1 John P. Kristensen (SBN 224132) David L. Weisberg (SBN 211675) 2 KRISTENSEN WEISBERG, LLP 3 12304 Santa Monica Boulevard, Suite 100 Los Angeles, California 90025 4 Telephone: 310-507-7924 5 Fax: 310-507-7906 john@kristensenlaw.com 6 david@kristensenlaw.com 7 Jarrett L. Ellzey (*Pro Hac Vice* pending) 8 **HUGHES ELLZEY, LLP** 9 2700 Post Oak Boulevard, Suite 1120 Houston, Texas 77056 10 Telephone: (713) 554-2377 11 Fax: (888) 995-3335 jarrett@hughesellzey.com 12 13 Attorneys for Plaintiff and all others similarly situated 14 THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT 15 EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA 16 **ROBERT T. MATSUI FEDERAL COURTHOUSE** 17 PAUL LEE, an individual, on behalf Case No.: 18 of himself and all others similarly situated **CLASS ACTION** 19 20 Plaintiff, PLAINTIFF'S COMPLAINT FOR **DAMAGES AND INJUNCTIVE** 21 RELIEF vs. 22 CALIFORNIA SERVICE (1) Violations of the Telephone 23 BUREAU, INC., a California Consumer Protection Act, 47 24 corporation; and DOE U.S.C. § 227, et seq.; and INDIVIDUALS, inclusive, and each (2) Willful Violations of the 25 **Telephone Consumer Protection** of them, 26 Act, 47 U.S.C. § 227, et seq. Defendants. 27 **DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL** 28 CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT FOR DAMAGES AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF

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for Plaintiffs

Attorneys

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Plaintiff Paul Lee ("Plaintiff" or "Lee"), on behalf of himself and all others similar situated, alleges the follow upon information and belief based upon personal knowledge:

NATURE OF THE CASE

1. Plaintiff, on behalf of himself and others similarly situated, seeking damages and any other available legal or equitable remedies resulting from the illegal actions of defendant CALIFORNIA SERVICE BUREAU, INC. and INDIVIDUAL DOES (collectively "Defendants") in contacting Plaintiff, as well as knowingly, and/or willfully contacting Plaintiff on Plaintiff's cellular telephone in violation of the Telephone Consumer Protection Act, 47 U.S.C. § 227, *set* seq. ("TCPA").

2. Defendant is a company that regularly engages in aggressive and reckless debt collection practices which outright ignore controlling federal law, and the rights of the called party.

3. Defendant repeatedly made unsolicited calls to Plaintiff's cellular telephone in violation of the TCPA. Defendant made the calls using an automated telephone dialing system ("ATDS") or pre-recorded voice for the purpose of bullying Plaintiff into paying an allegedly deficient balance.

4. Defendant called Plaintiff, requesting the name of another
individual. Even after Plaintiff told Defendant (1) it had the wrong number and
(2) to stop calling his cell phone, Defendant continued calling his cellular phone.

5. By making the telephone calls at issue in this Complaint, Defendant caused Plaintiff actual harm, including the aggravation, nuisance, and invasion of privacy that necessarily accompanies the receipt of unsolicited and harassing telephone calls, as well as the monies paid to his carrier(s) for the receipt of such telephone calls.

27 6. Congress enacted the TCPA to protect consumers from unsolicited
28 telephone calls exactly like those alleged in this case. In response to Defendant's

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unlawful conduct, Plaintiff files the instant lawsuit and seeks an injunction
requiring Defendant to cease all illegal telephone calling activities to his cellular
telephone, and other individuals cellular phones and an award of statutory
damages under the TCPA equal to \$500.00 per violation, together with court
costs, reasonable attorneys' fees (including under Cal. *Code Civ. Proc.* §
1021.5), and treble damages (for knowing and/or willful violations). Plaintiff
also seeks an award of court costs and reasonable attorney's fees.

JURISDICTION & VENUE

7. Jurisdiction is proper under 28 U.S.C. § 1332(d)(2) because the Plaintiff, a resident of California, seeks relief on behalf of a Class, which will result in at least one class member belonging to a different state than that of the Defendant, which is based in California.

8. Plaintiff also seeks up to \$1,500.00 in damages for each call in violation of the TCPA, which, when aggregated among a proposed class in the thousands, exceeds the \$5,000,000.00 threshold for federal court jurisdiction. Therefore, both diversity jurisdiction and the damages threshold under the Class Action Fairness Act of 2005 ("CAFA") are present, and this Court has jurisdiction.

9. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. § 1331, as this action arises under the TCPA, which is a federal statute.

10. The Court has personal jurisdiction over Defendant because it
conduct significant business in this District, and the unlawful conduct alleged in
this Complaint occurred in, was directed to, and/or emanated from this District.

24 11. Venue is proper in this District pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b)
25 because the wrongful conduct giving rise to this case occurred in, was directed
26 to, and/or emanated from this District.

27 12. Defendant is subject to specific personal jurisdiction in this District
28 because it has continuous and systematic contacts with this District through their

CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT FOR DAMAGES AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF -3-

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KRISTENSEN WEISBERG up marketing efforts and services that target this District, and the exercise of
personal jurisdiction over Defendant in this District does not offend traditional
notions of fair play or substantial justice.

PARTIES

13. Plaintiff PAUL LEE ("Plaintiff") is a citizen of the State of California who resides in Auburn, Placer County, California.

14. Defendant CALIFORNIA SERVICE BUREAU, INC.
("Defendant" or "California Service Bureau") is a California corporation organized under the laws of the State of California. Defendant maintains its principle place of business at 100 Wood Hollow Drive, Suite 200, Novato, California 94945, but regularly conducts business in this District. Defendant can be served with process by serving its registered agent, Brandon Amyot at100 Wood Hollow Drive, Suite 200, Novato, California 94945.

15. The true names and capacities of the Defendants sued herein as DOE INDIVIDUALS, inclusive, are currently unknown to Plaintiff, who therefore sues such Defendants by fictitious names. Each of the Defendants designated herein as a DOE is legally responsible for the unlawful acts alleged herein. Plaintiff will seek leave of Court to amend the Complaint to reflect the true names and capacities of the DOE Defendants when such identities become known.

21 16. Plaintiff does not yet know the identity of Defendants' 22 employees/agents, identified as DOE INDIVIDUALS that had direct, personal 23 participation in or personally authorized the conduct found to have violated the 24 statute, and were not merely tangentially involved. They are named tentatively as 25 numerous District Courts have found that individual officers/principals of 26 corporate entities may be personally liable (jointly and severally) under the 27 TCPA if they had direct, personal participation in or personally authorized the 28 conduct found to have violated the statute, and were not merely tangentially **CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT FOR DAMAGES AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF**

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involved. Texas v. American Blastfax, Inc., 164 F.Supp.2d 892, 899 (W.D. Tex.

2001) ("American Blastfax"); Sandusky Wellness Center, LLC v. Wagner

Wellness, Inc., 2014 WL 1333472, at * 3 (N.D. Ohio March 28, 2014); Maryland

v. Universal Elections, 787 F.Supp.2d 408, 415-16 (D.Md. 2011) ("Universal

Elections"); *Baltimore-Washington Tel Co. v. Hot Leads Co.*, 584 F.Supp.2d

736, 745 (D.Md. 2008); Covington & Burling v. Int'l Mktg. & Research, Inc.,

2003 WL 21384825, at *6 (D.C.Super Apr. 17, 2003); *Chapman v. Wagener*

Equities, Inc. 2014 WL 540250, at *16-17 (N.D.Ill. Feb. 11, 2014); Versteeg v.

Bennett, Deloney & Noyes, P.C., 775 F.Supp.2d 1316, 1321 (D.Wy.2011)

("Versteeg"). Upon learning of the identities of said individuals, Plaintiff will move to amend to name the individuals as defendants.

17. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that at all relevant times, each and every Defendant was acting as an agent and/or employee of each of the other Defendants and was the owner, agent, servant, joint venturer and employee, each of the other and each was acting within the course and scope of its ownership, agency, service, joint venture and employment with the full knowledge and consent of each of the other Defendants. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that each of the acts and/or omissions complained of herein was made known to, and ratified by, each of the other Defendants.

At all times mentioned herein, each and every Defendant was the 18. 22 successor of the other and each assumes the responsibility for each other's acts and omissions.

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TELEPHONE CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT

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25 19. Congress enacted the TCPA in 1991 to address certain practices 26 thought to be an invasion of consumer privacy and a risk to public safety. The 27 TCPA and the Federal Communications Commission's (hereinafter "FCC") 28 implemented rules prohibit: (1) making telemarketing calls using an artificial or **CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT FOR DAMAGES AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF**

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KRISTENSEN WEISBERG up prerecorded voice to residential telephones without prior express consent; and (2) making any non-emergency call using an automatic telephone dialing system (hereinafter "ATDS") or an artificial or prerecorded voice to a wireless telephone number without prior express consent. If the call includes or introduces an advertisement, or constitutes telemarketing, consent must be in writing.¹ The TCPA grants consumers a private right of action, with a provision for \$500 or the actual monetary loss in damages for each violation, whichever is greater, and treble damages for each willful or knowing violation, as well as injunctive relief.

20. Since the TCPA's passage in 1991, the FCC has taken multiple actions implementing and interpreting the TCPA, and has issued numerous Declaratory Rulings clarifying specific aspects of the TCPA. The most recent, FCC Omnibus Order of July 10, 2015, (the "Order") provided further protection to consumers by, among other things, clarifying that ATDS is broadly defined, confirming liability attaches to calls made to the wrong number or reassigned number, and clarifying consumers may revoke consent through reasonable methods. *In the Matter of Rules and Regulations Implementing the Tel. Consumer Prot. Act of 1991*, FCC 15–72, 30 F.C.C.R. 7961, (July 10, 2015), available at https://www.fcc.gov/document/tcpa-omnibus-declaratory-ruling-and-order. The Order defines an "autodialer" as equipment/software that has the future capacity to dial randomly or sequentially. "In other words, the capacity of an autodialer is not limited to its current configuration but also includes its potential functionalities." The Order clarifies the meaning of "capacity" and that

<sup>Prior express written consent means "an agreement, in writing, bearing the signature of the person called that clearly authorizes the seller to deliver or cause to be delivered to the person called advertisements or telemarketing messages using an automatic telephone dialing system or an artificial or prerecorded voice, and the telephone number to which the signatory authorizes such advertisements or telemarketing messages to be delivered.
47 C.F.R. § 64.1200(f)(8).</sup>

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KRISTENSEN WEISBERG up "any call" made using a device with the capacity to serve as an ATDS requires consent under the TCPA, even if the caller is not "actually...using those functionalities to place calls" at the time. *Derby v. AOL, Inc.*, No. 5:15-CV-00452-RMW, 2015 WL 5316403, at *3 (N.D. Cal. Sept. 11, 2015).

21. The Order also states that calls placed to the wrong number or a reassigned number are made with knowledge of the error after the first call; and consumers may revoke consent through any reasonable method, including orally: "[w]e clarify, however, that callers who make calls without knowledge of reassignment and with a reasonable basis to believe that they have valid consent to make the call should be able to initiate one call after reassignment as an additional opportunity to gain actual or constructive knowledge of the reassignment and cease future calls to the new subscriber. If this one additional call does not yield actual knowledge of reassignment, we deem the caller to have constructive knowledge of such;" "[c]onsumers generally may revoke, for example, by way of a consumer-initiated call, directly in response to a call initiated or made by a caller, or at an in-store bill payment location, among other possibilities."

18 22. Finally, in 2008, the FCC held that "a creditor on whose behalf an
autodialed or prerecorded message call is made to a wireless number bears the
responsibility for any violation of the Commission's rules." In re Rules and
Regulations Implementing the Telephone Consumer Protection Act, Declaratory
Ruling on Motion by ACA International for Reconsideration, 23 FCC Rcd. 559,
565, ¶ 10 (Jan. 4, 2008); *Birchmeier v. Caribbean Cruise Line, Inc.*, 2012 WL
7062748 (Dec. 31, 2012).

25 23. Accordingly, the entity can be liable under the TCPA for a call
26 made on its behalf, even if the entity did not directly place the call. Under those
27 circumstances, the entity is deemed to have initiated the call through the person
28 or entity.

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FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

24. Beginning in or around March 3, Defendant contacted Plaintiff on his cellular telephone number ending in 3156 *via* ATDS, as defined by 47 U.S.C. § 227(a)(1), at least eighteen time over a four-month period without first obtaining Plaintiff's consent.

25. Plaintiff's caller ID read "888-224-5557" as the calls were incoming. These numbers are assigned to the Defendants and their agents.

26. Plaintiff would answer some of the calls even though she had memorized the numbers assigned to Defendants as a result of the constant abusive calling techniques employed by Defendants. When Plaintiff answered the phone, he experienced dead air before he could hear the call being routed a live representative.

27. To the extent Plaintiff ever consented to the calls, she revoked such consent but the calls continued.

28. Despite Plaintiff's reasonable requests, Defendant called him at least eighteen (18) times.

29. Plaintiff was extremely frustrated by the calls and wantedDefendants to stop calling. The calls invaded his privacy and used up capacity onhis cellular plan.

20 30. On information and belief, Defendants' automated system had21 called Plaintiff on every occasion.

31. Based on the circumstances of the calls – including but not limited
to the multiple calls, Defendants called despite Plaintiff's requests to Defendants
to stop calling (indicating a computer automatically dialed the number again) –
Plaintiff believes Defendants called her cellular telephone using an ATDS that
automatically selected his number from a computer database.

27 32. On information and belief, Defendants' ATDS called Plaintiff on
28 every occasion.

CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT FOR DAMAGES AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF -8-

33. On information and belief, and based on the circumstances of the all 1 the calls, Defendants called Plaintiff using an ATDS.

34. Plaintiff understood the purpose of Defendants' calls was to collect a debt from Plaintiff.

The telephone number Defendants called was assigned to a cellular 35. telephone.

36. Plaintiff is the regular carrier and exclusive user of the cellular telephone assigned the number ending in 3156.

37. Defendant's calls constituted calls that were not for emergency purposes as defined by 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(1(A)(i).

38. Plaintiff did not provide Defendants with prior express written consent to receive calls to her cellular telephone utilizing an ATDS or artificial or pre-recorded voice, pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 227 (b)(1)(A) and 47 C.F.R. § 64.1200(a)(3).

39. All calls Defendants made to Plaintiff violate 47 U.S.C. § 227, and 15 U.S.C. § 1692.

40. Plaintiff seeks an injunction requiring Defendants to cease all illegal, abusive, and harassing telephone calls using an ATDS and an award of statutory damages, together with costs and reasonable attorneys' fees. Plaintiffs, 20 once they learn the identity of DOE INDIVIDUALS will seek an appropriate injunction that will at a minimum require DOE INDIVIDUALS to cease all 22 illegal, abusive, and harassing telephone calls using an ATDS and confirm with 23 this Court they are doing so with any future employer or entity with whom they 24 are engaged

CLASS ALLEGATIONS

26 41. Plaintiff brings this action pursuant to Rule 23 of the Federal Rules 27 of Civil Procedure and/or other applicable law, on behalf of himself and all 28 others similarly situated, as a member of the proposed class (hereafter "the

CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT FOR DAMAGES AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF -9-

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Class") defined as follows:

All persons within the United States who received any telephone calls from Defendant(s) to said person's cellular telephone made through the use of any automatic telephone dialing system or an artificial or prerecorded voice and such person had not previously provided express consent to receiving such calls within the four years prior to the filing of this Complaint.

42. Plaintiff represents, and is a member of the Class, consisting of all persons within the United States who received any telephone call from Defendant(s) to said person's cellular telephone made through the use of any automatic telephone dialing system or an artificial or prerecorded voice and such person had not previously not provided their cellular telephone number to Defendant within the four years prior to the filing of this Complaint.

43. Excluded from the Class are governmental entities, Defendants, any entity in which Defendants have a controlling interest, and Defendants' officers, directors, affiliates, legal representatives, employees, co-conspirators, successors, subsidiaries, and assigns. Also excluded from the Class are any judges, justices or judicial officers presiding over this matter and the members of their immediate families and judicial staff.

20 44. This action is properly maintainable as a class action. This action 21 satisfies the numerosity, typicality, adequacy, predominance and superiority for a class action.

45. **Numerosity**: The proposed Class is so numerous that individual joinder of all members is impracticable. Due to the nature of the trade and commerce involved, Plaintiff does not know the number of members in the 26 Class, but believes the Class members number in the thousands, if not more. 27 Plaintiff alleges that the Class may be ascertained by the records maintained by 28 Defendants.

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46. Plaintiff and members of the Class were harmed by the acts of Defendant(s) in at least the following ways: Defendant(s) illegally contacted Plaintiff and Class members via their cellular telephones thereby causing Plaintiff and Class members, without their "prior express consent," to incur certain charges or reduced telephone time for which Plaintiff and Class members had previously paid by having to retrieve or administer message(s) left by Defendant during those illegal calls, and invading the privacy of said Plaintiff and Class members.

47. **Common Questions of Law and Fact Predominate**: There are only a few legal and factual issues to determine if there is liability under the TCPA and for each of those questions of law and fact, common issues to the Class predominate over any questions that may affect individual Class members, in that the claims of all Class members for each of the claims herein can be established with common proof. Common questions of fact and law include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (a) Whether, within the four years prior to the filing of this
 Complaint, Defendant(s) made any calls (other than a call made for emergency purposes or made with the prior express consent of the called party) to a Class member using any automated dialing system or an artificial or prerecorded voice to any telephone number assigned to a cellular telephone service;
- (b) Whether Plaintiff and the Class members were damaged
 thereby, and the extent of the statutory damages for each such
 violation; and

(c) Whether the Defendant(s) should be enjoined from engaging in such conduct in the future.

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48. **Typicality**: Plaintiff's claims are typical of the claims of members of the Class, as Plaintiff was subject to the same common course of conduct by Defendant(s) as all Class members. The injuries to each member of the Class were caused directly by Defendant(s)' wrongful conduct as alleged herein.

49. **Adequacy of Representation**: Plaintiff will fairly and adequately represent and protect the interests of the Class. Plaintiff has retained counsel with substantial experience in handling complex class action litigation. Plaintiff and his counsel are committed to prosecuting this action vigorously on behalf of the Class and have financial resources to do so.

50. **Superiority of Class Action**: A class action is superior to other available methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of the present controversy. Class members have little interest in individually controlling the prosecution of separate actions because the individual damage claims of each Class member are not substantial enough to warrant individual filings. In sum, for many, if not most, Class members, a class action is the only feasible mechanism that will allow them an opportunity for legal redress and justice. Plaintiff is unaware of any litigation concerning the present controversy already commenced by members of the Class. The conduct of this action as a class action in this forum, with respect to some or all of the issues presented herein, presents fewer management difficulties, conserves the resources of the parties and of the court system, and protects the rights of each Class member.

22 51. Moreover, individualized litigation would also present the potential 23 for varying, inconsistent, or incompatible standards of conduct for Defendants, 24 and would magnify the delay and expense to all parties and to the court system 25 resulting from multiple trials of the same factual issues. The adjudication of 26 individual Class members' claims would also, as a practical matter, be 27 dispositive of the interests of other members not parties to the adjudication, and 28 could substantially impair or impede the ability of other Class members to **CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT FOR DAMAGES AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF**

1 protect their interests.

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KRISTENSEN WEISBERG LIP 52. Plaintiff and the members of the Class have suffered and will continue to suffer harm as a result of Defendant(s)' unlawful and wrongful conduct. Defendant(s) have acted, or refused to act, in respects generally applicable to the Class, thereby making appropriate final and injunctive relief with regard to the members of the Class as a whole.

FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION

VIOLATION OF THE TELEPHONE CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT,

47 U.S.C. § 227, ET SEQ.

(By Plaintiff Against All Defendants)

53. Plaintiff hereby incorporates by reference and re-alleges each and every allegation set forth in each and every preceding paragraph of this Complaint, as though fully set forth herein.

54. The foregoing acts and omissions of Defendants constitute numerous and multiple violations of the TCPA, including but not limited to each and every one of the above cited provisions of 47 U.S.C. § 227, *et seq.* and 47 C.F.R. §64.1200, *et seq.*

55. As a result of Defendants' violations of 47 U.S.C. § 227, *et seq.*, and 47 C.F.R. §64.1200, *et seq.*, Plaintiff is entitled to an award of \$500.00 in statutory damages, for each and every violation, pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(3)(B).

56. Plaintiff is also entitled to and seeks injunctive relief prohibiting such conduct in the future.

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SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION

KNOWING AND/OR WILLFUL VIOLATION OF THE TELEPHONE CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT, 47 U.S.C. § 227, *ET SEQ*. (By Plaintiff Against All Defendants)

57. Plaintiff hereby incorporates by reference and re-allege each and every allegation set forth in each and every preceding paragraph of this Complaint, as though fully set forth herein.

58. The foregoing acts and omissions of Defendants constitute numerous and multiple knowing and/or willful violations of the TCPA, including but not limited to each and every one of the above cited provisions of 47 U.S.C.
§ 227, *et seq.* and 47 C.F.R. §64.1200, *et seq.*

59. As a result of Defendants' violations of 47 U.S.C. § 227, *et seq.*, and 47 C.F.R. §64.1200, *et seq.* Plaintiff is entitled to an award of \$1,500.00 in statutory damages, for each and every violation, pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(3)(B) and 47 U.S.C. § 227(b)(3)(C).

60. Plaintiff is also entitled to and seeks injunctive relief prohibiting such conduct in the future.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff, individually and on behalf of the Class, prays for relief and judgment as follows:

1. An order certifying this action as a class action and appointing

22 Plaintiff and his counsel to represent the Class;

- 2. For the first cause of action:
 - Plaintiff and Class members are entitled to and request \$500.00 in statutory damages, for each and every violation, pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 227, *et seq.*;
 - Preliminary and permanent injunctive relief enjoining

Defendant(s), their agents, servants and employees, and all

CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT FOR DAMAGES AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF -14persons acting in concert with them, from engaging in, and continuing to engage in, the unlawful calls made with automated dialing systems to cellular phones without prior express consent;

- Attorneys' fees, costs and any and all other relief that the Court deems just and proper.
- 3. For the second cause of action:

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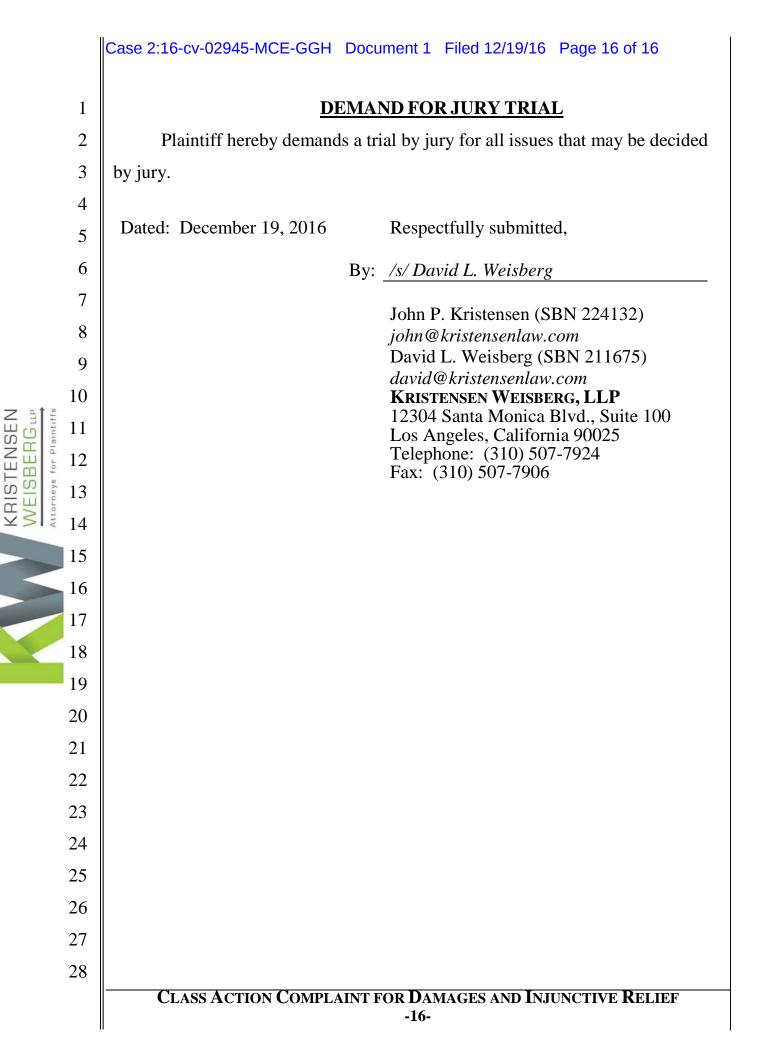
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KRISTENSEN SBERG LLP for Plaintiffs

- Plaintiff and Class members are entitled to and request \$1,500.00 in statutory damages, for each and every violation, pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 227, et seq.;
- Preliminary and permanent injunctive relief enjoining Defendant(s), their agents, servants and employees, and all persons acting in concert with them, from engaging in, and continuing to engage in, the unlawful calls made with automated dialing systems to cellular phones without prior express consent;
- Attorneys' fees, costs and any and all other relief that the Court deems just and proper.

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18	Dated: December 19, 2016	Respectfully submitted,
19]	By: <u>/s/ David L. Weisberg</u>
20		John P. Kristensen (SBN 224132)
21		john@kristensenlaw.com
22		David L. Weisberg (SBN 211675) david@kristensenlaw.com
23		KRISTENSEN WEISBERG, LLP
24		12304 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 100 Los Angeles, California 90025
25		Telephone: (310) 507-7924 Fax: (310) 507-7906
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	CLASS ACTION COMPLAI	NT FOR DAMAGES AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF -15-



ClassAction.org

This complaint is part of ClassAction.org's searchable class action lawsuit database and can be found in this post: <u>Robocalls Spark Class Action Against California Service Bureau</u>