

l. negotiating, finalizing and fully executing the settlement agreement;

m. preparing and filing the Motion for Preliminary Approval and supporting documents;

n. attending the hearing on Motion for Preliminary Approval;

o. communicating with any Class Members who sought additional information regarding the settlement; and

p. preparing the instant Motion for Final Approval and supporting documents.

22. WLF's current lodestar reflects the efficiencies achieved by attorneys experienced in this field with **136** hours of work resulting in **$11,225.00** in fees. The chart below shows the calculation of hours spent by each of WLF's attorneys on this case:

Attorney	**Hours**	**Hourly Rate**	**Total**
Tyler J. Woods	25.5	$1,200.00	$30,600.00
James Yoo	64.4	$800.00	$51,520.00
Lucy Nguyen	12.3	$650.00	$7,995.00
Giancarlo A. Recinos	6.3	$950.00	$5,985.00
Ruby Carrera	27.5	$550.00	$7,995.00
	136.0		**$111,225.00**

23. This amount results in a 7.71 multiplier. Class Counsel's lodestar does not include the time Class Counsel will spend at the Final Approval Hearing and assisting the Administrator following final approval. Class Counsel dedicated significant resources to this case by dividing the tasks required according to skill level. The hours expended by each attorney were not duplicative and reflect the extensive investigation and analysis that was required to achieve this Settlement. This time could have been spent on other potentially lucrative cases. Class Counsel's lodestar reflects the efficiencies achieved by attorneys experienced in this field. Moreover, Class Counsel has singularly assumed the risk and costs of litigation purely on a contingency basis. And, while Plaintiffs are confident in the merits of their claims, a legitimate controversy exists as to each cause of action, posing an actual risk that Plaintiffs may not succeed at class certification and/or trial. Any of these obstacles could have prevented recovery completely, meaning Class Counsel would have been left with no compensation for all the time and money invested in litigating this case. Despite these risks, Class Counsel took this case on a contingency basis so that Class Members (a particularly vulnerable group of hourly paid workers) could be compensated for their unpaid wages.

Consequently, Class Counsel was precluded from focusing on, or taking on, other cases which could have resulted in a larger, and less risky, monetary gain.

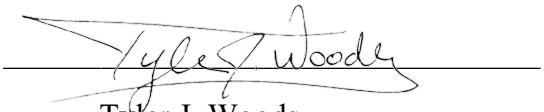
24. In litigation costs, Wilshire Law Firm, PLC, has spent $18,950.56 on items such as filing fees, service fees, mediation fees, and expert fees. A true and correct copy of a breakdown of costs incurred by my office is attached hereto as **Exhibit 3**. Additionally, we anticipate incurring $126.25 in anticipated future costs for filing fees and service fees for a total of $19,076.81 in costs. In litigation costs, Otkupman Law Firm has spent $6,367.59, and Rist Law Office, LC has spent $7,400.07. These costs were reasonable and necessary to prosecute this case and obtain the results achieved

25. Class Counsel has negotiated a settlement here that they believe is fair, reasonable, and adequate based on their prior experience litigating these type of cases.

26. To date, the LWDA has not responded to or objected to the Settlement in this matter.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on November 20, 2026 at Los Angeles, California.



Tyler J. Woods

EXHIBIT 1



ELM Solutions

2025 Real Rate Report® powered by LegalVIEW® DynamicInsights

The industry's leading analysis of law firm rates, trends, and practices

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A Letter to Our Readers

Welcome to the latest edition of the Real Rate Report®, the legal industry's most trusted benchmark for legal billing rates.

Since 2010, the Real Rate Report has helped legal departments and law firms make smarter decisions about pricing, resourcing, and vendor management. That hasn't changed. What has changed is how we deliver those insights.

This year, the Real Rate Report is powered by LegalVIEW® DynamicInsights—our new digital-first platform that brings the same trusted LegalVIEW data to life in a more interactive, flexible, and timely way. Leveraging Wolters Kluwer's LegalVIEW database, with over $200B in anonymized, approved, invoice data, LegalVIEW DynamicInsights offers dynamic filters, quarterly updates, and calendar-year alignment to help users tailor benchmarks to their unique needs, on demand.

The Real Rate Report remains a vital snapshot of the market, and we know many of you rely on it as a reference tool. But DynamicInsights goes further. It enables deeper exploration of rate trends by role, experience, geography, practice area, industry, and more. Whether you're negotiating rates, evaluating law firm performance, or planning budgets, DynamicInsights gives you the agility and precision today's legal environment demands.

As always, we welcome your feedback and thank our data contributors for making this work possible. We're proud to be your partner in legal analytics and look forward to continuing to deliver insights that drive better business outcomes.

Sincerely,



Brian Jorgenson
Vice President, Product Management
Wolters Kluwer ELM Solutions

Real Rate Report Overview

The Real Rate Report is powered by LegalVIEW DynamicInsights, a web-based solution that delivers dynamic, invoice-backed insights through approved legal billing rates. It enables legal professionals to analyze rate trends by role, experience, industry, geography, practice area, and more using the world's largest repository of legal spend data.

DynamicInsights leverages the same trusted LegalVIEW database that has powered the Real Rate Report for years, now encompassing over $200B+ in anonymized, approved legal invoice data. As with previous Real Rate Reports, our data is sourced from corporations' and law firms' e-billing and time management solutions. We have included lawyer and paralegal rate data filtered by specific practice and sub-practice areas, metropolitan areas, and types of matters. This level of granularity gives legal departments and law firms the precision they need to identify areas of opportunity.

What's different with DynamicInsights?

Same source, same methodology: DynamicInsights uses the same rigorous data validation and methodology as the Real Rate Report.

- **Enhanced flexibility:** With dynamic filters, DynamicInsights enables users to tailor benchmarks to their unique needs and on demand.
- **Full year data:** DynamicInsights now aligns to a calendar year view—January through December—replacing the previous July-to-June format used in the Real Rate Report, reducing confusion and improving consistency across reporting periods.
- **More up to date:** Unlike the annual and static Real Rate Report, DynamicInsights is refreshed quarterly, offering more timely insights.
- **Digital-first access:** Delivered via a secure online interface, users can interact with the data, bookmark views, and share insights in real time.

DynamicInsights provides the same level of credibility and analytical power long trusted in the Real Rate Report with more agility and transparency for today's legal environment.

2025 Real Rate Report use considerations

- Examines law firm rates over time
- Identifies rates by location, experience, firm size, areas of expertise, industry, and timekeeper role (i.e., partner, associate, and paralegal)
- Itemizes variables that drive rates up or down

All the analyses included in DynamicInsights and this report are derived from the actual rates charged by law firm professionals as recorded on invoices submitted and approved for payment.

Examining real, approved rate information, along with the ranges of those rates and their changes over time, highlights the role these variables play in driving aggregate legal cost and income. The analyses can energize questions for both corporate clients and law firm principals.

Legal departments might ask whether they are paying the right amount for different types of legal services, while law firm principals might ask whether they are charging the right amount for legal services and whether to modify their pricing approach.

Examples of data to consider when reviewing rates:

- **Industry** – Compare spend and rate trends across various industries
- **Practice area** – Analyze cost variations in different legal practice areas
- **Detailed practice area** – Drill down into niche legal specialties for precise benchmarking
- **Am Law** – Benchmark against top-ranked law firms for competitive rate analysis
- **City** – Understand rate trends in specific metropolitan areas
- **Country** – Gain a global perspective on legal costs and spend management
- **Role** – Assess legal spend distribution across different law firm roles

Real Rate Report Overview

Understanding key statistical terms

To help interpret the legal rate data presented in DynamicInsights and this report, it's important to understand the statistical measures used. Below are definitions of the core metrics:

- **Mean (average):** The sum of all rate values divided by the total number of values added. It provides a general sense of the central tendency of the rates but can be influenced by extreme values (outliers).
- **Median:** The middle value when all rates are arranged in ascending order. If there is an even number of rates being analyzed, the median is the average of the two middle rates. It is a robust measure of central tendency of rates that is less affected by outliers.
- **First quartile (Q1):** The value below which 25% of the rates fall. It marks the lower boundary of the middle 50% of the rates and helps identify the lower range of typical values.
- **Third quartile (Q3):** The value below which 75% of the rates fall. It marks the upper boundary of the middle 50% of the rates and helps identify the upper range of typical values.
- **n:** The number of unique timekeepers contributing to the data.

These metrics are used to provide a more nuanced view of legal rates, helping users identify trends, outliers, and benchmarks across various dimensions.

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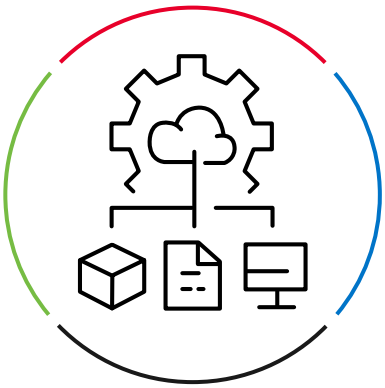
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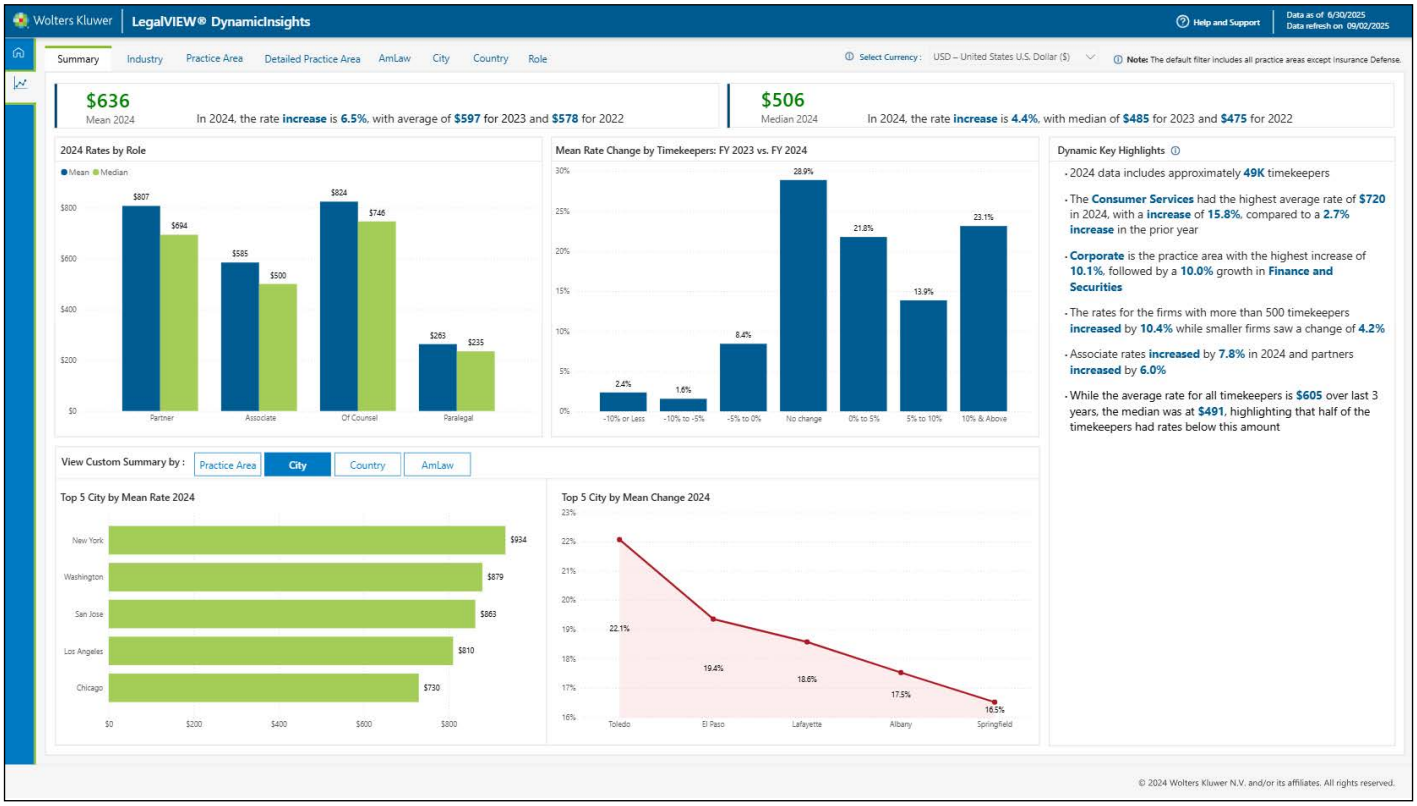
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- **Enhanced Transparency & Collaboration:** Strengthens law firm-client relationships through data-driven transparency and benchmarking.
- **Insight-Driven Decision Making:** Enables analysis across key dimensions to support strategic negotiations and financial optimization.





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Section I: High-Level Data Cuts

All data and analysis based on data collected thru Q2 2025

Section I: High-Level Data Cuts

Cities
By Role

2025 Real Rates for Associate and Partner **Trend Analysis - Mean**

City	Role	n	First Quartile	Median	Third Quartile	2025	2024	2023
Los Angeles CA	Partner	565	$517	$925	$1,365	$993	$979	$913
	Associate	518	$485	$720	$982	$761	$741	$684
Louisville KY	Partner	32	$291	$395	$500	$411	$395	$380
	Associate	19	$275	$290	$342	$304	$274	$268
Madison WI	Partner	10	$275	$420	$491	$420	$443	$563
Memphis TN	Partner	22	$325	$394	$470	$404	$428	$387
Miami FL	Partner	191	$250	$525	$733	$547	$570	$575
	Associate	128	$175	$330	$479	$357	$389	$393
Milwaukee WI	Partner	32	$364	$459	$649	$524	$581	$525
	Associate	18	$322	$455	$690	$498	$462	$404
Minneapolis MN	Partner	138	$475	$694	$918	$692	$673	$637
	Associate	111	$333	$450	$620	$485	$467	$432

Section I: High-Level Data Cuts

Cities
By Years of Experience

2025 Real Rates for Partner **Trend Analysis - Mean**

City	Years of Experience	n	First Quartile	Median	Third Quartile	2025	2024	2023
Phoenix AZ	21 or More Years	25	$350	$490	$674	$559	$499	$540
Pittsburgh PA	Fewer Than 21 Years	41	$501	$600	$810	$669	$658	$599
	21 or More Years	72	$480	$691	$860	$705	$733	$669
Portland ME	21 or More Years	18	$386	$435	$484	$418	$421	$381
Portland OR	Fewer Than 21 Years	17	$402	$465	$525	$599	$536	$509
	21 or More Years	32	$470	$525	$639	$594	$607	$553
Raleigh NC	21 or More Years	12	$396	$475	$510	$489	$477	$477
Richmond VA	Fewer Than 21 Years	10	$604	$703	$855	$707	$746	$687
	21 or More Years	24	$431	$713	$1,084	$739	$756	$726
Salt Lake City UT	Fewer Than 21 Years	12	$395	$447	$459	$422	$445	$412
	21 or More Years	16	$350	$463	$521	$480	$433	$407
San Diego CA	21 or More Years	33	$438	$785	$1,334	$894	$898	$882

Section II: Industry Analysis

All data and analysis based on data collected thru Q2 2025

Section II: Industry Analysis

Consumer Services

By Detailed Practice Area and Matter Type

2025 - Real Rates for Associate and Partner **Trend Analysis - Mean**

Practice Area	Matter Type	Role	n	First Quartile	Median	Third Quartile	2025	2024	2023
Employment and Labor: Discrimination, Retaliation and Harassment / EEO	**Litigation**	Partner	27	$393	$495	$613	$509	$463	$436
		Associate	19	$400	$475	$493	$437	$387	$370
Employment and Labor: Other	**Litigation**	Partner	24	$564	$692	$1,252	$956	$782	$683
		Associate	14	$384	$469	$564	$553	$484	$458
	Non-Litigation	Partner	25	$450	$574	$695	$579	$573	$548
		Associate	25	$397	$450	$525	$465	$472	$456
Intellectual Property: Patents	**Non-Litigation**	Partner	41	$350	$595	$691	$605	$652	$634
		Associate	51	$208	$373	$517	$382	$378	$389
Real Estate: Leasing	**Non-Litigation**	Partner	17	$410	$539	$865	$616	$664	$667
		Associate	10	$278	$404	$617	$482	$444	$478
Real Estate: Other	**Non-Litigation**	Partner	58	$480	$626	$940	$694	$612	$540
		Associate	39	$320	$460	$733	$503	$468	$415

EXHIBIT 2

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Business & Practice

Big Law Rates Topping $2,000 Leave Value ‘In Eye of Beholder’

By Roy Strom

Column
June 9, 2022, 2:30 AM

Welcome back to the Big Law Business column on the changing legal marketplace written by me, Roy Strom. Today, we look at a new threshold for lawyers’ billing rates and why it’s so difficult to put a price on high-powered attorneys. Sign up to receive this column in your inbox on Thursday mornings. Programming note: Big Law Business will be off next week.

Some of the nation’s top law firms are charging more than $2,000 an hour, setting a new pinnacle after a two-year burst in demand.

Partners at Hogan Lovells and Latham & Watkins have crossed the threshold, according to court documents in bankruptcy cases filed within the past year.

Other firms came close to the mark, billing more than $1,900, according to the documents. They include Kirkland & Ellis, Simpson Thacher & Bartlett, Boies Schiller Flexner, and Sidley Austin.

Simpson Thacher & Bartlett litigator Bryce Friedman, who helps big-name clients out of jams, especially when they’re accused of fraud, charges $1,965 every 60 minutes, according to a court document.

In need of a former acting US Solicitor General? Hogan Lovells partner Neal Katyal bills time at $2,465 an hour. Want to hire famous litigator David Boies? That’ll cost $1,950 an hour (at least). Reuters was first to report their fees.

Eye-watering rates are nothing new for Big Law firms, which typically ask clients to pay higher prices at least once a year, regardless of broader market conditions.

“Value is in the eye of the beholder,” said John O’Connor, a San Francisco-based expert on legal fees. “The perceived value of a good lawyer can reach into the multi-billions of dollars.”

Kirkland & Ellis declined to comment on its billing rates. None of the other firms responded to requests to comment.

Charge It Up

Big Law firms are crossing the $2,000-an-hour threshold after two years of surging rates driven by an increase in demand for lawyers.

Firm	Highest Billing Rate
Hogan Lovells	$2,465
Latham & Watkins	$2,075
Kirkland & Ellis	$1,995
Simpson Thacher & Bartlett	$1,965
Boies Schiller Flexner	$1,950
Sidley Austin	$1,900

Source: Court documents

Bloomberg Law

Law firms have been more successful raising rates than most other businesses over the past 15 years.

Law firm rates rose by roughly 40 percent from 2007 to 2020, or just short of 3 percent per year, Thomson Reuters Peer Monitor data show. US inflation rose by about 28% during that time.

The 100 largest law firms in the past two years achieved their largest rate increases in more than a decade, Peer Monitor says. The rates surged more than 6% in 2020 and grew another 5.6% through November of last year. Neither level had been breached since 2008.

The price hikes occurred during a once-in-a-decade surge in demand for law services, which propelled profits at firms to new levels. Fourteen law firms reported average profits per equity partner in 2021 over $5 million, according to data from The American Lawyer. That was up from six the previous year.

The highest-performing firms, where lawyers charge the highest prices, have outperformed their smaller peers. Firms with leading practices in markets such as mergers and acquisitions, capital markets, and real estate were forced to turn away work at some points during the pandemic-fueled surge.

Firms receive relatively tepid pushback from their giant corporate clients, especially when advising on bet-the-company litigation or billion-dollar deals.

The portion of bills law firms collected—a sign of how willingly clients pay full-freight—rose during the previous two years after drifting lower following the Great Financial Crisis. Collection rates last year breached 90% for the first time since 2009, Peer Monitor data show.

Professional rules prohibit lawyers from charging “unconscionable” or “unreasonable” rates. But that doesn’t preclude clients from paying any price they perceive as valuable, said Jacqueline Vinaccia, a San Diego-based lawyer who testifies on lawyer fee disputes.

Lawyers’ fees are usually only contested when they will be paid by a third party.

That happened recently with Hogan Lovells’ Katyal, whose nearly $2,500 an hour fee was contested in May by a US trustee overseeing a bankruptcy case involving a Johnson & Johnson unit facing claims its talc-based powders caused cancer.

The trustee, who protects the financial interests of bankruptcy estates, argued Katyal’s fee was more than $1,000 an hour higher than rates charged by lawyers in the same case at Jones Day and Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom.

A hearing on the trustee’s objection is scheduled for next week. Hogan Lovells did not respond to a request for comment on the objection.

Vinaccia said the firm’s options will be to reduce its fee, withdraw from the case, or argue the levy is reasonable, most likely based on Katyal’s extensive experience arguing appeals.

Still, the hourly rate shows just how valuable the most prestigious lawyers’ time can be—even compared to their highly compensated competitors.

“If the argument is that Jones Day and Skadden Arps are less expensive, then you’re already talking about the cream of the crop, the top-of-the-barrel law firms,” Vinaccia said. “I can’t imagine a case in which I might argue those two firms are more reasonable than the rates I’m dealing with.”

Worth Your Time

On Cravath: Cravath Swaine & Moore is heading to Washington, opening its first new office since 1973 by hiring former heads of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission and Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. Meghan Tribe reports the move comes as Big Law firms are looking to add federal government expertise as clients face more regulatory scrutiny.

On Big Law Promotions: It’s rare that associates get promotions to partner in June, but Camille Vasquez is now a Brown Rudnick partner after she shot to fame representing Johnny Depp in his defamation trial against ex-wife Amber Heard.

On Working From Home: I spoke this week with Quinn Emanuel’s John Quinn about why he thinks law firm life is never going back to the office-first culture that was upset by the pandemic. Listen to the podcast here.



00:00:00

That's it for this week! Thanks for reading and please send me your thoughts, critiques, and tips.

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Documents

Trustee's Objection

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EXHIBIT 3

Wilshire Law Firm, PLC

Transaction Detail by Account

All Transactions

Accrual Basis

Type	Date	Num	Memo	Description	Amount	Balance
Mediation Fees						
	5/12/2025	PR59432	Signature Resolution, LLC	Mediation Fees	$5,350.00	$5,350.00
Total MEDIATION FEES					$5,350.00	$5,350.00
Consultant Fees						
	01/22/2026	17172	Berger Consulting Group LLC	20.60 hours of work	$9,785.00	$9,785.00
Total CONSULTANT FEES					$9,785.00	$9,785.00
Filing Fees						
	11/08/2024		Filing Fee - Department of Industrial Relations	PAGA Notice	$75.00	$75.00
	11/19/2024	24170963	Filing Fee - One Legal LLC	Complaint	$1,579.73	$1,654.73
	12/16/2024	85405	Process Service Fees - Valpro Attorney Services, LLC	Serve:Naphcare U.s., Inc.,	$100.00	$1,754.73
	12/16/2024	85406	Process Service Fees - Valpro Attorney Services, LLC	Serve:Naphcare Of San Die	$60.00	$1,814.73
	12/16/2024	85407	Process Service Fees - Valpro Attorney Services, LLC	Serve:Naphcare Pharmacy,	$60.00	$1,874.73
	12/16/2024	85408	Process Service Fees - Valpro Attorney Services, LLC	Serve:Naphcare Us De, Llc,	$60.00	$1,934.73
	12/16/2024	85409	Process Service Fees - Valpro Attorney Services, LLC	Serve:Naphcare Wholesale	$60.00	$1,994.73
	12/16/2024	85410	Process Service Fees - Valpro Attorney Services, LLC	Serve:Naphcare, Inc., An Al	$60.00	$2,054.73
	12/18/2024	85455	Filing Fee - Valpro Attorney Services, LLC	Proof of Service	$95.00	$2,149.73
	01/14/2025	86425	Process Service Fees - Valpro Attorney Services, LLC	Serve:Naphcare U.s., Inc.,	$100.00	$2,249.73
	01/14/2025	86426	Process Service Fees - Valpro Attorney Services, LLC	Serve:Naphcare Of San Die	$60.00	$2,309.73
	01/14/2025	86427	Process Service Fees - Valpro Attorney Services, LLC	Serve:Naphcare Pharmacy,	$60.00	$2,369.73
	01/14/2025	86428	Process Service Fees - Valpro Attorney Services, LLC	Serve:Naphcare U.s., Inc.,	$60.00	$2,429.73
	01/14/2025	86429	Process Service Fees - Valpro Attorney Services, LLC	Serve:Naphcare Wholesale	$60.00	$2,489.73
	01/14/2025	86430	Process Service Fees - Valpro Attorney Services, LLC	Serve:Naphcare Us De, Llc,	$60.00	$2,549.73
	01/15/2025	24494136	Filing Fee - One Legal LLC	Amended Complaint	$129.06	$2,678.79
	01/16/2025	86489	Valpro Attorney Services, LLC	Proof of Service	$95.00	$2,773.79
	02/05/2025	24654505	Filing Fee - One Legal LLC	Dissmissal	$129.06	$2,902.85
	05/05/2025	25303630	Filing Fee - One Legal LLC	CMS	$129.06	$3,031.91
	05/07/2025	25308545	Filing Fee - One Legal LLC	Notice	$129.06	$3,160.97
	08/01/2025	CC083125TA-0986	Filing Fee - One Legal LLC	Notice	$129.06	$3,290.03
	02/05/2026	CC022826TA-0325	Filing Fee - One Legal LLC	Notice	$134.55	$3,424.58
	04/03/2026	CC043026TA-0236	Filing Fee - One Legal LLC	MPA	$87.86	$3,512.44
	07/22/2026	CC073126TA-1904	Filing Fee - One Legal LLC	CMS	$134.55	$3,646.99
	07/30/2026	CC073126TA-2775	San Diego Superior Court	Document Purchase	$7.40	$3,654.39
	07/30/2026	CC073126TA-2915	Filing Fee - One Legal LLC	Notice	$24.73	$3,679.12
	08/05/2026	CC083126TA-0307	Filing Fee - One Legal LLC	Notice	$134.55	$3,813.67
Total FILING FEES					$3,813.67	$3,813.67
Other Costs						
	9/30/2024	E-3245883	Docusign Envelope		$1.89	$1.89

Total OTHER COSTS					$1.89	$1.89
TOTAL					**$18,950.56**	**$18,950.56**