CONFORMED COPY ORIGINAL FILED Superior Court of California County of Los Angeles Victor Viramontes (SBN 214158) 1 Martha L. Gómez (SBN 274024) MEXICAN AMERICAN LEGAL DEFENSE 2 AND EDUCATIONAL FUND NOV 05 2015 634 S. Spring Street, 11th Floor 3 Los Angeles, CA 90014 Sherri R. Carter, Executive Officer/Clerk Telephone: (213) 629-2512 By Cristina Grijalva, Deputy 4 Facsimile: (213) 629-0266 Email: vviramontes@maldef.org 5 mgomez@maldef.org 6 Attorneys for Plaintiffs 7 8 SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA 9 FOR THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES 10 IRMA ESPINOZA, an individual; JOSE Case No. BC581121 11 AGUILAR, an individual; ROBERTO CASTRO, SECOND AMENDED COMPLAINT an individual; MARIA DUARTE, an individual; 12 ERIKA GALLO, an individual; ANA GOMEZ, an (1) Unlawful Workplace Language Policy individual; JUAN HERRERA, an individual; 13 ROSA MACIAS, an individual; MARIA [Cal. Gov. Code § 12951] (2) National Origin Discrimination MARTINEZ, an individual; ROBERTO 14 [Cal. Gov. Code §§ 12900 et seq.] MAYORGA, an individual; OLGA MENDOZA, an (3) Harassment [Cal. Gov. Code § 12940(j)] individual person; EZEQUIEL MUNIZ, an 15 (4) Failure to Prevent Discrimination and individual; JORGE PEREZ, an individual; CESAR Harassment [Cal. Gov. Code § 12940(k)] PICHARDO, an individual; ELVIRA SANCHEZ, 16 (5) Unfair and Unlawful Business Practices [Cal. an individual; Bus. & Prof. Code §§ 17200 et seq.] 17 Plaintiffs, DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL 18 VS. 19 GATE GOURMET, INC., and DOES 1 to 10, Judge: Hon. Robert L. Hess inclusive, 20 Dept: 24 Defendants. 21 22 23 24 25 26 27

28

Plaintiffs Irma Espinoza, Jose Aguilar, Roberto Castro, Maria Duarte, Erika Gallo, Ana Gomez, Juan Herrera, Rosa Macias, Maria Martinez, Roberto Mayorga, Olga Mendoza, Ezequiel Muniz, Jorge Perez, Cesar Pichardo, and Elvira Sanchez ("Plaintiffs") complain and allege as follows:

INTRODUCTION

- 1. This action is brought to remedy the unlawful discrimination that Plaintiffs experienced as employees of Gate Gourmet, Inc. ("Gate Gourmet").
- 2. Plaintiffs seek damages from Gate Gourmet for its violations under the Fair Employment and Housing Act ("FEHA"), including (1) an unlawful workplace language policy, (2) national origin discrimination, (3) harassment, (4) failure to prevent discrimination and harassment; and for (5) unfair and unlawful business practices in violation of the California Business and Professions Code §§ 17200 *et seq*.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 3. Jurisdiction and venue are proper in this Court because all of the claims alleged here arose in Los Angeles County, and Gate Gourmet, a corporation, does substantial business in California and has a place of business in Los Angeles, California, in this District.
 - 4. The amount in controversy is within the jurisdiction of this Court.

PARTIES

- 5. Plaintiff Jose Aguilar, a resident of Los Angeles County, is Latino and speaks Spanish as his primary language. Gate Gourmet employed him in May 2014, and he is currently employed by Gate Gourmet.
- 6. Plaintiff Roberto Castro, a resident of Los Angeles County, is Latino and speaks Spanish as his primary language. Gate Gourmet employed him in May 2014, and he is currently employed by Gate Gourmet.
- 7. Plaintiff Maria Duarte, a resident of Los Angeles County, is Latina and speaks Spanish as her primary language. Gate Gourmet employed her in May 2014, and she is currently employed by Gate Gourmet.

- 8. Plaintiff Irma Espinoza, a resident of Los Angeles County, is Latina and speaks Spanish as her primary language. Gate Gourmet employed her in May 2014, and she is currently employed by Gate Gourmet.
- 9. Plaintiff Erika Gallo, a resident of Los Angeles County, is Latina and speaks Spanish as her primary language. Gate Gourmet employed her in May 2014, and she is currently employed by Gate Gourmet.
- 10. Plaintiff Ana Gomez, a resident of Los Angeles County, is Latina and speaks Spanish as her primary language. Gate Gourmet employed her in May 2014, and she is currently employed by Gate Gourmet.
- 11. Plaintiff Juan Herrera, a resident of Los Angeles County, is Latino and speaks Spanish as his primary language. Gate Gourmet employed him in May 2014, and he is currently employed by Gate Gourmet.
- 12. Plaintiff Rosa Macias, a resident of Los Angeles County, is Latina and speaks Spanish as her primary language. Gate Gourmet employed her in May 2014, and she is currently employed by Gate Gourmet.
- 13. Plaintiff Maria Martinez, a resident of Los Angeles County, is Latina and speaks Spanish as her primary language. Gate Gourmet employed her in May 2014, and she is currently employed by Gate Gourmet.
- 14. Plaintiff Roberto Mayorga, a resident of Los Angeles County, is Latino and speaks Spanish as his primary language. Gate Gourmet employed him in May 2014, and he is currently employed by Gate Gourmet.
- 15. Plaintiff Olga Mendoza, a resident of Los Angeles County, is Latina and speaks Spanish as her primary language. Gate Gourmet employed her in May 2014, and she is currently employed by Gate Gourmet.
- 16. Plaintiff Ezequiel Muniz, a resident of Los Angeles County, is Latino. Gate Gourmet employed him in May 2014, and he is currently employed by Gate Gourmet.

- 17. Plaintiff Jorge Perez, a resident of Los Angeles County, is Latino and speaks Spanish as his primary language. Gate Gourmet employed him in May 2014, and he is currently employed by Gate Gourmet.
- 18. Plaintiff Cesar Pichardo, a resident of Los Angeles County, is Latino and speaks Spanish as his primary language. Gate Gourmet employed him in May 2014, and he is currently employed by Gate Gourmet.
- 19. Plaintiff Elvira Sanchez, a resident of Los Angeles County, is Latina and speaks Spanish as her primary language. Gate Gourmet employed her in May 2014, and she is currently employed by Gate Gourmet.
- 20. Gate Gourmet, upon information and belief, is a corporation existing and operating in the State of California, County of Los Angeles.
- 21. The true names and capacities, whether individual, corporate, associate, and the true involvement of Defendants sued here as Does 1 thorough 10, inclusive, are unknown to Plaintiffs who therefore sue these Defendants by fictitious names and will amend this Complaint to show the true names, capacities, and involvement when ascertained. Plaintiffs are informed and believe and allege that each of the Defendants designated as a Doe is responsible in some manner for the events and happenings referred to here, and that Plaintiffs' injuries and damages were in part caused by these Defendants.

EXHAUSTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE REMEDIES

22. On April 9, 2015, Plaintiffs Jose Aguilar, Roberto Castro, Irma Espinoza, Ana Gomez, Rosa Macias, Maria Martinez, Roberto Mayorga, and Elvira Sanchez filed a charge against Defendant with the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing ("DFEH") and on the same day received a right to sue. On April 10, 2015, Plaintiffs Maria Duarte, Erika Gallo, Juan Herrera, and Cesar Pichardo filed a charge against Defendant with the DFEH and on the same day received a right to sue. On April 13, 2015, Plaintiff Ezequiel Muniz filed a charge against Defendant with the DFEH and on the same day received a right to sue. On April 14, 2015, Plaintiff Olga Mendoza filed a charge against Defendant with the DFEH and on the same day received a right to sue. On May 18, 2015,

Plaintiff Jorge Perez filed a charge against Defendant with the DFEH and on the same day received a right to sue.

- 23. In the DFEH charge, each Plaintiff alleges that since May 15, 2014 to the present, Gate Gourmet prohibited him/her from speaking Spanish while in the workplace, subjected him/her to disparate treatment and harassment because of his/her Latino national origin and race, and failed to prevent the discrimination and harassment that they subjected him/her to. All Plaintiffs further alleged that each of them was aware of a class of similarly situated Latino employees who are being subjected to the same treatment.
 - 24. Plaintiffs exhausted the administrative remedies available to them before filing this suit.

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

- 25. At all times relevant to this action, Gate Gourmet has operated a business located in Los Angeles, California, that provides janitorial services to Delta Airlines at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), including cleaning airplane cabins, restocking airplane cabins with supplies, and servicing airplane laboratories, among others.
- 26. At all times relevant to this action, Plaintiffs were employed for Gate Gourmet at LAX. Plaintiffs have different positions, ranging from cabin cleaners, laboratory ("lab") drivers, leads, and dispatch operators, among others. Collectively, Plaintiffs and other employees ensure that airplanes are properly cleaned and restocked between flights. In order to complete their responsibilities promptly and successfully, Plaintiffs and other employees communicate with each other throughout the day, either in person or via radio. Plaintiffs' duties are routine and repetitive in nature.
 - 27. Plaintiffs are all of Latino national origin.
 - 28. All Plaintiffs speak Spanish as their native language.
- 29. Most Plaintiffs do not speak English and/or have limited proficiency in English. The few Plaintiffs that are English proficient must speak Spanish to communicate with employees who have limited English proficiency.
- 30. Prior to May 15, 2014, Plaintiffs worked for various contractors, including G2 Secure Staff Services ("G2 Services") and World Service West ("World Services"), doing the same duties that

they now perform for Gate Gourmet. Under these previous employers, Plaintiffs successfully completed the same job duties in Spanish, some for up to 10 years.

- 31. On information and belief, on May 15, 2014, Gate Gourmet became the new third party contractor for Delta Airlines. At that point, Plaintiffs became new employees of Gate Gourmet, but in practice their jobs remained the same.
- 32. Since about May 15, 2014, Gate Gourmet's swing shift¹ manager, Silvana Jahshan, instituted an "English only" and "No Spanish" policy, prohibiting employees from speaking Spanish and requiring employees to speak English during the swing shift. Gate Gourmet's policy prohibits employees from speaking Spanish at all times. Gate Gourmet's language policy requires Plaintiffs and employees who do not speak English to go without speaking during a workday. Gate Gourmet's policy prohibits bilingual employees from speaking in Spanish to employees who only speak Spanish.
- 33. Gate Gourmet did not notify its employees of the consequence for violating the language restriction.
- 34. In briefings, Ms. Jahshan cautioned all Plaintiffs to not speak Spanish and to only speak English. Via the radio, Ms. Jahshan cautioned all Plaintiffs not to speak Spanish and to only speak English.
- 35. Ms. Jahshan intimidated, harassed, and threatened Plaintiffs for speaking Spanish. Ms. Jahshan monitored and scrutinized the work of Plaintiffs because of their Spanish language usage and Latino national origin. Ms. Jahshan unfairly scrutinized and subjected Plaintiffs to unfair terms and conditions because of their Latino national origin.
- 36. Plaintiffs who only speak Spanish are too afraid to speak whatsoever due to fear of discrimination, harassment, humiliation, and discipline. Bilingual employees are afraid to communicate with their colleagues who only speak Spanish due to fear of discrimination, harassment, humiliation, and discipline.

¹ The swing shift, also referred to as the evening shift, is approximately from 2 p.m. to 11 p.m. Some morning and night shift employees, including but not limited to those who work overtime, overlap with the swing shift.

- 37. Gate Gourmet does not have a legitimate business necessity for instituting an English only policy during the swing shift.
- 38. Gate Gourmet did not impose any language restrictions on its morning or night shift employees. Monolingual and bilingual Spanish speaking employees in the morning and night shift successfully perform the same job duties as Plaintiffs in the swing shift while speaking Spanish. The morning and night shift crews have the same duties as the Plaintiffs in the swing shift.
- 39. Even if Gate Gourmet could establish a legitimate business necessity for instituting an English only policy, less discriminatory alternatives exist. The morning and night shift have a bilingual dispatch that communicates to employees in English or Spanish, depending on that employee's language ability. The swing shift could do the same, particularly as the dispatch workers are already bilingual. Even if the dispatch workers were not bilingual, Gate Gourmet could easily hire a bilingual dispatch worker.
- 40. Plaintiffs complained to Gate Gourmet's human resources and higher management about Ms. Jahshan's discrimination, harassment, and the unlawful treatment that Plaintiffs suffered, but they did not take any action whatsoever to correct the discrimination, harassment, and unlawful treatment.
- 41. Gate Gourmet continues to strictly enforce the English only policy and continues to discriminate against the Plaintiffs on the basis of their Latino national origin.
- 42. As a result of Gate Gourmet's unlawful conduct, Plaintiffs have suffered damages, including economic losses and emotional distress, in an amount to be determined at trial.

FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION Unlawful Workplace Language Policy in Violation of Cal. Gov. Code § 12951

- 43. Plaintiffs reallege and incorporate by reference all previous allegations.
- 44. Plaintiffs are and were, at all material times, of Latino national origin and therefore protected under the Fair Employment and Housing Act ("FEHA").
- 45. Gate Gourmet, at all material times, is and was an employer subject to the FEHA requirements.

- 46. Gate Gourmet implemented and enforced a workplace language policy that prohibits Plaintiffs and other Latino employees from speaking Spanish at the workplace, and that requires them to speak only English at the workplace.
- 47. Gate Gourmet's workplace language restriction is not justified by any business necessity and there are alternative practices to the language restriction that would accomplish any asserted business necessity equally well and with a lesser discriminatory impact.
- 48. Gate Gourmet failed to notify all of its employees of the circumstances and the time when the language restriction was required to be observed and of the consequences for violating the language restriction. Gate Gourmet provided Plaintiffs with defective notice about the circumstances and the time when the language restriction applied and the consequences for violating the restriction.
- 49. As a result of Gate Gourmet's workplace language policy, Plaintiffs have suffered damages, including economic losses and emotional distress, in an amount to be determined at trial.
- 50. Gate Gourmet's actions were willful, malicious, fraudulent, and oppressive, and were committed with the wrongful intent to injure the Plaintiffs and in conscious disregard of Plaintiffs' rights.

SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION National Origin Discrimination in Violation of Cal. Gov. Code § 12900 et seq.

- 51. Plaintiffs reallege and incorporate by reference all previous allegations.
- 52. Plaintiffs are and were, at all material times, of Latino/Hispanic origin and therefore protected under FEHA.
- 53. Gate Gourmet, at all material times, is and was an employer subject to FEHA requirements and had a duty under FEHA to not discriminate against Plaintiffs based on their national origin.
- 54. In violation of their duty, Gate Gourmet intentionally discriminated against Plaintiffs because of their Latino national origin and treated Plaintiffs less favorably than similarly situated non-Latino employees. Gate Gourmet's unlawful employment practices also had a disparate impact on Plaintiffs.

- 55. As a result of Gate Gourmet's discrimination, Plaintiffs have suffered damages, including economic losses and emotional distress, in an amount to be determined at trial.
- 56. Gate Gourmet's actions were willful, malicious, fraudulent, and oppressive, and were committed with the wrongful intent to injure the Plaintiffs and in conscious disregard of Plaintiffs' rights.

THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION Harassment in Violation of Cal. Gov. Code § 12940(j)

- 57. Plaintiffs reallege and incorporate by reference all previous allegations.
- 58. Gate Gourmet routinely subjected Plaintiffs to a pattern of abusive conduct because of their Latino national origin. Gate Gourmet engaged in the heightened scrutiny and threats described in preceding paragraphs with the intent of harassing Plaintiffs on account of their Latino national origin. Gate Gourmet's harassment of Plaintiffs was sufficiently pervasive and severe to alter the conditions of their employment.
- 59. As a result of Gate Gourmet's harassment, Plaintiffs have suffered damages, including economic losses and emotional distress, in an amount to be determined at trial.
- 60. Gate Gourmet's actions were willful, malicious, fraudulent, and oppressive, and were committed with the wrongful intent to injure the Plaintiffs and in conscious disregard of Plaintiffs' rights.

FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION Failure to Prevent Discrimination and Harassment in Violation of Cal. Gov. Code § 12940(k)

- 61. Plaintiffs reallege and incorporate by reference all previous allegations.
- 62. Under FEHA, Government Code § 12940(k), Gate Gourmet owed Plaintiffs the legal duty to take all reasonable actions necessary to prevent and stop unlawful discrimination and harassment.
- 63. Gate Gourmet breached its legal duty to Plaintiffs to take all reasonable action necessary to prevent and stop the discrimination and harassment described in preceding paragraphs. Gate Gourmet and their agents, servants and/or employees, knew or should have known of these harassing actions because Gate Gourmet participated in creating and maintaining a workplace with

pervasive harassment and Plaintiffs complained to Gate Gourmet about its discrimination and harassment.

- 64. Gate Gourmet failed to investigate, correct and/or prevent the incidents of discrimination and harassment based on Plaintiffs' Latino national origin.
- 65. As a result of Gate Gourmet's conduct, Plaintiffs have suffered damages, including economic losses and emotional distress, in an amount to be determined at trial.
- 66. Gate Gourmet's actions were willful, malicious, fraudulent, and oppressive, and were committed with the wrongful intent to injure the Plaintiffs and in conscious disregard of Plaintiffs' rights.

FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION

Unlawful and Unfair Business Practices in Violation of Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code §§ 17200 et seq.

- 67. Plaintiffs reallege and incorporate by reference all previous allegations.
- 68. California Business and Professions Code § 17200 *et seq.* prohibits unfair competition in the form of any unlawful, unfair, deceptive, or fraudulent business practices.
- 69. Gate Gourmet's conduct as alleged here has been and continues to be deleterious to Plaintiffs and to the general public.
- 70. Plaintiffs are "person[s]" within the meaning of Business and Professions Code §17201, and therefore have standing to bring this suit for injunctive relief.
- 71. Beginning on or about May 15, 2014, Gate Gourmet committed unlawful acts as defined by California Business and Professions Code §§17200 *et seq.* Gate Gourmet's unlawful and unfair business practices include, but are not necessarily limited to, FEHA violations.
- 72. The victims of Gate Gourmet's unfair and/or unlawful business practices, include, but are not limited to Plaintiffs, other employees, competing businesses in the State of California, and the general public. By means of its unfair and unlawful practices, Gate Gourmet has gained an unfair competitive advantage over other employers that act in compliance with FEHA.
- 73. Under Business and Professions Code § 17203, injunctive relief is necessary to prevent Gate Gourmet from continuing to engage in unfair and unlawful business practices as alleged here.

 Gate Gourmet has done, is doing, and will continue the above-described illegal and unfair acts unless

restrained or enjoined by this Court. Unless the relief prayed for below is granted, a multiplicity of actions will result. Plaintiffs have no plain, speedy, or adequate remedy at law, in that pecuniary compensation alone would not afford adequate and complete relief. The above-described acts will continue to cause great and irreparable damage to Plaintiffs and the general public unless Defendants are restrained from committing further illegal acts.

- 74. Monetary damages alone will not compel Gate Gourmet to cease from engaging in the unfair and unlawful business practices described in this action. The benefit to the public good, as well as to Plaintiffs, far outweighs any inconvenience to Gate Gourmet of ceasing to engage in these unfair and unlawful business practices.
- 75. Business and Professions Code § 17203 also provides that the Court may restore to an aggrieved party any money or property acquired by means of unlawful or unfair business practices. Therefore, Plaintiffs request attorney's fees and costs pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure § 1021.5 upon proof that Plaintiffs seek to enforce important rights affecting the public interest. All remedies are cumulative under Business and Professions Code § 17205.

JURY DEMAND

76. Plaintiffs demand a trial by jury.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs prays for relief as follows:

- 77. For general damages, according to proof on each cause of action for which such damages are available;
- 78. For restitution, according to proof on each cause of action for which such damages are available;
- 79. For special damages, according to proof on each cause of action for which such damages are available;
- 80. For compensatory damages, according to proof on each cause of action for which such damages are available;
- 81. For punitive damages, according to proof on each cause of action for which such damages are available;

1	82.	For injunctive relief as necessary to:
2		(a) Enjoin Gate Gourmet from engaging in discrimination against Plaintiffs and
3		similarly situated employees, including harassment based on national origin, and
4		unlawful language restriction against Plaintiffs;
5		(b) Order Gate Gourmet to institute and carry out policies, practices and programs
6		which provide equal employment opportunities for Plaintiffs which eradicate the
7		effects of its past and present unlawful employment practices;
8	•	(c) Create an effective process for the investigation and resolution of harassment
9		and discrimination complaints;
10		(d) Create a monitoring and reporting system to ensure that injunctive relief is fully
11		implemented;
12	83.	A declaratory judgment that the practices complained of in this complaint are unlawful
13	and violate F	EHA;
14	84.	For prejudgment and post-judgment interest according to law;
15	85.	For reasonable attorneys' fees incurred in this action on those causes of action for which
16	such fees are	recoverable under the law;
17	86.	For costs of suit incurred in this action; and
18	87.	For such other and further relief as the Court deems proper and just.
19		
20	Dated: Nove	ember 5, 2015 MEXICAN AMERICAN LEGAL DEFENSE AND EDUCATION FUND, INC.
21		Marina & Home
22		Martha L. Gómez
23		Attorney for Plaintiffs
24		
25		
26		
27		
1	I	

1	PROOF OF SERVICE		
2	STATE OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES		
3	I am employed in the County of Los Angeles, State of California. I am over the age of 1		
4	and not a party to the within action. My business address is 634 South Spring Street, 11th Floor,		
5	Los Angeles, CA 90014.		
7	On November 5, 2015, I served:		
8	SECOND AMENDED COMPLAINT		
9			
10	on the parties identified below by placing a true and correct copy thereof enclosed in a sealed		
11	envelope(s) for collection at my place of business, following ordinary business practices		
12	addressed as follows:		
13	MARK D. KEMPLE GREENBERG TRAURIG		
14	1840 Century Park East Suite 1900		
	Los Angeles, CA. 90067		
15	Tel: (310) 586-7700 Fax: (310) 586-7800		
16			
17	Attorneys for Defendant, Gate Gourmet, Inc.		
18	[X] BY MAIL - I deposited such envelope in the mail at Los Angeles, California, with first		
19	class postage thereon fully prepaid. I am readily familiar with the business practice for		
20	collection and processing of correspondence for mailing. Under that practice, it is deposited with the United States Postal Service on that same day, at Los Angeles,		
21	California, in the ordinary course of business. I am aware that on motion of the party served, service is presumed invalid if postage cancellation date or postage meter date is		
22	more than one (1) day after the date of deposit for mailing in affidavit.		
23	I certify or declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that		
24	the foregoing is true and correct.		
25	Work of 1000		
26	November 5, 2015 Dated MARCO A. GOMEZ		
27			
28			