UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF RHODE ISLAND

MICHAEL FRANCOEUR,	:	
JOSEPH FRANCOEUR, AND	:	
SHAYNE GUILLEMETTE on behalf of	:	
themselves and all other employees	:	
similarly situated,	:	
Plaintiffs	:	
	:	
v.	:	C.A. No.: 17-
HIGG'S PAINTING, INC. and	:	
JEFFREY S. HIGGINBOTTOM,	:	
Defendants	:	

COMPLAINT

I. <u>Introduction</u>

1. This is an action brought by the Plaintiffs, on behalf of herself and other similarly situated employees, against Defendants, seeking compensatory, punitive, and liquidated damages, as well as attorneys' fees, litigation expenses and other equitable relief, arising out of the unlawful failure to pay overtime compensation, prevailing wages, and prevailing wage overtime compensation owed to the Plaintiffs in violation of the Fair Labor Standards Act ("FLSA"), 29 U.S.C. § 201, *et seq.*, the Rhode Island Minimum Wage Act ("RIMWA"), R.I.G.L. §28-12-1, *et seq.* and §28-14-1, *et seq.*, and Labor and Payment of Debts by Contractors chapter of the Rhode Island General Laws under § 37-13-1 *et seq.*, and Commonwealth of Massachusetts General Laws c. 151, § 1A, and c. 149, § 27.

II. <u>Parties</u>

2. Plaintiff Michael Francoeur, at all times relevant to this action, was a resident of the City of Fall River, Commonwealth of, and was an employee of Defendants, within the meaning of 29 U.S.C. §203(e)(1) of the FLSA.

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3. Plaintiff Joseph Francoeur, at all times relevant to this action, was a resident of the City of Fall River, Commonwealth of, and was an employee of Defendants, within the meaning of 29 U.S.C. §203(e)(1) of the FLSA.

4. Plaintiff Shayne Guillemette, at all times relevant to this action, was a resident of the City of Fall River, Commonwealth of, and was an employee of Defendants, within the meaning of 29 U.S.C. §203(e)(1) of the FLSA.

5. Defendant Higg's Painting, Inc. is a corporation duly organized and incorporated pursuant to the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. At all relevant times, this defendant hired Plaintiffs to work at numerous construction painting projects in Rhode Island and Massachusetts and was the Plaintiffs, as well as all other similarly situated employees, employer within the meaning of 29 U.S.C. §203(d).

6. Defendant Jeffrey S. Higginbottom, at all times relevant to this action, was the President, Treasurer, and Secretary of, and had operational control over Defendant Higgs Painting, Inc., and was therefore also the Plaintiffs; as well as all other similarly situated employees, employer within the meaning of 29 U.S.C. §203(d). *See Donovan v. Agnew*, 712 F.2d 1509 (1st. Cir. 1983) ("The overwhelming weight of authority is that a corporate officer with operational control … is an employer along with the corporation, jointly and severally liable under the FLSA for unpaid wages."); *see also Dole v. Elliott Travel & Tours, Inc.*, 942 F.2d 962, 965 (6th Cir. 1991), *and cases cited therein*.

III. Jurisdiction

7. This Court has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§1331, 1332, 1367, 2201, and 2202 and 29 U.S.C. §216(b) ,29 U.S.C. § 1132(a), and R.I.G.L. § 9-5-33.

IV. <u>Venue</u>

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8. Venue is proper in this Court insofar as the parties are doing business in the State of Rhode Island and therefore are within the requirements set forth in 28 U.S.C. §1391.

V. Material Facts

9. Plaintiff Michael Francoeur, worked for Defendants from 2011 to September of 2017.

10. Plaintiff Joseph Francoeur worked for Defendants from 2011 to November of 2015.

11. Plaintiff Shayne Guillemette worked for Defendants from 2013 to May of 2017.

12. In the performing their functions as employees of the Defendants, Plaintiffs, and other similarly situated employees, were engaged in commerce within the meaning of Sections 3(b), 3(i), 3(j), and 6(a) and 7(a) of the FLSA.

13. Both the FLSA and the RIMWA require an employer to pay its employees at a rate not less than one and one-half times their regular rate of pay for all hours worked in excess of forty (40) in any one workweek. 29 U.S.C. § 207(a)(1); R.I.G.L. §28-12-4.1.

14. Throughout the course of their employment by the Defendants, the Plaintiffs and other similarly situated employees worked on numerous construction projects as painters in Rhode Island and Massachusetts and were paid between \$18-\$20 per hour for all hours worked, including all hours worked in excess of forty (40) in any given week.

15. Throughout the course of their employment by the Defendants, the Plaintiffs worked on numerous construction public works projects in Rhode Island and Massachusetts as painters and were still only paid between \$18-\$20 per hour for all hours worked, including all hours worked in excess of forty (40) in any given week thereby not paying Plaintiffs the hourly and overtime rates required by R.I.G.L. § 37-13-1 *et seq.* and Ma. G.L. c. 149, § 27.

16. During the duration of their employment with the Defendants, Defendants required Plaintiffs, and other similarly situated employees, to work in excess of forty (40) hours but failed

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to pay them at rates not less than one and one-half $(1 \frac{1}{2})$ times the regular rates at which they were employed, contrary to 29 U.S.C. § 207(a)(1), R.I.G.L. §28-12-4.1, § 37-13-1, Ma. G.L. c. 151, § 1A, and Ma. G.L. c. 149, § 27.

17. Defendants paid Plaintiffs the same regular hourly rate for all hours worked over forty (40) in any given work week in a separate line item in the same paycheck.

18. Utilizing a separate line item for all hours worked over forty (40) demonstrates Defendant's willful failure to pay overtime compensation.

19. Despite Defendants' knowledge of its obligation to pay the Plaintiffs and other similarly situated employees their base hourly wage and overtime premiums as required by the FLSA, RIMWA, § 37-13-1 *et seq.*, Ma. G.L. c. 151, § 1A, and Ma. G.L. c. 149, § 27.

20. Defendants knowingly and willfully refused to comply with their obligation to pay Plaintiffs, and other similarly situated employees, certain prevailing wage rates or any overtime premiums for hours worked over forty (40) in any one workweek.

21. As a proximate result of Defendants' unlawful acts and/or omissions, including, but not limited to, those described herein, Plaintiffs and other similarly situated employees have suffered loss of wages and benefits due, expenses for legal services, and other great harm.

22. As a proximate result of Defendants' discriminatory acts and/or omissions, including but not limited to those described herein, Plaintiffs, and other similarly situated employees, have suffered and will continue to suffer loss of income.

VI. <u>Claims for Relief</u>

23. The Plaintiff incorporates the allegations contained in $\P\P1$ through 22 above in the counts set forth below.

<u>Count One</u> Violation of FLSA, 29 U.S.C. §207

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24. Defendants, by their individual and concerted acts and/or omissions, including, but not limited to, those described herein, violated the FLSA by failing or refusing to pay Plaintiffs, and other similarly situated employees, overtime compensation for all work in excess of forty (40) hours performed in any one workweek, thereby causing Plaintiffs, and other similarly situated employees, to suffer damages as aforesaid, for which they are entitled to relief pursuant to 29 U.S.C. §216(b).

<u>Count Two</u> Violation of RIMWA, R.I.G.L. §28-12-1 and § 28-14-1, *et seq.*

25. Defendants, by their individual and concerted acts and/or omissions, including, but not limited to, those described herein, violated the RIMWA by failing or refusing to pay Plaintiffs, and other similarly situated employees, overtime compensation for all work in excess of forty (40) hours performed in any one workweek, thereby causing Plaintiffs, and other similarly situated employees, to suffer damages as aforesaid, for which they are entitled to relief pursuant to R.I.G.L. §28-12-19 and § 28-14-19.2.

<u>Count Three</u> <u>Violation of 37-13-1, et seq.</u>

26. Defendants, by their individual and concerted acts and/or omissions, including, but not limited to, those described herein, violated R.I.G.L. § 37-13-1 et seq. by failing or refusing to pay Plaintiffs, and other similarly situated employees, the hourly prevailing wage and benefit amount on public works projects thereby causing Plaintiffs, and other similarly situated employees, to suffer damages as aforesaid, for which they are entitled to relief pursuant to R.I.G.L. §37-13-17.

<u>Count Four</u> Violation of 37-13-1, *et seq*.

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27. Defendants, by their individual and concerted acts and/or omissions, including, but not limited to, those described herein, violated R.I.G.L. § 37-13-1 *et seq.* by failing or refusing to pay Plaintiffs, and other similarly situated employees, overtime compensation for all work in excess of forty (40) hours performed in any one workweek, thereby causing Plaintiffs, and other similarly situated employees as aforesaid, for which they are entitled to relief pursuant to R.I.G.L. §37-13-17.

<u>Count Five</u> <u>Violation of Ma. G.L. c. 151, § 1A</u>

28. Defendants, by their individual and concerted acts and/or omissions, including, but not limited to, those described herein, violated the Commonwealth of Massachusetts general laws by failing or refusing to pay Plaintiffs, and other similarly situated employees, overtime compensation for all work in excess of forty (40) hours performed in any one workweek, thereby causing Plaintiffs, and other similarly situated employees, to suffer damages as aforesaid, for which they are entitled to relief pursuant to Ma. G.L. c. 151, § 1A.

<u>Count Six</u> <u>Violation of Ma. G.L. c. 149, § 27</u>

29. Defendants, by their individual and concerted acts and/or omissions, including, but not limited to, those described herein, violated the Commonwealth of Massachusetts general laws by failing or refusing to pay Plaintiffs, and other similarly situated employees, the hourly prevailing wage and benefit amount on public works projects thereby causing Plaintiffs, and other similarly situated employees, to suffer damages as aforesaid, for which they are entitled to relief pursuant to Ma. G.L. c. 149, § 27.

<u>Count Seven</u> <u>Violation of Ma. G.L. c. 149, § 27</u>

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30. Defendants, by their individual and concerted acts and/or omissions, including, but not limited to, those described herein, violated the Commonwealth of Massachusetts general laws by failing or refusing to pay Plaintiffs, and other similarly situated employees, overtime compensation for all work in excess of forty (40) hours performed in any one workweek, thereby causing Plaintiffs, and other similarly situated employees, to suffer damages as aforesaid, for which they are entitled to relief pursuant to Ma. G.L. c. 149, § 27.

VII. <u>Prayers for Relief</u>

WHEREFORE, the Plaintiff prays that this Honorable Court grant the following relief:

 A declaratory judgment declaring that the Defendants willfully violated the wage and overtime payment requirements under the FLSA, the RIMWA, R.I.G.L. § 37-13-1 *et seq.*, Ma. G.L. c. 151, § 1A, and Ma. G.L. c. 149, § 27 in the manner complained of herein.

2. In the alternative, a declaratory judgment declaring that the Defendants violated the wage and overtime payment requirements under the FLSA, the RIMWA, R.I.G.L. § 37-13-1 *et seq.*, Ma. G.L. c. 151, § 1A, and Ma. G.L. c. 149, § 27 in the manner complained of herein.

3. An award of back pay for violating the FLSA, the RIMWA, R.I.G.L. § 37-13-1 *et seq.*, Ma. G.L. c. 151, § 1A, and Ma. G.L. c. 149, § 27.

4. An award of liquidated damages pursuant to 29 U.S.C. §216(b), the RIMWA, R.I.G.L. § 37-13-1 *et seq.*, Ma. G.L. c. 151, § 1A, and Ma. G.L. c. 149, § 27

5. An award of reasonable attorneys' fees and costs of litigation pursuant to 29 U.S.C. §216(b) and R.I.G.L. §28-14-19.2, § 37-13-17, Ma. G.L. c. 151, § 1A, and Ma. G.L. c. 149, § 27.

6. An award of other appropriate equitable relief pursuant to 29 U.S.C. §216(b) and R.I.G.L. §28-14-19.2, § 37-13-17, Ma. G.L. c. 151, § 1A, and Ma. G.L. c. 149, § 27.

7. An award of such other and further relief as this Honorable Court deems just and proper.

VIII. Demand for Jury Trial

The Plaintiff and other similarly situated employees hereby demand a trial by jury on all counts so triable.

IX. Designation of Trial Counsel

The Plaintiff and other similarly situated employees hereby designate Gregory A. Mancini Esquire as trial counsel.

> PLAINTIFFS, MICHAEL FRANCOEUR JOSEPH FRANCOEUR, and SHAYNE GUILLEMETTE By their attorneys, SINAPI LAW ASSOCIATES, LTD.

Date: October 27M 2017

/s/Gregory A. Mancini Gregory A. Mancini (RI BAR 5740) 2374 Post Road, Suite 201 Warwick, RI 02886 Phone: (401) 739-9692; FAX: (401) 739-9040 Email: gmancinilaw@gmail.com

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CIVIL COVER SHEET

JS 44 (Rev. 06/17)

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. *(SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)*

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	"		DEFENDANTS	<u> </u>	
MICHAEL FRANCOEUF GUILLEMETTE,	R, JOSEPH FRANCOE	EUR, and SHAYNE			G, INC. and JEFFREY S	3. HIGGINBOTTOM
(b) County of Residence	of First Listed Plaintiff			County of Residence	e of First Listed Defendant	
	XCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF C.	ASES)		county of residents	(IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES	ONLY)
				NOTE: IN LAND C THE TRAC	ONDEMNATION CASES, USE T OF LAND INVOLVED.	•
(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, SINAPI LAW ASSOCIAT	Address, and Telephone Numbe	er)		Attorneys (If Known)	I	
2374 POST ROAD, SUI 401-739-9690	TE 201, WARWICK, R	02886				
II. BASIS OF JURISD	ICTION (Place an "X" in C	One Box Only)		FIZENSHIP OF P For Diversity Cases Only)	RINCIPAL PARTIES	(Place an "X" in One Box for Plainti, and One Box for Defendant)
I U.S. Government Plaintiff	3 Federal Question (U.S. Government)	Not a Party)		P	TF DEF J I D 1 Incorporated or I	PTF DEF
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150 Recovery of Overpayment & Enforcement of Judgment	320 Assault, Libel & Slander	Pharmaceutical Personal Injury			PROPERTY RIGHTS	10 410 Antitrust
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152 Recovery of Defaulted	Liability	368 Asbestos Personal			O 835 Patent - Abbreviated	☐ 460 Deportation
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160 Stockholders' Suits	355 Motor Vehicle	371 Truth in Lending		Act	862 Black Lung (923)	850 Securities/Commodities/
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I 195 Contract Product Elability I 196 Franchise	360 Other Personal Injury	Property Damage 385 Property Damage	740	Relations Railway Labor Act	□ 864 SSID Title XVI □ 865 RSI (405(g))	 890 Other Statutory Actions 891 Agricultural Acts
	362 Personal Injury - Medical Malpractice	Product Liability		Family and Medical Leave Act	D 000 ((0 (g))	 891 Agricultural Acts 893 Environmental Matters 895 Freedom of Information
REAL PROPERTY	CIVIL RIGHTS	PRISONER PETITION	NS 0 790	Other Labor Litigation	FEDERAL TAX SUITS	Act
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AO 440 (Rev. 06/12) Summons in a Civil Action

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

District of Rhode Island

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Civil Action No. 17-498

MICHAEL FRANCOEUR, JOSEPH FRANCOEUR, and SHAYNE GUILLEMETTE, on behalf of themselves and all other employees similarly situated, *Plaintiff(s)*

vintiff(s) V.

HIGG'S PAINTING, INC. and JEFFREY S. HIGGINBOTTOM,

Defendant(s)

SUMMONS IN A CIVIL ACTION

To: (Defendant's name and address) HIGG'S PAINTING, INC. c/o JEFFREY S. HIGGINBOTTOM, REGISTERED AGENT 21 MOUNT HOPE AVENUE SWANSEA, MA 02777

A lawsuit has been filed against you.

Within 21 days after service of this summons on you (not counting the day you received it) — or 60 days if you are the United States or a United States agency, or an officer or employee of the United States described in Fed. R. Civ. P. 12 (a)(2) or (3) — you must serve on the plaintiff an answer to the attached complaint or a motion under Rule 12 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. The answer or motion must be served on the plaintiff or plaintiff's attorney, whose name and address are: GREGORY A. MANCINI, ESQ.

SINAPI LAW ASSOCIATES, LTD. 2374 POST ROAD, SUITE 201 WARWICK, RI 02886

If you fail to respond, judgment by default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint. You also must file your answer or motion with the court.

CLERK OF COURT

Date:

Signature of Clerk or Deputy Clerk

AO 440 (Rev. 06/12) Summons in a Civil Action (Page 2)

Civil Action No. 17-498

PROOF OF SERVICE

(This section should not be filed with the court unless required by Fed. R. Civ. P. 4 (l))

	This summons for (nat	me of individual and title, if any)				
was ree	ceived by me on (date)	·				
	□ I personally served	l the summons on the individual	at (place)			
			on (date)	; or		
	□ I left the summons					
			on of suitable age and discretion who res	d discretion who resides there,		
	on (date)	on (date), and mailed a copy to the individual's last known address; or				
	\Box I served the summ	, who is				
	designated by law to	accept service of process on bel	nalf of (name of organization)			
			on (date)	; or		
	□ I returned the summons unexecuted because			; or		
	Other (<i>specify</i>):					
	My fees are \$	for travel and \$	for services, for a total of \$	0.00 .		
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Date:						
			Server's signature			
			Printed name and title			

Additional information regarding attempted service, etc:

Server's address

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AO 440 (Rev. 06/12) Summons in a Civil Action

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

District of Rhode Island

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Civil Action No. 17-498

MICHAEL FRANCOEUR, JOSEPH FRANCOEUR, and SHAYNE GUILLEMETTE, on behalf of themselves and all other employees similarly situated,

Plaintiff(s) V.

HIGG'S PAINTING, INC. and JEFFREY S. HIGGINBOTTOM,

Defendant(s)

SUMMONS IN A CIVIL ACTION

To: (Defendant's name and address) JEFFREY S. HIGGINBOTTOM 21 MOUNT HOPE AVENUE SWANSEA, MA 02777

A lawsuit has been filed against you.

Within 21 days after service of this summons on you (not counting the day you received it) — or 60 days if you are the United States or a United States agency, or an officer or employee of the United States described in Fed. R. Civ. P. 12 (a)(2) or (3) — you must serve on the plaintiff an answer to the attached complaint or a motion under Rule 12 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. The answer or motion must be served on the plaintiff or plaintiff's attorney, whose name and address are: GREGORY A. MANCINI, ESQ.

SINAPI LAW ASSOCIATES, LTD. 2374 POST ROAD, SUITE 201 WARWICK, RI 02886

If you fail to respond, judgment by default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint. You also must file your answer or motion with the court.

CLERK OF COURT

Date:

Signature of Clerk or Deputy Clerk

AO 440 (Rev. 06/12) Summons in a Civil Action (Page 2)

Civil Action No. 17-498

PROOF OF SERVICE

(This section should not be filed with the court unless required by Fed. R. Civ. P. 4 (l))

	This summons for (no	ume of individual and title, if any)				
was ree	ceived by me on (date)					
	□ I personally serve	d the summons on the individ	dual at (place)			
		on (<i>date</i>)				
	\Box I left the summon	summons at the individual's residence or usual place of abode with (name)				
	, a person of suitable age and discretion who resides the					
	on (date)	, and mailed a cop	y to the individual's last known address; or			
	□ I served the summons on (<i>name of individual</i>)					
	designated by law to accept service of process on behalf of (name of organization)					
		on (date)				
	\Box I returned the sum			; or		
	Other (<i>specify</i>):					
	My fees are \$	for travel and \$	for services, for a total of \$	0.00		
	I declare under penalty of perjury that this information is true.					
Date:						
			Server's signature			
			Printed name and title			

Additional information regarding attempted service, etc:

Server's address

ClassAction.org

This complaint is part of ClassAction.org's searchable class action lawsuit database and can be found in this post: <u>Higg's Painting</u>, <u>Owner Rolled with Unpaid Overtime</u>, <u>Prevailing Wages Complaint</u>