

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Medina Orthwein LLP Files Race Discrimination Class Action on Behalf of Black City of Long Beach Employees.

The Lawsuit calls for the City to Address Ongoing and Historical Systemic Racism that Hurts the Economic and Emotional Wellbeing of Black Employees and their Families.

LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA JUNE 10, 2021 —Black employees of the City of Long Beach sued the City in a class action lawsuit which provides a shocking account of the City's failure to provide Black employees with equal employment opportunities as required by law.

The plaintiffs and the class have been paid less than non-Black colleagues; denied promotions due to their race; subjected to racist comments, harassment, and treatment; retaliated against; and have been ignored by management and Human Resources. The City's leadership has refused to recognize their role in perpetuating a white supremacist work culture and lack of equal employment opportunities for Black employees.

According to the City's 2018 Workforce Demographics Report, Black employees make up 13% of the City's workforce, and white employees make up 38% of the City's workforce. 65% of the City's Black employees make under \$60,000, compared to 34% of white employees. On the other hand, 54% of the City's employees in the \$180,000+ salary bracket are white employees, compared to 13% Black.

Felicia Medina, a class action attorney who specializes in race discrimination, said, "It is incumbent on the City of Long Beach and all municipalities to do right by its Black employees. Our clients are seeking equity and change. It is our hope that the leadership will see this lawsuit as an opportunity to join its employees as problem solvers to both name and end discriminatory policies and practices."

"The class action vehicle is necessary here to force the City and its leadership to stop hiding behind diversity doublespeak and enact the changes Black City employees want to see. Representation in leadership is important, but it is not the only end-game," said Shauna Madison, Managing Partner at Medina Orthwein LLP.

Jennifer Orthwein, a clinical psychologist and Founding Partner at Medina Orthwein LLP, explains, "Persistent and pervasive anti-Blackness and workplace oppression cause physiological, cognitive, and emotional harm that not only negatively impacts Black people's quality of life but can literally shorten it. This is unacceptable. Racial battle fatigue and trauma are real, and we are glad to see that the CDC and other health organizations have named racism as a public health emergency and concern. The next step is to prioritize Black people's health and opportunities in the workplace."

After the City is served with the complaint, the City can answer the complaint or try to dismiss certain claims. Then discovery will ensue. The Class size is estimated at 1,000.

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About Medina Orthwein LLP:

Medina Orthwein is a queer-owned plaintiff-side employment and civil rights law firm located in Oakland, California. The firm ensures that the voices and rights of those most impacted by inequity are heard and can fight power with power. Using an intersectional approach to practice, Medina Orthwein effectively leverages its extensive trial, litigation, and negotiations expertise to enforce and expand protections for people most impacted by systemic discrimination. The firm specializes in individual and class action employment and civil rights disputes. MO is currently litigating a race discrimination class action against the City of San Francisco (*Robinson-Luqman et al. v. City and County of San Francisco*, No. CGC-20- 588012 (Cal. Super. Ct., San Francisco)) and previously settled a case against AC Transit on behalf of pregnant or lactating bus drivers (*McNaulty et al. v. AC Transit*, No. RG18933966 (Cal. Super. Ct., Alameda, 2018)) and a case against Kaiser on behalf of Black and Latinx employees (*Stewart et al. v. Kaiser et al.*, No. CGC-21-590966 (Cal. Super. Ct., San Francisco)). Founding Partner Felicia Medina has obtained cutting edge pre-suit class action discrimination settlements on three other occasions since 2016, *Chen v. Western Digital*, No. 8:19-cv 00909 (C.D. Cal., 2020), *Pan v. Qualcomm*, No. 3:16-cv-01885 (S.D. Cal., 2016), and *Branner et al. v. Covenant et al.*, No. 20-CIV-03164 (Cal. Super. Ct., San Mateo, 2020). Felicia is a current board member Public Justice, the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR), and the Chicana Latina Foundation (CLF). She has been honored as a Law 360 Minority Power Broker and received the SF Business Times OUTstanding Voices Award.

For more information, visit www.medinaorthwein.com/lb-city-class-action.