

Edwin Aiwazian (SBN 232943)
Arby Aiwazian (SBN 269827)
Joanna Ghosh (SBN 272479)
LAWYERS for JUSTICE, PC
410 West Arden Avenue, Suite 203
Glendale, California 91203
Telephone: (818) 265-1020
Facsimile: (818) 265-1021

Attorneys for Plaintiffs Ahmir Ringo and Kawana Anderson

Isam C. Khoury (SBN 58759)
Michael D. Singer (SBN 115301)
Rosemary C. Khoury (SBN 331307)
COHELAN KHOURY & SINGER
605 C Street, Suite 200
San Diego, CA 92101
Telephone: (619) 595-3001/Facsimile: (619) 595-3000

Attorneys for Penny A. Scott

[Additional counsel listed on following page]

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

PENNY A. SCOTT, on behalf of herself and
other similarly-situated employees,

Plaintiff,

vs.

BLACKSTONE CONSULTING, INC., a
California Corporation; and DOES 1 Through
10, inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No.: 21CV1470 MMA (KSC)

CLASS ACTION

**DECLARATION OF JOANNA GHOSH IN
SUPPORT OF MOTION FOR
PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF CLASS
ACTION SETTLEMENT**

Date: July 10, 2023
Time: 2:30 p.m.
Judge: Michael M. Anello
Ctrm.: 3D (3rd Floor)

1 Larry W. Lee (State Bar No. 228175)
2 Max W. Gavron (SBN 291697)
3 Kwanporn “Mai” Tulyathan (SBN 316704)
4 **DIVERSITY LAW GROUP, P.C.**
5 515 S. Figueroa Street, Suite 1250
6 Los Angeles, CA 90071
7 Telephone: (213) 488-6555/Facsimile: (213) 488-6554
8
9 William L. Marder (SBN 170131)
10 **POLARIS LAW GROUP**
11 501 San Benito Street, Suite 200
12 Hollister, CA 95023
13 Telephone: (831) 531-4214/Facsimile: (831) 634-0333
14
15 Attorneys for Plaintiffs Tiffany Lockett and Tocashema Williams
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DECLARATION OF JOANNA GHOSH

I, Joanna Ghosh, hereby declare as follows:

1. I am an attorney licensed to practice law in the State of California. I am a member of Lawyers *for* Justice, PC, attorneys of record for Plaintiff Ahmir Ringo (“Plaintiff Ringo”) in the putative class and representative action under the Private Attorneys General Act (“PAGA”) entitled *Ahmir Ringo v. Blackstone Consulting, Inc.*, Los Angeles Superior Court Case No. 22SMCV00066 (“*Ringo* Action”), and Plaintiff Kawana Anderson (“Plaintiff Anderson”) in the putative class action entitled *Kawana Anderson v. Blackstone Consulting, Inc.*, Los Angeles Superior Court Case No. 22STCV31450 (“*Anderson* Class Action”) and the representative PAGA action entitled *Kawana Anderson v. Blackstone Consulting, Inc.*, Los Angeles Superior Court Case No. 22SMCV01667 (“*Anderson* PAGA Action”), which are being resolved by way of the settlement for which approval is sought in the above-captioned action. The facts set forth in this declaration are within my personal knowledge or based on information and belief, and, if called as a witness, I could and would competently testify as follows.

EXPERIENCE AND ADEQUACY OF LAWYERS *for* JUSTICE, PC

EDUCATION

2. Since October 2008, Lawyers *for* Justice, PC has almost exclusively focused on the prosecution of consumer and employment class actions, involving wage-and-hour claims, race discrimination, unfair business practices, or consumer fraud. Currently, Lawyers *for* Justice, PC is attorney of record in well over a dozen employment-related putative class actions in both state and federal courts in the State of California. Lawyers *for* Justice, PC is comprised of attorneys who focus on litigating complex wage-and-hour class and Private Attorneys General Act representative actions. The firm has successfully litigated cases involving the executive, administrative, and other overtime exemptions to the State of California and federal overtime compensation requirements. During a relatively short time, in association with other law firms, Lawyers *for* Justice, PC has recovered millions of dollars on behalf of thousands of individuals in California.

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1 3. Edwin Aiwazian is the Managing Member and Shareholder of Lawyers *for*
2 Justice, PC. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Pepperdine University in April of
3 1999 and earned a Juris Doctor degree from Pepperdine University School of Law in May of
4 2004. He has extensive formal training in dispute resolution and negotiation from the Straus
5 Institute for Dispute Resolution as part of its Masters in Dispute Resolution degree program. In
6 addition, he has previously served as a pro bono mediator for the Los Angeles County Superior
7 Court. In October of 2000, he obtained a Litigation Paralegal Certificate from the UCLA
8 Extension Program. During the summer of 2000, he studied Legal Writing at Harvard
9 University. From approximately September 2002 to approximately December 2002, he served as
10 a Judicial Extern to the Honorable Kim McLane Wardlaw of the United States Court of Appeals
11 for the Ninth Circuit. From approximately June 2002 to approximately August 2002, he served
12 as a Judicial Extern to the Honorable Earl Johnson, Jr. of the California Court of Appeal for the
13 Second Appellate District. In December of 2004, he obtained a license to practice law from the
14 California State Bar. From approximately December 2004 to approximately August 2008, he
15 was employed by Girardi & Keese. At Girardi & Keese, his practice focused on class actions
16 and other complex cases involving toxic torts and products liability. In addition, he gained
17 substantial experience on cases involving insurance bad faith, premises liability, and medical
18 negligence. While employed by Girardi & Keese, he argued approximately one hundred (100)
19 motions, took or defended approximately one hundred fifty (150) depositions, and prepared
20 dozens of expert witnesses for deposition or trial. Since in or around October of 2008, through
21 his work at Lawyers *for* Justice, PC, he has almost exclusively focused on the prosecution of
22 consumer and employment class actions, involving wage-and-hour claims, race discrimination,
23 unfair business practices, or consumer fraud. While employed by Lawyers *for* Justice PC, he has
24 argued over one hundred (100) motions, taken or defended over one hundred fifty (150)
25 depositions, prepared dozens of expert witnesses for deposition or trial, and attended over one
26 hundred seventy-five (175) mediations. Together with other attorneys at the firm, and in many
27 cases in conjunction with co-counsel, he has successfully litigated cases involving the executive,
28 administrative, and other overtime exemptions to the State of California and federal overtime

1 compensation requirements. Under his supervision, Lawyers *for* Justice, PC has successfully
2 obtained class certification by contested motion practice in approximately fifteen (15) cases in
3 the last decade, and litigated over 1,000 class action or representative action cases.

4 4. Arby Aiwazian is a Member and Shareholder of Lawyers *for* Justice, PC. He
5 received his Bachelor of Arts degree from University of California, Los Angeles and graduated
6 magna cum laude. He earned a Juris Doctor degree, cum laude, from Southwestern Law School.
7 From approximately May 2007 to approximately July 2007, he served as a Judicial Extern to the
8 Honorable Earl Johnson, Jr. of the California Court of Appeal for the Second Appellate District.
9 From approximately August 2008 to approximately December 2008 he served as a Judicial
10 Extern to the Honorable Kim McLane Wardlaw of the United State Court of Appeals for the
11 Ninth Circuit. He was admitted to practice law in California in 2010. He is admitted to practice
12 before all courts of the State of California and all United States District Courts in the State of
13 California. He has worked on many wage-and-hour class action and representative action cases,
14 taking the lead in taking and defending depositions, arguing motions, and attending mediations.
15 He has played an integral role in preparing matters for class certification, including and not
16 limited to, successful certification of a class in *Upson v. Sur La Table* (Los Angeles County
17 Superior Court Case No. BC424012), *Montazemi v. Regus Management* (Los Angeles County
18 Superior Court Case No. BC478769), and *Abdulhaqq v. Urban Outfitters* (Alameda County
19 Superior Court Case No. RG13680477). Under his supervision, dozens of class action or
20 representative cases have resulted in settlements that have been granted court approval, including
21 and not limited to, those listed in paragraph 6 herein. He has worked on over one hundred (100)
22 class action or representative action cases which have resulted in settlement.

23 5. I, Joanna Ghosh, am a Senior Member of Lawyers *for* Justice, PC. I received a
24 Bachelor of Arts degree from California State University, Los Angeles in 2006, a Master of
25 Science degree from the London School of Economics in 2007, and a Juris Doctor degree from
26 Georgetown University Law Center in 2010. I am admitted to practice in California (since 2010)
27 and in New York (since 2013) and am also admitted to practice in all U.S. District Courts in
28 California, the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Central District of California, and the U.S.

Supreme Court. I have taken and defended dozens of depositions and successfully handled motion practice in class action cases regarding discovery (including and not limited to, regarding class contact information), class certification (both contested class certification and stipulated class certification), arbitration agreements, coordination, and intervention. I have successfully handled briefing and oral argument on appeal and obtained notable decisions regarding the Private Attorneys General Act and employer efforts to compel arbitration, e.g., *Betancourt v. Prudential Overall Supply*, 9 Cal.App.5th 439 (Cal. Ct. App., Mar. 7, 2017), cert. denied (Cal., May 24, 2017), cert. denied (U.S., Dec. 11, 2017) and *ZB, N.A. v. Superior Court*, 8 Cal.5th 175 (2019). I also have extensive experience with class action and/or representative action cases. Under my, Edwin Aiwasian, and Arby Aiwasian's supervision, the firm has handled the class certification and court approval process for hundreds of class action and/or representative action matters that have successfully resolved. I am a member of the California Employment Lawyers Association.

**EXAMPLES OF RESULTS IN WAGE-AND-HOUR CLASS ACTION AND
REPRESENTATIVE ACTION CASES**

6. What follows are just a few examples of the type of results Lawyers for Justice, PC ("LFJ") has achieved on behalf of its clients:

a) LFJ, in association with co-counsel therein, represented the plaintiffs in a wage-and-hour class action against a major property management company involving allegations of misclassification of various "manager" positions. On September 20, 2010, the court granted final approval of the class action settlement. The Los Angeles County Superior Court Case Number is BC400414.

b) LFJ, in association with co-counsel therein, represented the plaintiffs in a wage-and-hour class action against a national retailer of household items involving allegations of misclassification of the "Assistant Store Manager" position. On October 28, 2010, the court granted final approval of the class action settlement. The Los Angeles County Superior Court Case Number is BC413498.

c) LFJ, in association with co-counsel therein, represented the plaintiffs in a

1 wage-and-hour class action against a national property management company involving
2 allegations of misclassification of the “Property Manager” position. On May 23, 2012, the court
3 granted final approval of the class action settlement. The Los Angeles County Superior Court
4 Case Number is BC430918.

5 d) LFJ, in association with co-counsel therein, represented the plaintiffs in a
6 wage-and-hour class action against a national retailer involving allegations of misclassification
7 of the “Store Manager” position. On June 10, 2011, the court granted plaintiffs’ motion for class
8 certification. On August 26, 2013, the court granted final approval of the class action settlement.
9 The Los Angeles County Superior Court Case Number is BC424012.

10 e) LFJ, in association with co-counsel therein, represented the plaintiff in a
11 wage-and-hour class and PAGA representative action against a bank, involving allegations of
12 misclassification of the “Assistant Branch Manager” position. On August 27, 2013, the court
13 granted final approval of the class and PAGA representative action settlement. The Kern County
14 Superior Court Case Number is S-1500-CV-273194-LHB.

15 f) LFJ, in association with co-counsel therein, represented the plaintiff in a
16 wage-and-hour class and PAGA representative action against a national wholesale distributor of
17 plumbing and builder supplies, involving allegations of misclassification of multiple salaried
18 “manager” positions. On May 22, 2014, the court granted final approval of the class and PAGA
19 representative action settlement. The Sacramento County Superior Court Case Number is 34-
20 2012-00136285.

21 g) LFJ, in association with co-counsel therein, represented the plaintiff in a
22 wage-and-hour class action against a multinational corporation that provides global workplace
23 solutions, involving allegations of misclassification of the “Operations Manager” position. On
24 September 16, 2014, the court granted plaintiff’s motion for class certification. The Los Angeles
25 County Superior Court Case Number is BC478769.

26 h) LFJ, in association with co-counsel therein, represented the plaintiff in a
27 wage-and-hour class and PAGA representative action against a national retailer of household
28 items, on behalf of hourly-paid or non-exempt employees. On May 27, 2015, the court granted

1 final approval of the class and PAGA representative action settlement. The San Francisco
2 County Superior Court Case Number is CGC-13-532344.

3 i) LFJ, in association with co-counsel therein, represented the plaintiff in a
4 wage-and-hour class and PAGA representative action involving allegations of misclassification
5 of the salaried residential “Property Manager” position. On September 17, 2015, the court
6 granted plaintiff’s motion for class certification. On October 20, 2017, the court granted final
7 approval of the class and PAGA representative action settlement. The Los Angeles County
8 Superior Court Case Number is BC474784.

9 j) LFJ, in association with co-counsel therein, represented the plaintiffs in a
10 wage-and-hour class and PAGA representative action against a national retailer of upscale
11 hardware and home furnishings, on behalf of non-exempt employees. On April 28, 2016, the
12 court granted final approval of the class and PAGA representative action settlement. The Los
13 Angeles County Superior Court Case Numbers are BC516795 and JCCP4794, and the Judicial
14 Council Coordination Proceeding Number is 4794.

15 k) LFJ, in association with co-counsel therein, represented the plaintiffs in a
16 wage-and-hour class action against a national retailer of apparel and fashion accessories, on
17 behalf of non-exempt employees. On August 5, 2016, the court granted final approval of the
18 class action settlement. The Los Angeles County Superior Court Case Number is BC488069.

19 l) LFJ, in association with co-counsel therein, represented the plaintiffs in a
20 wage-and-hour class action against a national retailer of apparel, accessories, and home products,
21 involving allegations of misclassification of the “Department Manager” position. On August 12,
22 2016, the court granted the plaintiffs’ motion for class certification in part and certified a class.
23 On August 6, 2019, the court granted final approval of the class action settlement. The Alameda
24 County Superior Court Case Number is RG13680477.

25 m) LFJ represented the plaintiff in a PAGA representative action against a
26 real estate and property management company, on behalf of non-exempt employees. On
27 November 4, 2016, the court granted approval of the PAGA representative action settlement. The
28 Orange County Superior Court Case Number is 30-2015-00775439-CU-OE-CXC.

1 n) LFJ, in association with co-counsel therein, represented the plaintiffs in a
2 wage-and-hour class and PAGA representative action against a full-service bank, on behalf of
3 non-exempt employees. On November 18, 2016, the court granted final approval of the class and
4 PAGA representative action settlement. The San Francisco County Superior Court Case Number
5 is CJC-13-004839 and the Judicial Council Coordination Proceeding Number is 4839.

6 o) LFJ represented the plaintiffs in a wage-and-hour class and PAGA
7 representative action against a foodservice distributor, on behalf of non-exempt employees. On
8 January 26, 2017, the court granted final approval of the class and PAGA representative action
9 settlement. The San Bernardino County Superior Court Case Number is CIVDS1507260.

10 p) LFJ, on behalf of the plaintiff and respondent in a PAGA representative
11 action, successfully opposed in the trial court, and briefed and argued an appeal with respect to
12 the employer's motion to compel arbitration, which resulted in a published opinion by the
13 California Court of Appeal in favor of employees. *Roberto Betancourt v. Prudential Overall*
14 *Supply* (Cal. App. 4th Dist., Mar. 7, 2017) 9 Cal.App.5th 439, review denied, cert. denied (U.S.
15 Supreme Court Docket No. 17-254). The Riverside County Superior Court Case Numbers are
16 RIC1503952 and RICJCCP5046, and the Judicial Council Coordination Proceeding Number is
17 5046.

18 q) LFJ, in association with co-counsel therein, represented the plaintiffs in a
19 wage-and-hour class and PAGA representative action against a consumer packaging company,
20 on behalf of non-exempt employees. On March 10, 2017, the court granted final approval of the
21 class and PAGA representative action settlement. The Los Angeles County Superior Court Case
22 Number is BC590429.

23 r) LFJ, in association with co-counsel therein, represented the plaintiffs in a
24 wage-and-hour class and PAGA representative action against a manufacturer of food service
25 industry supplies on behalf of non-exempt employees. On April 14, 2017, the court granted final
26 approval of the class and PAGA representative action settlement. The Orange County Superior
27 Court Case Number is 30-2015-00810013-CU-OE-CXC.

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1 s) LFJ in association with co-counsel therein, represented the plaintiffs in a
2 wage-and-hour class and PAGA representative action against a lumber and hardware company
3 on behalf of non-exempt employees. On April 26, 2017, the court granted final approval of the
4 class and PAGA representative action settlement. The Orange County Superior Court Case
5 Number is 30-2014-00747750-CU-OE-CXC.

6 t) LFJ represented the plaintiff in a wage-and-hour class and PAGA
7 representative action against a property management company, on behalf of non-exempt
8 employees. On June 14, 2017, the court granted final approval of the class and PAGA
9 representative action settlement. The Los Angeles County Superior Court Case Number is
10 BC586234.

11 u) LFJ represented the plaintiff in a wage-and-hour class and PAGA
12 representative action against a food company on behalf of non-exempt employees. On June 30,
13 2017, the court granted final approval of the class and PAGA representative action settlement.
14 The Sacramento County Superior Court Case Number is 34-2015-00175871.

15 v) LFJ represented the plaintiffs in a wage-and-hour class and PAGA
16 representative action against a chocolate company on behalf of non-exempt employees. On July
17 19, 2017, the court granted final approval of the class and PAGA representative action
18 settlement. The Alameda County Superior Court Case Number is RG15764300.

19 w) LFJ represented the plaintiff in a PAGA representative action, against the
20 parent company of several restaurants, on behalf of hourly-paid, non-exempt employees. On
21 October 18, 2017, the court granted approval of the PAGA representative action settlement. The
22 Los Angeles County Superior Court Case Number is BC569664.

23 x) LFJ represented the plaintiffs in a wage-and-hour class and PAGA
24 representative action against a manufacturer of plastic containers on behalf of non-exempt
25 employees. On October 31, 2017, the court granted final approval of the class and PAGA
26 representative action settlement. The Los Angeles County Superior Court Case Number is
27 BC577233.

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1 y) LFJ, in association with co-counsel therein, represented the plaintiffs in a
2 wage-and-hour class and PAGA representative action against a bank on behalf of non-exempt
3 employees. On December 11, 2017, the court granted final approval of the class and PAGA
4 representative action settlement. The Los Angeles County Superior Court Case Number is
5 BC569646.

6 z) LFJ, in association with co-counsel therein, represented the plaintiffs in a
7 wage-and-hour class and PAGA representative action against a property management company
8 on behalf of hourly-paid and non-exempt employees. On January 4, 2018, the court granted final
9 approval of the class and PAGA representative action settlement. The Los Angeles County
10 Superior Court Case Number is JCCP4819 and the Judicial Council Coordination Proceeding
11 Number is 4819.

12 aa) LFJ, in association with co-counsel therein, represented the plaintiffs in a
13 wage-and-hour class and PAGA representative action against a global provider of flexible office
14 space solutions. On February 15, 2018, the court granted final approval of the class and PAGA
15 representative action settlement. The Los Angeles County Superior Court Case Number is
16 BC498401.

17 bb) LFJ, in association with co-counsel therein, represents the plaintiff in a
18 wage-and-hour class action against a container manufacturer, on behalf of non-exempt
19 employees. On October 15, 2018, the court granted the plaintiff's motion for class certification.
20 The Tulare County Superior Court Case Number is VCU264528.

21 cc) LFJ represented the plaintiffs in a wage-and-hour class and PAGA
22 representative action against a behavioral health service provider on behalf of non-exempt
23 employees. On November 13, 2018, the court granted final approval of the class and PAGA
24 representative action settlement. The Alameda County Superior Court Case Number is
25 RG16811450.

26 dd) LFJ, in association with co-counsel therein, represented the plaintiff in a
27 PAGA representative action against a global provider of products and services to the energy
28 industry, on behalf of hourly-paid and non-exempt employees. On November 19, 2018, the court

1 granted approval of the PAGA representative action settlement. The Kern County Superior
2 Court Case Number is S-1500-CV-280215-SDC.

3 ee) LFJ, in association with co-counsel therein, represents the plaintiff in a
4 wage-and-hour class action against a parking company on behalf of non-exempt employees. On
5 September 3, 2019, the court granted the plaintiff's motion for class certification and certified a
6 class. The Santa Clara County Superior Court Case Number is 16CV292208 and the Judicial
7 Council Coordination Proceeding Number is 4886.

8 ff) LFJ, in association with co-counsel therein, represents the plaintiffs in a
9 wage-and-hour class and PAGA representative action against a bank on behalf of non-exempt
10 employees. On September 27, 2019, the court granted the plaintiffs' motion for class
11 certification in part and certified a class. The Alameda County Superior Court Case Number is
12 RG15757606 and the Judicial Council Coordination Proceeding Number is 4921.

13 gg) LFJ, in association with co-counsel therein, represented the plaintiffs in a
14 wage-and-hour class and PAGA representative action against a national retailer of apparel and
15 fashion accessories, on behalf of non-exempt employees. On October 9, 2019, the court granted
16 the plaintiffs' motion for class certification in part and certified a class. On May 14, 2021, the
17 court granted final approval of the class and PAGA representative action settlement. The
18 Sacramento County Superior Court Case Number is 34-2015-00175330-CU-OE-GDS.

19 hh) LFJ, in association with co-counsel therein, represents the plaintiff in a
20 wage-and-hour class and PAGA representative action against a medical equipment supplier on
21 behalf of non-exempt employees. On February 13, 2020, the court granted the plaintiff's motion
22 for class certification and certified a class. The San Bernardino County Superior Court Case
23 Number is CIVDS1505744.

24 ii) LFJ, in association with co-counsel therein, on behalf of the plaintiff and
25 respondent in a PAGA representative action, successfully opposed in the trial court, and briefed
26 and argued an appeal with respect to the employer's motion to compel arbitration, resulting in a
27 notable decision from the California Supreme Court clarifying the law regarding PAGA claims,
28 *ZB, N.A. v. Superior Court* (2019) 8 Cal.5th 175. On February 21, 2020, the court granted

1 approval of the PAGA representative action settlement. The San Diego County Superior Court
2 Case Number is 34-2015-00175330.

3 jj) LFJ, in association with co-counsel therein, represents the plaintiff in a
4 wage-and-hour class and PAGA representative action against a large national drug testing
5 laboratory on behalf of non-exempt employees. On February 21, 2020, the court granted the
6 plaintiff's motion for class certification and certified a class. On October 28, 2022, the court
7 granted final approval of the class and PAGA representative action settlement. The San Diego
8 County Superior Court Case Number is 37-2018-00019611-CU-OE-CTL.

9 kk) LFJ, in association with co-counsel therein, represents the plaintiffs in a
10 wage-and-hour class and PAGA representative action against a national retailer of sportswear,
11 footwear, and camping equipment on behalf of non-exempt employees. On March 16, 2020, the
12 court granted in part the plaintiff's motion for class certification and certified a class. The
13 Riverside County Superior Court Case Numbers are RIC1507504 and RICJCCP4930, and the
14 Judicial Council Coordination Proceeding Number is 4930.

15 ll) LFJ, in association with co-counsel therein, represented the plaintiffs in a
16 wage-and-hour class action against manufacturer and supplier of power products and services on
17 behalf of non-exempt employees. On July 31, 2020, the court granted in part the plaintiffs'
18 motion for class certification and certified a class. On August 27, 2021, the court granted final
19 approval of the class action settlement. The San Diego County Superior Court Case Number is
20 37-2015-00025968-CU-OE-CTL.

21 mm) LFJ represents the plaintiff in a wage-and-hour class action against a
22 nutritional products manufacturer on behalf of non-exempt production line employees. On
23 December 13, 2021, the court granted the plaintiff's motion for class certification in part and
24 certified a class. The Solano County Superior Court Case Number is FCS051001.

25 SUMMARY OF WORK PERFORMED

26 7. Lawyers for Justice, PC has been actively engaged in this litigation since the
27 inception of the *Ringo* Action which was commenced on January 18, 2022, the *Anderson* Class
28 Action which was commenced on September 26, 2022, and the *Anderson* PAGA Action which

was commenced on September 26, 2022, and throughout their pendency. Lawyers for Justice, PC eventually joined forces with Cohelan Khoury & Singer, counsel for Plaintiff Penny A. Scott (“Plaintiff Scott”), who have been pursuing the above-captioned action, and with Diversity Law Group, P.C. and Polaris Law Group, counsel for Tiffany Lockett and Tocashema Williams (“Plaintiffs Lockett and Williams”), who have been pursuing the action entitled *Tiffany Lockett, et al. v. Blackstone Consulting*, Riverside County Superior Court, Case No. CVRI2201443 (“Lockett Action”). The above-captioned action, the *Ringo* Action, the *Anderson* Class Action, the *Anderson* PAGA Action, and the *Lockett* Action are being resolved by way of the settlement for which approval is being sought in the above-captioned action. We have worked cooperatively with the other plaintiffs’ firms to strategize and prosecute the cases, and our work with them has been a coordinated and combined effort. Together, Plaintiff Scott, Plaintiff Ringo, Plaintiff Anderson, and Plaintiffs Lockett and Williams are referred to as “Plaintiffs.”

8. Before initiating the *Ringo* Action, *Anderson* Class Action, and *Anderson* PAGA Action, Lawyers for Justice, PC conducted extensive investigation and research into the facts and circumstances underlying the pertinent factual and legal issues and applicable law. This required thorough discussions and interviews between attorneys at our firm and Plaintiff Ringo and Plaintiff Anderson, and research into the various legal issues involved in the *Ringo* Action, *Anderson* Class Action, and *Anderson* PAGA Action, namely, the current state of the law as it applied to class certification, off-the-clock theory, meal and rest periods, PAGA representative actions, wage-and-hour enforcement, Plaintiff Ringo and Plaintiff Anderson’s claims and damages, and potential defenses. After conducting initial investigation, our firm determined that Plaintiff Ringo and Plaintiff Anderson’s claims were well-suited for class action and representative treatment owing to what appeared to be a common course of conduct affecting a similarly situated group of current and former non-exempt employees who worked for Defendant Blackstone Consulting, Inc. (“Defendant”) within the State of California, who were not properly compensated for, *inter alia*, all hours worked, non-compliant meal and rest periods, and unreimbursed business expenses.

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1 9. Lawyers for Justice, PC investigated the veracity, strength, and scope of the
2 claims, and worked on preparing the *Ringo* Action, *Anderson* Class Action, and *Anderson* PAGA
3 Action for class certification and trial, prior to reaching the Settlement. The cases involved
4 extensive and ongoing investigations, research into legal and factual issues, and exchange of
5 information, documents, and data in the course of litigation and in connection with mediation
6 and settlement negotiations. Lawyers for Justice, PC reviewed and analyzed a volume of
7 information, documents, and data obtained from Plaintiffs, Defendant, and other sources,
8 researched applicable law, and undertook analyses and calculations of the value of claims,
9 damages, and penalties exposure. Lawyers for Justice, PC also met and conferred with
10 Defendant's counsel on numerous occasions, e.g., to discuss issues relating to the pleadings, case
11 management, court proceedings, venue, motion practice, informal discovery and production of
12 information, documents, and data in the course of litigation and mediation and settlement
13 negotiations. Other work that Lawyers for Justice, PC performed, collectively, included, and
14 was not limited to, case strategy and analysis; drafting, reviewing, and revising the pleadings;
15 case management; preparing motion-related papers; claims assessment and evaluation; and
16 preparing for mediation and settlement negotiations.

17 10. As outlined herein, the parties have conducted significant investigations and
18 exchange, review, and analysis of a volume of information, documents, and data obtained from
19 Plaintiffs, Defendant, and other sources during the course of litigating the cases and in
20 connection with mediation and settlement negotiations. This provided a critical understanding of
21 the nature of the work performed by putative class members, as well as Defendant's operations
22 and employment policies, practices, and procedures, and were used in analyzing liability,
23 damages, and penalties valuation issues in connection with all phases of the litigation, and
24 ultimately, in connection with the mediation and settlement negotiation process. Accordingly,
25 sufficient investigation and review of information has taken place in order for the parties to be
26 sufficiently informed of the nature and extent of the claims, and to enable all parties to fully
27 evaluate the Settlement for its fairness, adequacy, and reasonableness.

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11. After conducting significant investigation of the facts and law during the prosecution of the cases, counsel for the parties engaged in extensive mediation and settlement negotiations to try to resolve the cases. These efforts included participating in a global mediation of the cases, conducted by Lou Marlin, Esq., a well-regarded mediator who is experienced in mediating complex labor and employment matters, on December 1, 2022. During all settlement discussions, the parties conducted their negotiations at arm's length in an adversarial position. In the course of mediation and settlement negotiations, the parties discussed and considered all aspects of the cases, including the risks and delays of further litigation, the risks to the parties of proceeding with class certification and/or trial, the law relating to class certification, off-the-clock theory, meal and rest periods, collective bargaining agreements and related federal pre-emption and California Labor Code exemption/exception issues, PAGA representative claims, vacation pay, reimbursement of business expenses, and wage-and-hour enforcement, as well as the evidence produced and analyzed, and the possibility of appeals, among other things. Arriving at a settlement that was acceptable to the parties was not easy. After conducting investigations, motion practice, exchange of information, documents, and data, and settlement negotiations, and with the aid of the mediator's evaluation, the parties ultimately agreed to resolve the cases given the legal issues relating to Plaintiffs' principal claims, as well as the costs and risks to both sides that would attend further litigation, and the real possibility of no recovery after years of litigation.

12. The Settlement provides for Class Representative Service Payments in an amount not to exceed ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) each to Plaintiffs (for a combined total of \$50,000.00). The contemplated service payments are fair and appropriate in light of the time and effort that Plaintiffs expended to pursue the cases. Plaintiffs were available whenever Class Counsel needed them, actively tried to obtain and provide information, and spent a substantial amount of time and effort providing the facts and evidence necessary to facilitate prosecution of the cases. Accordingly, it is appropriate and just for Plaintiffs to receive reasonable enhancement payments for their services in the cases, in addition to their individual settlement payments under the settlement.

1 13. I submit that the Settlement is fair, reasonable, and adequate, and in the best
2 interests of Plaintiffs, other Class Members and Aggrieved Employees, and the State of
3 California.

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

6 Executed this 9th day of May 2023, at Glendale, California.

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Joanna Ghosh