

SUMMONS

(CITACION JUDICIAL)

FOR COURT USE ONLY
(SOLO PARA USO DE LA CORTE)

NOTICE TO DEFENDANT: (AVISO AL DEMANDADO):

AMERICAN CHEESEBURGER LLC, dba HIHO CHEESEBURGER, a Delaware limited liability company; and DOES 1-50, Inclusive,

YOU ARE BEING SUED BY PLAINTIFF: (LO ESTÁ DEMANDANDO EL DEMANDANTE):

CRISTIAN DUENAS ACHUTEGUI, on behalf of the State of California in their representative capacity as a private attorney general,

Electronically FILED by
Superior Court of California,
County of Los Angeles
1/23/2025 8:48 AM
David W. Slayton,
Executive Officer/Clerk of Court,
By L. Kulkin, Deputy Clerk

NOTICE! You have been sued. The court may decide against you without your being heard unless you respond within 30 days. Read the information below.

You have 30 CALENDAR DAYS after this summons and legal papers are served on you to file a written response at this court and have a copy served on the plaintiff. A letter or phone call will not protect you. Your written response must be in proper legal form if you want the court to hear your case. There may be a court form that you can use for your response. You can find these court forms and more information at the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), your county law library, or the courthouse nearest you. If you cannot pay the filing fee, ask the court clerk for a fee waiver form. If you do not file your response on time, you may lose the case by default, and your wages, money, and property may be taken without further warning from the court.

There are other legal requirements. You may want to call an attorney right away. If you do not know an attorney, you may want to call an attorney referral service. If you cannot afford an attorney, you may be eligible for free legal services from a nonprofit legal services program. You can locate these nonprofit groups at the California Legal Services Web site (www.lawhelpcalifornia.org), the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), or by contacting your local court or county bar association. **NOTE:** The court has a statutory lien for waived fees and costs on any settlement or arbitration award of \$10,000 or more in a civil case. The court's lien must be paid before the court will dismiss the case. **¡AVISO!** Lo han demandado. Si no responde dentro de 30 días, la corte puede decidir en su contra sin escuchar su versión. Lea la información a continuación.

Tiene 30 DÍAS DE CALENDARIO después de que le entreguen esta citación y papeles legales para presentar una respuesta por escrito en esta corte y hacer que se entregue una copia al demandante. Una carta o una llamada telefónica no lo protegen. Su respuesta por escrito tiene que estar en formato legal correcto si desea que procesen su caso en la corte. Es posible que haya un formulario que usted pueda usar para su respuesta. Puede encontrar estos formularios de la corte y más información en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California (www.sucorte.ca.gov), en la biblioteca de leyes de su condado o en la corte que le quede más cerca. Si no puede pagar la cuota de presentación, pida al secretario de la corte que le dé un formulario de exención de pago de cuotas. Si no presenta su respuesta a tiempo, puede perder el caso por incumplimiento y la corte le podrá quitar su sueldo, dinero y bienes sin más advertencia.

Hay otros requisitos legales. Es recomendable que llame a un abogado inmediatamente. Si no conoce a un abogado, puede llamar a un servicio de remisión a abogados. Si no puede pagar a un abogado, es posible que cumpla con los requisitos para obtener servicios legales gratuitos de un programa de servicios legales sin fines de lucro. Puede encontrar estos grupos sin fines de lucro en el sitio web de California Legal Services, (www.lawhelpcalifornia.org), en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California, (www.sucorte.ca.gov) o poniéndose en contacto con la corte o el colegio de abogados locales. **AVISO:** Por ley, la corte tiene derecho a reclamar las cuotas y los costos exentos por imponer un gravamen sobre cualquier recuperación de \$10,000 ó más de valor recibida mediante un acuerdo o una concesión de arbitraje en un caso de derecho civil. Tiene que pagar el gravamen de la corte antes de que la corte pueda desechar el caso.

The name and address of the court is:
(El nombre y dirección de la corte es): Los Angeles Superior Court
Santa Monica Courthouse - 1725 Main Street, Santa Monica, CA 90401

CASE NUMBER:
(Número del Caso):

258M CV00351

The name, address, and telephone number of plaintiff's attorney, or plaintiff without an attorney, is:
(El nombre, la dirección y el número de teléfono del abogado del demandante, o del demandante que no tiene abogado, es):
Shani O. Zakay, Esq. T: (619) 255-9047 Zakay Law Group, APLC - 5440 Morehouse Drive, Suite 3600, San Diego, CA 92121

DATE:
(Fecha) 01/23/2025

Clerk, by David W. Slayton, Executive Officer/Clerk of Court Deputy
(Secretario) L. Kulkin (Adjunto)

(For proof of service of this summons, use Proof of Service of Summons (form POS-010).)
(Para prueba de entrega de esta citación use el formulario Proof of Service of Summons, (POS-010)).

[SEAL]



NOTICE TO THE PERSON SERVED: You are served

- ☐ as an individual defendant.
- ☐ as the person sued under the fictitious name of (specify):
- ☐ on behalf of (specify):
under: ☐ CCP 416.10 (corporation) ☐ CCP 416.60 (minor)
☐ CCP 416.20 (defunct corporation) ☐ CCP 416.70 (conservatee)
☐ CCP 416.40 (association or partnership) ☐ CCP 416.90 (authorized person)
☐ other (specify):
- ☐ by personal delivery on (date):

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County of Los Angeles
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By L. Kulkin, Deputy Clerk

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Attorneys for PLAINTIFF

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

CRISTIAN DUENAS ACHUTEGUI, on
behalf of the State of California in their
representative capacity as a private attorney
general,

Plaintiff,

v.

AMERICAN CHEESEBURGER LLC, dba
HIHO CHEESEBURGER, a Delaware limited
liability company; and DOES 1-50, Inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No: **25SMCV00351**

REPRESENTATIVE ACTION
COMPLAINT FOR:

1) VIOLATIONS OF THE PRIVATE
ATTORNEYS GENERAL ACT [LABOR
CODE §§ 2698 ET SEQ.]

1 PLAINTIFF CRISTIAN DUENAS ACHUTEGUI ("PLAINTIFF") on behalf of the people
2 of the State of California, and as an "aggrieved employee" acting as a private attorney general under
3 the Labor Code Private Attorney General Act of 2004, Section 2699, *et seq.* ("PAGA") only, alleges
4 on information and belief, except for their own acts and knowledge which are based on personal
5 knowledge, the following:

6 **INTRODUCTION**

7 1. PLAINTIFF brings this action against AMERICAN CHEESEBURGER LLC, dba
8 HIHO CHEESEBURGER, seeking only to recover PAGA civil penalties on behalf of all current
9 and former aggrieved employees who worked for DEFENDANTS. PLAINTIFF does **not seek to**
10 **recover anything other than penalties as permitted by California Labor Code Section 2699.**

11 To the extent that statutory violations are mentioned for wage violations, PLAINTIFF does not seek
12 underlying general and/or special damages for those violations, but simply the civil penalties
13 permitted by California Labor Code Section 2699.

14 2. California has enacted the PAGA which permits PLAINTIFF to bring an action on
15 behalf of others for PAGA penalties *only*, which is the precise and sole nature of this action.

16 3. Accordingly, PLAINTIFF seeks to obtain all applicable relief for DEFENDANTS'
17 violations under PAGA and solely for the relief as permitted by PAGA that is, penalties and any
18 other relief the Court deems proper pursuant to PAGA. Nothing in this complaint should be
19 construed as attempting to obtain any relief that would not be available in a PAGA- only action.

20 4. PLAINTIFF is not suing in PLAINTIFF'S individual capacity; PLAINTIFF is
21 proceeding herein solely under the PAGA, on behalf of the State of California for all aggrieved
22 employees, including PLAINTIFF and other aggrieved employees. Nothing in this complaint
23 should be construed as PLAINTIFF suing in PLAINTIFF'S individual capacity

24 5. PLAINTIFF is informed and believes, and thereon alleges, that DEFENDANTS
25 decreased their employment-related costs by systematically violating California wage and hour
26 laws.

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6. DEFENDANTS' systematic pattern of wage and hour and Industrial Welfare Commission ("IWC") Wage Order violations toward PLAINTIFF and other aggrieved employees in California include, *inter alia*:

- a. Failure to provide compliant meal and rest periods;
- b. Failure to allow employees to take duty-free meal and rest periods;
- c. Failure to pay all minimum, sick pay, regular and overtime wages;
- d. Failure to correctly calculate the regular rate of pay;
- e. Failure to pay within seven (7) days of the close of payroll;
- f. Failure to pay for all hours worked;
- g. Failure to maintain true and accurate records;
- h. Failure to reimburse for required business expenses;
- i. Failure to provide accurate itemized wage statements; and
- j. Failure to timely pay wages due during, and upon termination of employment.

7. PLAINTIFF reserves the right to name additional representatives throughout the State of California.

THE PARTIES

8. Defendant AMERICAN CHEESEBURGER LLC, dba HIHO CHEESEBURGER, (“DEFENDANTS” is a Delaware limited liability company that at all relevant times mentioned herein conducted and continues to conduct substantial and regular business throughout California.

9. DEFENDANTS were the employer of PLAINTIFF as evidenced by the documents issued to PLAINTIFF and by the company for which PLAINTIFF performed work.

10.

11. DEFENDANTS own and operate restaurants in the State of California, including in the County of Los Angeles where PLAINTIFF worked.

12. PLAINTIFF was employed by DEFENDANTS in California from November of 2023 to February of 2024, paid in part an hourly wage, and entitled to the legally required meal and rest periods and payment of minimum and overtime wages due for all time worked.

/ / /

1 13. PLAINTIFF, and such persons who may be added from time to time who satisfy the
2 requirements and exhaust the administrative procedures under the PAGA, bring this Representative
3 Action on behalf of the State of California with respect to themselves and all individuals who are or
4 previously were employed by DEFENDANTS in California and classified as non-exempt
5 employees ("AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES") during the time period of November 18, 2023, and
6 the present ("PAGA PERIOD").

7 14. PLAINTIFF is an "AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEE" within the meaning of Labor Code
8 Section 2699(c) because PLAINTIFF was employed by DEFENDANTS and personally suffered
9 each of the alleged Labor Code violations committed by DEFENDANTS.

10 15. PLAINTIFF and all other AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES are, and at all relevant times
11 were, employees of DEFENDANTS, within the meanings set forth in the California Labor Code
12 and the applicable IWC Wage Order.

13 16. Each of the fictitiously named defendants participated in the acts alleged in this
14 Complaint. The true names and capacities of the Defendants named as DOES 1 THROUGH 50,
15 inclusive, are presently unknown to PLAINTIFF. PLAINTIFF will amend this Complaint, setting
16 forth the true names and capacities of these fictitiously named Defendants when their true names
17 are ascertained. PLAINTIFF is informed and believes, and on that basis alleges, that each of the
18 fictitious Defendants have participated in the acts alleged in this Complaint.

19 17. DEFENDANTS, including DOES 1 THROUGH 50 (hereinafter collectively
20 "DEFENDANTS"), were PLAINTIFF'S employers or persons acting on behalf of PLAINTIFF'S
21 employer, within the meaning of California Labor Code Section 558, who violated or caused to be
22 violated, a section of Part 2, Chapter 1 of the California Labor Code or any provision regulating
23 hours and days of work in any order of the IWC and, as such, are subject to civil penalties for each
24 underpaid employee, as set forth in Labor Code Section 558, at all relevant times.

25 18. DEFENDANTS were PLAINTIFF'S employer or persons acting on behalf of
26 PLAINTIFF'S employer either individually or as an officer, agent, or employee of another person,
27 within the meaning of California Labor Code Section 1197.1, who paid or caused to be paid to any
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1 employee a wage less than the minimum fixed by California state law, and as such, are subject to
2 civil penalties for each underpaid employee.

3 **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

4 19. This Court has jurisdiction over this Action pursuant to California Code of Civil
5 Procedure, Section 410.10 and California Business and Professions Code, Section 17203. This
6 Court has jurisdiction over AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES' claims for civil penalties under the
7 Private Attorney General Act of 2004, California Labor Code Section 2698, *et seq.*

8 20. Venue is proper in this Court pursuant to California Code of Civil Procedure,
9 Sections 395 and 395.5, because DEFENDANTS (i) currently maintain and at all relevant times
10 maintained offices and facilities in this County and/or conduct substantial business in this County,
11 and (ii) committed the wrongful conduct herein alleged in this County against AGGRIEVED
12 EMPLOYEES.

13 **THE CONDUCT**

14 21. In violation of the applicable sections of the California Labor Code and the
15 requirements of the IWC Wage Order, DEFENDANTS as a matter of company policy, practice,
16 and procedure, intentionally, knowingly, and systematically failed to provide legally compliant
17 meal and rest periods, failed to accurately compensate PLAINTIFF and AGGRIEVED
18 EMPLOYEES for missed meal and rest periods, failed to pay PLAINTIFF and AGGRIEVED
19 EMPLOYEES for all time worked, failed to compensate PLAINTIFF and AGGRIEVED
20 EMPLOYEES for off-the-clock work, failed to pay PLAINTIFF and AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES
21 overtime at the correct regular rate of pay, failed to compensate PLAINTIFF and AGGRIEVED
22 EMPLOYEES meal rest premiums at the regular rate, failed to reimburse PLAINTIFF and other
23 AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES for business expenses, and knowingly and intentionally failed to
24 issue to PLAINTIFF and AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES accurate itemized wage statements
25 showing, among other things, all applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay periods and the
26 corresponding amount of time worked at each hourly rate. DEFENDANTS' uniform policies and
27 practices are intended to purposefully avoid the accurate and full payment for all time worked as
28 required by California law which allows DEFENDANTS to illegally profit and gain an unfair

1 advantage over competitors who comply with the law. To the extent equitable tolling operates to
2 toll claims by the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES against DEFENDANTS, the PAGA PERIOD
3 should be adjusted accordingly.

4 **A. Meal Period Violations**

5 22. Pursuant to the IWC Wage Orders, DEFENDANTS were required to pay
6 PLAINTIFF and AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES for all their time worked, meaning the time during
7 which an employee is subject to the control of an employer, including all the time the employee is
8 suffered or permitted to work. From time to time during the PAGA PERIOD, DEFENDANTS
9 required PLAINTIFF and AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES to work without paying them for all the
10 time they were under DEFENDANTS' control. Specifically, DEFENDANTS required
11 PLAINTIFF to work while clocked out during what was supposed to be PLAINTIFF'S off-duty
12 meal break. Indeed, there were many days where PLAINTIFF did not even receive a partial lunch.
13 As a result, the PLAINTIFF and other AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES forfeited minimum wage and
14 overtime compensation by regularly working without their time being accurately recorded and
15 without compensation at the applicable minimum wage and overtime rates. DEFENDANTS'
16 uniform policy and practice not to pay PLAINTIFF and other AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES for all
17 time worked is evidenced by DEFENDANTS' business records.

18 23. During the PAGA PERIOD, as a result of their rigorous work schedules and
19 DEFENDANTS' inadequate staffing practices, PLAINTIFF and other AGGRIEVED
20 EMPLOYEES were from time to time unable to take thirty (30) minute off-duty meal breaks and
21 were not fully relieved of duty for their meal periods. PLAINTIFF and other AGGRIEVED
22 EMPLOYEES were from time to time required to perform work as ordered by DEFENDANTS for
23 more than five (5) hours during some shifts without receiving a meal break. Further, from time to
24 time DEFENDANTS failed to provide PLAINTIFF and AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES with a
25 second off-duty meal period for some workdays in which DEFENDANTS require these employees
26 to work ten (10) hours of work. The nature of the work performed by PLAINTIFF and other
27 AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES does not qualify for the limited and narrowly construed "on-duty"
28 meal period exception. When they were provided with meal periods, PLAINTIFF and other

1 AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES were, from time to time, required to remain on duty and on call.
2 DEFENDANTS' failure to provide PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES with legally
3 required meal breaks is evidenced by DEFENDANTS' business records. PLAINTIFF and
4 AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES therefore forfeit meal breaks without additional compensation and in
5 accordance with DEFENDANTS' strict corporate policy and practice.

6 **B. Rest Period Violations**

7 24. During the PAGA PERIOD, PLAINTIFF and other AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES
8 were from time to time also required to work in excess of four (4) hours without being provided ten
9 (10) minute rest periods as a result of their rigorous work requirements and DEFENDANTS'
10 inadequate staffing. Further, for the same reasons, these employees were from time to time denied
11 their first rest periods of at least ten (10) minutes for some shifts worked of at least two (2) to four
12 (4) hours, denied from time to time a first and second rest period of at least ten (10) minutes for
13 some shifts worked of between six (6) and eight (8) hours, and denied from time to time a first,
14 second and third rest period of at least ten (10) minutes for some shifts worked of ten (10) hours or
15 more. When they were provided with rest breaks, PLAINTIFF and other AGGRIEVED
16 EMPLOYEES were, from time to time, required to remain on duty and/or on call. PLAINTIFF and
17 other AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES were also not provided with one-hour wages *in lieu* thereof. As
18 a result of their rigorous work schedules and DEFENDANTS' inadequate staffing, PLAINTIFF
19 and other AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES were from time to time denied their proper rest periods by
20 DEFENDANTS and DEFENDANTS' managers.

21 **C. Unreimbursed Business Expenses**

22 25. DEFENDANTS as a matter of corporate policy, practice, and procedure,
23 intentionally, knowingly, and systematically failed to reimburse and indemnify the PLAINTIFF
24 and the other AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES for required business expenses incurred by the
25 PLAINTIFF and other AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES in direct consequence of discharging their
26 duties on behalf of DEFENDANTS. Under California Labor Code Section 2802, employers are
27 required to indemnify employees for all expenses incurred in the course and scope of their
28 employment. California Labor Code Section 2802 expressly states that "an employer shall

1 indemnify his or her employee for all necessary expenditures or losses incurred by the employee in
2 direct consequence of the discharge of his or her duties, or of his or her obedience to the directions
3 of the employer, even though unlawful, unless the employee, at the time of obeying the directions,
4 believed them to be unlawful."

5 26. In the course of their employment, DEFENDANTS required PLAINTIFF and other
6 AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES to incur personal expenses as a result of and in furtherance of their
7 job duties for the use of their personal cell phones, vehicles, and for the purchase and maintenance
8 of their work uniforms. Specifically, PLAINTIFF and other AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES were
9 required to use their own cell phones and vehicles, and purchase and maintenance of their uniforms
10 in order to perform work related tasks. However, DEFENDANTS unlawfully failed to reimburse
11 PLAINTIFF and other AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES for the personal expenses incurred for the use
12 of their personal cell phones, vehicles, and for the purchase and maintenance of their work
13 uniforms. As a result, in the course of their employment with DEFENDANTS, the PLAINTIFF and
14 other AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES incurred unreimbursed business expenses that included, but
15 were not limited to, costs related to the use of their personal cell phones, vehicles, and for the
16 purchase and maintenance of their work uniforms, all on behalf of and for the benefit of
17 DEFENDANTS.

18 **D. Wage Statement Violations**

19 27. California Labor Code Section 226 requires an employer to furnish its employees an
20 accurate itemized wage statement in writing showing (1) gross wages earned, (2) total hours
21 worked, (3) the number of piece-rate units earned and any applicable piece-rate, (4) all deductions,
22 (5) net wages earned, (6) the inclusive dates of the period for which the employee is paid, (7) the
23 name of the employee and only the last four digits of the employee's social security number or an
24 employee identification number other than a social security number, (8) the name and address of
25 the legal entity that is the employer, and (9) all applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay
26 period and the corresponding number of hours worked at each hourly rate by the employee.

27 28. From time to time during the PAGA PERIOD, when PLAINTIFF and other
28 AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES missed meal and rest breaks, or were paid inaccurately for missed

1 meal and rest period premiums, or were not paid for all hours worked, DEFENDANTS also failed
2 to provide PLAINTIFF and other AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES with complete and accurate wage
3 statements which failed to show, among other things, all deductions, the total hours worked and all
4 applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay period, and the corresponding amount of time
5 worked at each hourly rate, correct rates of pay for penalty payments or missed meal and rest
6 periods.

7 29. In addition to the foregoing, DEFENDANTS, from time to time, failed to provide
8 PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES with wage statements that comply with
9 California Labor Code Section 226(a)(1)-(9).

10 30. As a result, DEFENDANTS issued PLAINTIFF and AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES
11 with wage statements that violate California Labor Code Section 226. Further, DEFENDANTS'
12 violations are knowing and intentional; they were not isolated due to an unintentional payroll error
13 due to clerical or inadvertent mistake.

14 **E. Off-the-Clock Work Resulting in Minimum Wage and Overtime Violations**

15 31. During the PAGA PERIOD, from time to time DEFENDANTS failed and continue
16 to fail to accurately pay PLAINTIFF and AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES for all hours worked.

17 32. During the PAGA PERIOD, from time to time DEFENDANTS required
18 PLAINTIFF and AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES to perform pre-shift or post-shift work, including
19 but not limited to, sending and receiving work-related communications, and performing security
20 sweeps. This resulted in PLAINTIFF and AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES having to work while off-
21 the-clock.

22 33. DEFENDANTS directed and directly benefited from the undercompensated off-the-
23 clock work performed by PLAINTIFF and the other AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES.

24 34. DEFENDANTS controlled the work schedules, duties, protocols, applications,
25 assignments, and employment conditions of PLAINTIFF and AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES.

26 35. DEFENDANTS were able to track the amount of time PLAINTIFF and
27 AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES spent working; however, DEFENDANTS failed to document, track,
28

1 or pay PLAINTIFF and AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES all wages earned and owed for all the work
2 they performed.

3 36. PLAINTIFF and AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES were non-exempt employees,
4 subject to the requirements of the California Labor Code.

5 37. DEFENDANTS' policies and practices deprived PLAINTIFF and the other
6 AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES of all minimum regular, overtime, and double time wages owed for
7 the off-the-clock work activities. Because PLAINTIFF and AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES typically
8 worked over forty (40) hours in a workweek, and more than eight (8) hours per day,
9 DEFENDANTS' policies and practices also deprived them of overtime pay.

10 38. DEFENDANTS knew or should have known that PLAINTIFF and AGGRIEVED
11 EMPLOYEES' off-the-clock work was compensable under the law.

12 39. As a result, PLAINTIFF and AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES forfeited wages due to
13 them for all hours worked at DEFENDANTS' direction, control, and benefit for the time spent
14 working while off-the-clock. DEFENDANTS' uniform policy and practice to not pay PLAINTIFF
15 and AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES wages for all hours worked in accordance with applicable law is
16 evidenced by DEFENDANTS' business records.

17 **F. Regular Rate Violation – Overtime, Double Time, Meal and Rest Period Premiums, and**
18 **Redeemed Sick Pay**

19 40. From time to time during the PAGA PERIOD, DEFENDANTS failed and continues
20 to fail to accurately calculate and pay PLAINTIFF and the other AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES for
21 their overtime and double time hours worked, meal and rest period premiums, and redeemed sick
22 pay. As a result, PLAINTIFF and the other AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES forfeited wages due to
23 them for working overtime without compensation at the correct overtime and double time rates,
24 meal and rest period premiums, and redeemed sick pay rates. DEFENDANTS' uniform policy and
25 practice not to pay PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES at the correct rate for all
26 overtime and double time worked, meal and rest period premiums, and redeemed sick pay in
27 accordance with applicable law is evidenced by DEFENDANTS' business records.

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1 41. State law provides that employees must be paid overtime at one-and-one-half times
2 their “regular rate of pay.” (Cal. Lab. Code § 510.) PLAINTIFF and other AGGRIEVED
3 EMPLOYEES were compensated at an hourly rate plus incentive pay that was tied to specific
4 elements of an employee’s performance.

5 42. The second component of PLAINTIFF’S and other AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES’
6 compensation was DEFENDANTS’ non-discretionary incentive program that paid PLAINTIFF
7 and other AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES’ incentive wages based on their performance for
8 DEFENDANTS. The non-discretionary bonus program provided all employees paid on an hourly
9 basis with bonus compensation when the employees met the various performance goals set by
10 DEFENDANTS.

11 43. From time to time, when calculating the regular rate of pay, in those pay periods
12 where PLAINTIFF and other AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES worked overtime, double time, paid
13 meal and rest period premium payments, and/or redeemed sick pay, and earned non-discretionary
14 bonus, DEFENDANTS failed to accurately include the non-discretionary bonus compensation as
15 part of the employees’ “regular rate of pay” and/or calculated all hours worked rather than just all
16 non-overtime hours worked. Management and supervisors described the incentive/bonus program
17 to potential and new employees as part of the compensation package. As a matter of law, the
18 incentive compensation received by PLAINTIFF and other AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES must be
19 included in the “regular rate of pay.” The failure to do so has resulted in a systematic underpayment
20 of overtime and double time compensation, meal and rest period premiums, and redeemed sick pay
21 to PLAINTIFF and other AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES by DEFENDANTS. Specifically,
22 California Labor Code Section 246 mandates that paid sick time for non-exempt employees shall
23 be calculated in the same manner as the regular rate of pay for the workweek in which the non-
24 exempt employee uses paid sick time, whether or not the employee actually works overtime in that
25 workweek. DEFENDANTS’ conduct, as articulated herein, by failing to include the incentive
26 compensation as part of the “regular rate of pay” for purposes of sick pay compensation was in
27 violation of California Labor Code Section 246 the underpayment of which is recoverable under
28 California Labor Code Sections 201, 202, 203 and/or 204.

1 44. In violation of the applicable sections of the California Labor Code and the
2 requirements of the IWC Wage Order, DEFENDANTS as a matter of company policy, practice,
3 and procedure, intentionally and knowingly failed to compensate PLAINTIFF and AGGRIEVED
4 EMPLOYEES at the correct rate of pay for all overtime and double time worked, meal and rest
5 period premiums, and sick pay. This uniform policy and practice of DEFENDANTS is intended to
6 purposefully avoid the payment of the correct overtime and double time compensation, meal and
7 rest period premiums, and sick pay as required by California law which allowed DEFENDANTS
8 to illegally profit and gain an unfair advantage over competitors who complied with the law. To
9 the extent equitable tolling operates to toll claims by the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES against
10 DEFENDANTS, the PAGA PERIOD should be adjusted accordingly.

11 **G. Sick Pay Violations**

12 45. California Labor Code Section 246 (a)(1) mandates that “An employee who, on or
13 after July 1, 2015, works in California for the same employer for 30 or more days within a year
14 from the commencement of employment is entitled to paid sick days as specified in this section.”
15 Further, California Labor Code Sections 246(b)-(d) provide for the sick day accrual requirements.
16 From time to time, DEFENDANTS failed to have a policy or practice in place that provided
17 PLAINTIFF and AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES with sick days and/or paid sick leave. As of January
18 1, 2024, DEFENDANTS failed to adhere to the law in that they failed to provide and allow
19 employees to use at least forty hours or five days of paid sick leave per year.

20 46. California Labor Code Section 246(i) requires an employer to furnish its employees
21 with written wage statements setting forth the amount of paid sick leave available. From time to
22 time, DEFENDANTS violated California Labor Code Section 246 by failing to furnish PLAINTIFF
23 and AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES with wage statements setting forth the amount of paid sick leave
24 available.

25 **H. Violations for Untimely Payment of Wages**

26 47. Pursuant to California Labor Code section 204, PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED
27 EMPLOYEES were entitled to timely payment of wages during their employment. PLAINTIFF
28 and the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES, from time to time, did not receive payment of all wages,

1 including, but not limited to, overtime wages, minimum wages, meal period premium wages, and
2 rest period premium wages within the permissible time period.

3 48. Pursuant to California Labor Code Section 201, “If an employer discharges an
4 employee, the wages earned and unpaid at the time of discharge are due and payable immediately.”
5 Pursuant to California Labor Code Section 202, if an employee quits his or her employment, “his
6 or her wages shall become due and payable not later than 72 hours thereafter, unless the employee
7 has given 72 hours previous notice of his or her intention to quit, in which case the employee is
8 entitled to his or her wages at the time of quitting.” PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED
9 EMPLOYEES were, from time to time, not timely provided the wages earned and unpaid at the
10 time of their discharge and/or at the time of quitting, in violation of California Labor Code Sections
11 201 and 202. Further, DEFENDANTS’ violations are willful and intentional; they were not isolated
12 due to an unintentional payroll error due to clerical or inadvertent mistake.

13 49. As such, PLAINTIFF demands up to thirty days of pay as penalty for not timely
14 paying all wages due at time of termination for all AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES whose
15 employment ended during the PAGA PERIOD.

16 **I. Unlawful Deductions**

17 50. DEFENDANTS, from time to time unlawfully deducted wages from PLAINTIFF
18 and AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES’ pay without explanations and without authorization to do so or
19 notice to PLAINTIFF and the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES. As a result, DEFENDANTS violated
20 Labor Code Section 221.

21 **J. Unlawful Rounding Practices**

22 51. During the PAGA PERIOD, DEFENDANTS did not have in place an immutable
23 timekeeping system to accurately record and pay PLAINTIFF and other AGGRIEVED
24 EMPLOYEES for the actual time these employees worked each day, including overtime hours.
25 Specifically, DEFENDANTS had in place an unlawful rounding policy and practice that resulted
26 in PLAINTIFF and AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES being undercompensated for all of their time
27 worked. As a result, DEFENDANTS were able to and did in fact unlawfully, and unilaterally round
28 the time recorded in DEFENDANTS’ timekeeping system for PLAINTIFF and AGGRIEVED

1 EMPLOYEES in order to avoid paying these employees for all their time worked, including the
2 applicable overtime compensation for overtime worked. As a result, PLAINTIFF and other
3 AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES, from time to time, forfeited compensation for their time worked by
4 working without their time being accurately recorded and without compensation at the applicable
5 overtime rates.

6 52. Further, the mutability of DEFENDANTS' timekeeping system and unlawful
7 rounding policy and practice resulted in PLAINTIFF and AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES' time being
8 inaccurately recorded. As a result, from time to time, DEFENDANTS' unlawful rounding policy
9 and practice caused PLAINTIFF and AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES to perform work as ordered by
10 DEFENDANTS for more than five (5) hours during a shift without receiving an off-duty meal
11 break.

12 **K. Timekeeping Manipulation**

13 53. During the PAGA PERIOD, DEFENDANTS, from time to time, did not have an
14 immutable timekeeping system to accurately record and pay PLAINTIFF and AGGRIEVED
15 EMPLOYEES for the actual time PLAINTIFF and AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES worked each day,
16 including regular time, overtime hours, sick pay, meal and rest breaks. As a result, DEFENDANTS
17 was able to and did in fact, unlawfully, and unilaterally alter the time recorded in DEFENDANTS'
18 timekeeping system for PLAINTIFF and AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES in order to avoid paying
19 these employees for all hours worked, applicable overtime compensation, applicable sick pay,
20 missed meal breaks and missed rest break.

21 54. As a result, PLAINTIFF and AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES, from time to time,
22 forfeited time worked by working without their time being accurately recorded and without
23 compensation at the applicable pay rates.

24 55. The mutability of the timekeeping system also allowed DEFENDANTS to alter
25 employee time records by recording fictitious thirty (30) minute meal breaks in DEFENDANTS'
26 timekeeping system so as to create the appearance that PLAINTIFF and AGGRIEVED
27 EMPLOYEES clocked out for thirty (30) minute meal breaks when in fact the employees were not
28 at all times provided an off-duty meal break. This practice is a direct result of DEFENDANTS'

1 uniform policy and practice of denying employees uninterrupted thirty (30) minute off-duty meal
2 breaks each day or otherwise compensating them for missed meal breaks.

3 56. As a result, PLAINTIFF and AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES forfeited wages due to
4 them for all hours worked at DEFENDANTS' direction, control and benefit for the time the
5 timekeeping system was inoperable. DEFENDANTS' uniform policy and practice to not pay
6 PLAINTIFF and AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES wages for all hours worked in accordance with
7 applicable law is evidenced by DEFENDANTS' business records.

8 **L. Tip Pooling**

9 57. During the PAGA PERIOD, pursuant to DEFENDANTS' company policies and
10 practices, PLAINTIFF and AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES were forced to forfeit gratuities left for
11 them by customers to DEFENDANT's agents who provided no service to the customers that
12 resulted in the gratuity. DEFENDANT routinely added gratuity tips and service charges to its food
13 and beverage bills. These gratuities and service charges reasonably appear to be gratuities for the
14 service staff. It is typical and customary in the food and beverage industry that establishments
15 impose gratuity charges on the food and beverage bill. Thus, when customers paid these charges, it
16 is reasonable for them to have believed they were gratuities to be paid to the service staff. Indeed,
17 because many of these charges are depicted to customers, and the custom in the food and beverage
18 industry that gratuities are paid for food and beverage service, customers paid these charges
19 reasonably believing they were remitted to the service staff. However, DEFENDANT has not
20 remitted the total proceeds of these gratuities to the non-managerial employees who serve the food
21 and beverages. Instead, DEFENDANT has a policy and practice of using a portion of these
22 gratuities to pay managers or other non-service employees. As a result, PLAINTIFF and
23 AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES have not received the total proceeds of the gratuities, to which they
24 are entitled to under California law.

25 58. DEFENDANTS are generally in the business of owning and operating a restaurant.
26 During the PAGA PERIOD, PLAINTIFF and AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES were in the "chain of
27 service" and earned gratuities based on their service for their customers. However, PLAINTIFF and
28 AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES were forced to forfeit portions of their gratuities, which said

1 gratuities were kept by DEFENDANT's employees who were not in the chain of service from which
2 the gratuity resulted. PLAINTIFF and AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES contend that any gratuities
3 kept by DEFENDANT's non-service employees were illegal and in violation of California law
4 because PLAINTIFF and AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES provided the service for to whom the
5 gratuity should have been paid.

6 59. California Labor Code section 351 establishes the requirements for an employer
7 regarding the payment of gratuities. Specifically, gratuities are the sole property of the employees.
8 California Labor Code section 351 expressly prohibits employers and their agents from collecting,
9 taking, or receiving any portion of a gratuity. California Labor Code section 350(e) defines the term
10 "gratuity" as including any money that has been paid or given or left for an employee by a patron
11 of a business over and above the actual amount due the business for services rendered or for goods,
12 food, drink or articles sold or served to such patron. Labor Code section 353 requires employers to
13 keep accurate records of all gratuities they receive, directly or indirectly.

14 60. Although tip pooling is not expressly prohibited by the Labor Code, employees who
15 mandate tip pooling must only distribute pooled tips to employees in the "chain of service." By
16 distributing tips to employees who were not in the "chain of service," DEFENDANT has violated
17 and continue to violate the legal requirements for handling pooled tips.

18 61. Specifically, as to PLAINTIFF, PLAINTIFF was from time to time unable to take
19 off-duty meal and rest breaks and was not fully relieved of duty for PLAINTIFF'S rest and meal
20 periods. PLAINTIFF was required to perform work as ordered by DEFENDANTS for more than
21 five (5) hours during a shift without receiving an off-duty meal break. Further, DEFENDANTS
22 failed to provide PLAINTIFF with a second off-duty meal period each workday in which
23 DEFENDANTS required PLAINTIFF to work ten (10) hours of work. When DEFENDANTS
24 provided PLAINTIFF with a rest break, they required PLAINTIFF to remain on-duty and on-call
25 for the rest break. DEFENDANTS' policy caused PLAINTIFF to remain on-call and on-duty during
26 what was supposed to be PLAINTIFF'S off-duty meal periods. PLAINTIFF therefore forfeited
27 meal and rest breaks without additional compensation and in accordance with DEFENDANTS'
28 strict corporate policy and practice. Moreover, DEFENDANTS also provided PLAINTIFF with

1 paystubs that failed to comply with California Labor Code Section 226. Further, DEFENDANTS
2 also failed to reimburse PLAINTIFF for required business expenses related to the personal expenses
3 incurred for the use of PLAINTIFF'S personal cell phone, personal vehicle and for the purchase
4 and maintenance of work uniforms, on behalf of and in furtherance of PLAINTIFF'S employment
5 with DEFENDANTS. To date, DEFENDANTS have not fully paid PLAINTIFF the minimum,
6 overtime and double time compensation still owed to PLAINTIFF or any penalty wages owed to
7 PLAINTIFF under California Labor Code Section 203. The amount in controversy for PLAINTIFF
8 individually does not exceed the sum or value of \$75,000.

9 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

10 **VIOLATION OF THE PRIVATE ATTORNEYS GENERAL ACT**

11 **(Cal. Lab. Code §§2698 *et seq.*)**

12 **(Alleged by PLAINTIFF against all DEFENDANTS)**

13 62. PLAINTIFF realleges and incorporates by this reference, as though fully set forth
14 herein, the prior paragraphs of this Complaint.

15 63. PAGA is a mechanism by which the State of California itself can enforce state labor
16 laws through the employee suing under the PAGA who do so as the proxy or agent of the state's
17 labor law enforcement agencies. An action to recover civil penalties under PAGA is fundamentally
18 a law enforcement action designed to protect the public and not to benefit private parties. The
19 purpose of the PAGA is not to recover damages or restitution, but to create a means of "deputizing"
20 citizens as private attorneys general to enforce the Labor Code. In enacting PAGA, the California
21 Legislature specified that "it was ... in the public interest to allow aggrieved employees, acting as
22 private attorneys general to recover civil penalties for Labor Code violations ..." (Stats. 2003, ch.
23 906, § 1.) Accordingly, PAGA claims cannot be subject to arbitration.

24 64. At all relevant times, for the reasons described herein and others, PLAINTIFF and
25 the AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES were aggrieved employees of DEFENDANTS within the
26 meaning of Labor Code Section 2699(c).

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1 65. Labor Code Sections 2699(a) and (k) authorize an AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEE, like
2 PLAINTIFF, on behalf of themselves and other current or former employees, to bring a civil action
3 to recover civil penalties pursuant to the procedures specified in Labor Code Section 2699.3

4 66. PLAINTIFF complied with the procedures for bringing suit specified in Labor Code
5 Section 2699.3. By certified letter, return receipt requested, dated November 18, 2024,
6 PLAINTIFF gave written notice to the Labor and Workforce Development Agency (“LWDA”)
7 and to DEFENDANTS of the specific provisions of the Labor Code alleged to have been violated,
8 including the facts and theories to support the alleged violations. (See Exhibit #1.)

9 67. As of the date of this complaint, more than sixty-five (65) days after serving the
10 LWDA with notice of DEFENDANTS’ violations, the LWDA has not provided any notice by
11 certified mail of its intent to investigate the DEFENDANTS’ alleged violations as mandated by
12 Labor Code Section 2699.3(a)(2)(A). Accordingly, pursuant to Labor Code Section
13 2699.3(a)(2)(A), PLAINTIFF may commence and is authorized to pursue this cause of action.

14 68. Pursuant to Labor Code Sections 2699(a) and (f), PLAINTIFF and the
15 AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES are entitled to civil penalties for DEFENDANTS’ violations of
16 Labor Code Sections 201, 201.3, 202, 203, 204, 210, 218.5, 218.6, 221, 226, 226.2, 226.3, 226.7,
17 246, 510, 512, 558, 1174(d), 1174.5, 1194, 1197, 1197.1, 1197.14, 1198, 1198.5, 1199, 2802 and
18 2804 in the following amounts:

19 a. For violation of Labor Code Sections 201, 202, 203, and 204, up to (\$200)
20 per AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEE per pay period [penalty per Labor Code
21 Section 2699(f)];

22 b. For violations of Labor Code Section 226(a), a civil penalty in the amount
23 of two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) for each AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEE for
24 any initial violation and one thousand dollars for each subsequent violation
25 [penalty per Labor Code Section 226.3];

26 c. For violations of Labor Code Sections 204, a civil penalty in the amount of
27 one hundred dollars (\$100) for each AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEE for any initial
28 violation and two hundred dollars (\$200) for AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEE for

1 each subsequent violation [penalty per Labor Code Section 210];

2 d. For violations of Labor Code Sections 226.7, 510 and 512, a civil penalty
3 in the amount of fifty dollars (\$50) for each underpaid AGGRIEVED
4 EMPLOYEE for the initial violation and one hundred dollars (\$100) for each
5 underpaid AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEE for each subsequent violation [penalty
6 per Labor Code Section 558];

7 e. For violations of Labor Code Section 1174(d), a civil penalty in the amount
8 of five hundred (\$500) dollars for each AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEE [penalty
9 per Labor Code Section 1174.5].

10 f. For violations of Labor Code Sections 1194, 1194.2, 1197, 1198 and 1199,
11 a civil penalty in the amount of one hundred dollars (\$100) for each
12 AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEE per pay period for the initial violation and two
13 hundred dollars fifty (\$250) for each AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEE per pay
14 period for each subsequent violation [penalty per Labor Code Section 1197.1].

15 69. For all provisions of the Labor Code for which civil penalty is not specifically
16 provided, Labor Code Section 2699(f) imposes upon DEFENDANTS a penalty of up to two
17 hundred dollars (\$200) for each AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEE per pay period. PLAINTIFF and the
18 AGGRIEVED EMPLOYEES are entitled to an award of reasonable attorney's fees and costs in
19 connection with their claims for civil penalties pursuant to Labor Code Section 2699(k)(1).

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1. For reasonable attorney's fees and costs of suit to the extent permitted by law, including pursuant to Labor Code Section 2699, *et seq.*;
2. For civil penalties to the extent permitted by law pursuant to the Labor Code under the Private Attorneys General Act; and
3. For such other relief as the Court deems just and proper.

ZAKAY LAW GROUP, APLC

By: 
Shani O. Zakay
Attorney for PLAINTIFF

EXHIBIT 1



ZAKAY LAW GROUP
A PROFESSIONAL LAW CORPORATION

November 18, 2024

Via Online Filing to LWDA and Certified Mail to Defendants

Labor and Workforce Development Agency

Online Filing

AMERICAN CHEESEBURGER LLC, dba HIHO CHEESEBURGER

c/o National Registered Agents, Inc.

330 N. Brand Blvd., Ste 700

Glendale, CA 91203

Sent via Certified Mail and Return Receipt No. 9589 0710 5270 2308 6625 12

Re: Notice of Violations of California Labor Code Sections 201, 201.3, 202, 203, 204, 210, 218.5, 218.6, 221, 226, 226.2, 226.3, 226.7, 227.3, 246, 351, 510, 512, 558, 1174(d), 1174.5, 1194, 1197, 1197.1, 1197.14, 1198, 1198.5, 1199, 2802, 2804, and Violation of Applicable Industrial Welfare Commission Wage Order(s), and Pursuant to California Labor Code Section 2699.5

Dear Sir/Madam:

This notice is being sent in compliance with California Labor Code Section 2699.3. Our offices represent Plaintiff CRISTIAN DUENAS ACHUTEGUI ("Plaintiff") and other aggrieved employees. Plaintiff was employed by Defendant AMERICAN CHEESEBURGER LLC dba HIHO CHEESEBURGER ("Defendants") in California from November of 2023 through February of 2024, as a non-exempt employee, paid on an hourly basis, and entitled to payment of all wages and the legally required meal and rest breaks.

Plaintiff alleges that within the past year, Plaintiff personally suffered violations of the following Labor Code Sections as a result of Defendants' failure to pay Plaintiff for all time worked, provide Plaintiff with compliant meal periods, provide Plaintiff with compliant rest periods, provide Plaintiff with accurate itemized wage statements that facially comply with the requirements provided for in Labor Code Section 226, furnish wages to Plaintiff with the frequency as set forth under Labor Code Section 204, and reimburse Plaintiff for necessary business expenses pursuant to Labor Code Sections 201, 201.3, 202, 203, 204, 210, 218.5, 218.6, 221, 226, 226.2, 226.3, 226.7, 227.3, 246, 351, 510, 512, 558, 1174(d), 1174.5, 1194, 1197, 1197.1, 1197.14, 1198, 1198.5, 1199, 2802, and 2804. These violations are actionable under California Labor Code Section 2699.3.

The information below provides notice to the Labor and Workforce Development Agency of the facts and theories supporting the alleged violations for the agency's reference. If the agency needs any further information, please do not hesitate to ask.

Plaintiff seeks to represent a group of aggrieved employees defined as any person currently or formerly employed by Defendants who performed work in California and against whom one or more of the alleged violations listed above were committed during the relevant claim period ("Aggrieved Employees"). Plaintiff believes this group to be comprised of all current

and former non-exempt employees who performed work for Defendants in California during the period beginning one year prior to the date of this Notice and continuing through the present.

In violation of the applicable sections of the California Labor Code and the requirements of the Industrial Welfare Commission (“IWC”) Wage Order, Defendants as a matter of company policy, practice, and procedure, intentionally, knowingly, and systematically failed to provide legally compliant meal and rest periods, failed to accurately compensate Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees for missed meal and rest periods, failed to pay Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees for all time worked, failed to compensate Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees for off-the-clock work, failed to pay Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees overtime at the correct regular rate of pay, failed to compensate Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees meal and rest premiums at the regular rate of pay, failed to pay Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees redeemed sick pay at the regular rate of pay, failed to reimburse Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees for business expenses, and failed to issue to Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees accurate itemized wage statements showing, among other things, all applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay periods and the corresponding amount of time worked at each hourly rate. Defendants’ uniform policies and practices are intended to purposefully avoid the accurate and full payment for all time worked as required by California law which allows Defendants to illegally profit and gain an unfair advantage over competitors who comply with the law.

Meal Period Violations: Pursuant to the Industrial Welfare Commission Wage Orders, Defendants were required to pay Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees for all their time worked, meaning the time during which an employee is subject to the control of an employer, including all the time the employee is suffered or permitted to work. From time to time during the last year, Defendants required Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees to work without paying them for all the time they were under Defendants’ control. Specifically, Defendants required Plaintiff to work while clocked out during what was supposed to be Plaintiff’s off-duty meal break. Indeed, there were many days where Plaintiff did not even receive a partial lunch. As a result, Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees forfeited minimum wage and overtime compensation by regularly working without their time being accurately recorded and without compensation at the applicable minimum wage and overtime rates. Defendants’ uniform policy and practice not to pay Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees for all time worked is evidenced by Defendants’ business records.

During the last year, as a result of their rigorous work schedules and Defendants’ inadequate staffing practices, Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees were from time to time unable to take thirty (30) minute off duty meal breaks and were not fully relieved of duty for their meal periods. Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees were required to perform work as ordered by Defendants for more than five (5) hours during some shifts without receiving a meal break. Further, Defendants failed to provide Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees with a second off-duty meal period for some workdays in which these employees were required by Defendants to work ten (10) hours of work. The nature of the work performed by Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees does not qualify for the limited and narrowly construed “on-duty” meal period exception. When they were provided with meal periods, Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees were, from time to time, required to remain on duty and on call. Defendants’ failure to provide Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees with legally required meal breaks is evidenced by Defendants’ business records. As a result of their rigorous work schedules and Defendants’ inadequate staffing, Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees therefore forfeited meal breaks without additional compensation

and in accordance with Defendants' strict corporate policy and practice.

Rest Period Violations: From time to time during the past year, Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees were also required to work in excess of four (4) hours without being provided ten (10) minute rest periods as a result of their rigorous work requirements and Defendants' inadequate staffing. Further, for the same reasons, these employees were from time to time denied their first rest periods of at least ten (10) minutes for some shifts worked of at least two (2) to four (4) hours, from time to time denied a first and second rest period of at least ten (10) minutes for some shifts worked of between six (6) and eight (8) hours, and from time to time denied a first, second and third rest period of at least ten (10) minutes for some shifts worked of ten (10) hours or more. When they were provided with rest breaks, Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees were, from time to time, required to remain on premises, on duty and/or on call, and not fully relieved of all duties. Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees were also not provided with one-hour wages in lieu thereof. As a result of their rigorous work schedules and Defendants' inadequate staffing, Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees were from time to time denied their proper rest periods by Defendants and Defendants' managers.

Unreimbursed Business Expenses: Defendants as a matter of corporate policy, practice, and procedure, intentionally, knowingly, and systematically failed to reimburse and indemnify the Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees for required business expenses incurred by the Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees in direct consequence of discharging their duties on behalf of Defendants. Under California Labor Code Section 2802, employers are required to indemnify employees for all expenses incurred in the course and scope of their employment. California Labor Code Section 2802 expressly states that "an employer shall indemnify his or her employee for all necessary expenditures or losses incurred by the employee in direct consequence of the discharge of his or her duties, or of his or her obedience to the directions of the employer, even though unlawful, unless the employee, at the time of obeying the directions, believed them to be unlawful."

Within the last year, in the course of their employment, Defendants required Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees to incur personal expenses as a result of and in furtherance of their job duties for the use of their personal cell phones, personal vehicles, and for the purchase and maintenance of their work uniforms. Specifically, Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees were required to incur personal expenses for the use of their personal cell phones, personal vehicles, and for the purchase and maintenance of their work uniforms in order to perform work related tasks. However, Defendants unlawfully failed to reimburse Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees for the personal expenses incurred for the purchase and maintenance of their work uniforms. As a result, in the course of their employment with Defendants, the Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees incurred unreimbursed business expenses that included, but were not limited to, costs related to the personal expenses incurred for the use of their personal cell phones, personal vehicles, and for the purchase and maintenance of their work uniforms, all on behalf of and for the benefit of Defendants.

Wage Statement Violations: California Labor Code Section 226 requires an employer to furnish its employees and accurate itemized wage statement in writing showing (1) gross wages earned, (2) total hours worked, (3) the number of piece-rate units earned and any applicable piece-rate, (4) all deductions, (5) net wages earned, (6) the inclusive dates of the period for which the employee is paid, (7) the name of the employee and only the last four digits of the employee's 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 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. From time to time during the last year, when Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees missed meal and rest breaks, or were paid inaccurately for missed meal and rest period premiums, or were not paid for all hours worked, Defendants also failed to provide Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees with complete and accurate wage statements which failed to show, among other things, all deductions, the total hours worked and all applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay period, and the corresponding amount of time worked at each hourly rate, correct rates of pay for penalty payments or missed meal and rest periods. Defendants also failed to provide Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees with complete and accurate wage statements that included all required elements listed above. As a result, Defendants issued Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees with wage statements that violate California Labor Code Section 226. Further, Defendants' violations are knowing and intentional; they were not isolated due to an unintentional payroll error due to clerical or inadvertent mistake.

Off-the-Clock Work Resulting in Minimum Wage and Overtime Violations: During the last year, from time-to-time, Defendants failed and continue to fail to accurately pay Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees for all hours worked. During the last year, from time-to-time Defendants required Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees to perform pre-shift or post-shift work. This resulted in Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees having to work while off-the-clock. Defendants directly benefited from the undercompensated off-the-clock work performed by Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees. Defendants controlled the work schedules, duties, and protocols, applications, assignments, and employment conditions of Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees.

Defendants were able to track the amount of time Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees spent working; however, Defendants failed to document, track, or pay Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees all wages earned and owed for all the work they performed. Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees were non-exempt employees, subject to the requirements of the California Labor Code. Defendants' policies and practices deprived Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees of all minimum regular, overtime, and double time wages owed for the off-the-clock work activities. Because Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees typically worked over forty (40) hours in a workweek, and more than eight (8) hours per day, Defendants' policies and practices also deprived them of overtime pay.

Defendants knew or should have known that Plaintiff's and other Aggrieved Employees' off-the-clock work was compensable under the law. As a result, Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees forfeited wages due to them for all hours worked at Defendants' direction, control, and benefit for the time spent working while off-the-clock, including but not limited to, undergoing pre-shift and post-shift work. Defendants' uniform policy and practice to not pay Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees wages for all hours worked in accordance with applicable law is evidenced by Defendants' business records.

Regular Rate Violation – Overtime, Double Time, Meal and Rest Period Premiums, and Redeemed Sick Pay: From time to time during the last year, Defendants failed and continue to fail to accurately calculate and pay Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees for their overtime and double time hours worked, meal and rest period premiums, and redeemed sick pay. As a result,

Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees forfeited wages due to them for working overtime without compensation at the correct overtime and double time rates, meal and rest period premiums, and redeemed sick pay rates. Defendants' uniform policy and practice not to pay Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees at the correct rate for all overtime and double time worked, meal and rest period premiums, and sick pay in accordance with applicable law is evidenced by Defendants' business records.

State law provides that employees must be paid overtime at one-and-one-half times their "regular rate of pay." Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees were compensated at an hourly rate plus incentive pay that was tied to specific elements of an employee's performance. The second component of Plaintiff's and other Aggrieved Employees' compensation was Defendants' non-discretionary incentive program that paid Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees incentive wages based on their performance for Defendants. The non-discretionary bonus program provided all employees paid on an hourly basis with bonus compensation when the employees met the various performance goals set by Defendants. However, from time to time, when calculating the regular rate of pay in those pay periods where Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees worked overtime, double time, paid meal and rest period premium payments, and/or redeemed sick pay, and earned non-discretionary bonuses, Defendants failed to accurately include the non-discretionary bonus compensation as part of the employee's "regular rate of pay" and/or calculated all hours worked rather than just all non-overtime hours worked. Management and supervisors described the incentive/bonus program to potential and new employees as part of the compensation package. As a matter of law, the incentive compensation received by Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees must be included in the "regular rate of pay." The failure to do so has resulted in a systematic underpayment of overtime and double time compensation, meal and rest period premium payments, and redeemed sick pay to Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees by Defendants.

Specifically, California Labor Code Section 246 mandates that paid sick time for non-exempt employees shall be calculated in the same manner as the regular rate of pay for the workweek in which the non-exempt employee uses paid sick time, whether or not the employee actually works overtime in that workweek. Defendants' conduct, as articulated herein, by failing to include the incentive compensation as part of the "regular rate of pay" for purposes of sick pay compensation was in violation of California Labor Code Section 246 the underpayment of which is recoverable under California Labor Code Sections 201, 202, 203, and/or 204.

In violation of the applicable sections of the California Labor Code and the requirements of the Industrial Welfare Commission ("IWC") Wage Order, Defendants as a matter of company policy, practice, and procedure, intentionally and knowingly failed to compensate Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees at the correct rate of pay for all overtime and double time worked, meal and rest period premiums, and redeemed sick pay as required by California law which allowed Defendants to illegally profit and gain an unfair advantage over competitors who complied with the law.

Unlawful Deductions: During the last year, Defendants, from time-to-time, unlawfully deducted wages from Plaintiff and Aggrieved Employees' pay without explanations and without authorization to do so or notice to Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees. As a result, Defendants violated Labor Code Section 221.

Timekeeping Manipulation: During the last year, Defendants, from time-to-time, did not have an immutable timekeeping system to accurately record and pay Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees for the actual time Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees worked each day, including regular time, overtime hours, sick pay, meal and rest breaks. As a result, Defendants were able to and did in fact, unlawfully, and unilaterally alter the time recorded in Defendants' timekeeping system for Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees in order to avoid paying these employees for all hours worked, applicable overtime compensation, applicable sick pay, missed meal breaks and missed rest breaks. As a result, Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees, from time-to-time, forfeited time worked by working without their time being accurately recorded and without compensation at the applicable pay rates.

The mutability of the timekeeping system also allowed Defendants to alter employee time records by recording fictitious thirty (30) minute meal breaks in Defendants' timekeeping system so as to create the appearance that Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees clocked out for thirty (30) minute meal breaks when in fact the employees were not at all times provided an off-duty meal break. This practice is a direct result of Defendants' uniform policy and practice of denying employees uninterrupted thirty (30) minute off-duty meal breaks each day or otherwise compensating them for missed meal breaks. As a result, Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees forfeited wages due to them for all hours worked at Defendants' direction, control and benefit for the time the timekeeping system was inoperable. Defendants' uniform policy and practice to not pay Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees wages for all hours worked in accordance with applicable law is evidenced by Defendants' business records.

Unlawful Rounding Practices: During the last year, Defendants did not have in place an immutable timekeeping system to accurately record and pay Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees for the actual time these employees worked each day, including overtime hours. Specifically, Defendants had in place an unlawful rounding policy and practice that resulted in Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees being undercompensated for all of their time worked. As a result, Defendants were able to and did in fact unlawfully and unilaterally round the time recorded in Defendants' timekeeping system for Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees in order to avoid paying these employees for all their time worked, including the applicable overtime compensation for overtime worked. As a result, Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees, from time to time, forfeited compensation for their time worked by working without their time being accurately recorded and without compensation at the applicable overtime rates.

Further, the mutability of Defendants' timekeeping system and unlawful rounding policy and practice resulted in Plaintiff's and the Aggrieved Employees' time being inaccurately recorded. As a result, from time to time, Defendants' unlawful rounding policy and practice caused Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees to perform work as ordered by Defendants for more than five (5) hours during a shift without receiving an off-duty meal break.

Untimely Payment of Wages: Pursuant to California Labor Code Section 204, Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees were entitled to timely payment of wages during their employment. Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees, from time to time, did not receive payment of all wages, including, but not limited to, overtime wages, minimum wages, meal period premium wages, and rest period premium wages within the permissible time period. Pursuant to California Labor Code Section 201, "If an employer discharges an employee, the wages earned and unpaid at the time of discharge are due and payable immediately." Pursuant to California Labor Code Section 202, if an employee

quits his or her employment, “his or her wages shall become due and payable not later than 72 hours thereafter, unless the employee has given 72 hours previous notice of his or her intention to quit, in which case the employee is entitled to his or her wages at the time of quitting.” Plaintiff and the Aggrieved Employees were, from time to time, not timely provided the wages earned and unpaid at the time of their discharge and/or at the time of quitting, in violation of California Labor Code Sections 201 and 202. To date, Defendants have not fully paid PLAINTIFF the minimum, overtime and double time compensation still owed to them or any penalty wages owed to them under California Labor Code Section 203.

Sick Pay Violations: California Labor Code Section 246 (a)(1) mandates that “An employee who, on or after July 1, 2015, works in California for the same employer for 30 or more days within a year from the commencement of employment is entitled to paid sick days as specified in this section.” Further, California Labor Code Sections 246(b)-(d) provide for the sick day accrual requirements. From time to time, including within the last year, Defendants failed to have a policy or practice in place that provided Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees with sick days and/or paid sick leave. As of January 1, 2024, Defendants failed to adhere to the law in that they failed to provide and allow employees to use at least 40 hours or five days of paid sick leave per year. California Labor Code Section 246(i) requires an employer to furnish its employees with written wage statements setting forth the amount of paid sick leave available. From time to time, including within the last year, Defendants violated California Labor Code Section 246 by failing to furnish Plaintiff and other Aggrieved Employees with wage statements setting forth the amount of paid sick leave available.

To the extent that entities and/or individuals are named and charged with violations of the Labor Code—making them liable on an individual basis as permitted by numerous Labor Code Sections including, but not limited to 558, 558.1, and 1197.1—Plaintiff reserves any and all rights to add, substitute, or change the name of employer entities and/or individuals responsible for the violations at issue.

Any further amendments and changes to this notice shall relate back to the date of this notice. Consequently, Defendants are on notice that Plaintiff continues their investigation, with the full intent to amend and/or change this notice, to add any undiscovered violations of any of the provisions of the California Labor Code—to the extent that are applicable to this case—and to change and/or add the identities of any entities and/or individuals responsible for the violations contained herein.

This notice is provided in compliance with California Labor Code Section 2699.3, *et seq.*

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at the above number and address.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Shani O. Zakay', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Shani O. Zakay
Attorney for Plaintiff