

# IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF ARKANSAS WESTERN DIVISION

DEC 17 2018

JAMES W. McCORMACK, CLERK
By:

**PLAINTIFF** 

DANIEL FRYER, Individually and on Behalf of All Others Similarly Situated

vs.

No. 4:18-cv-927 - DPM

PRIME COMMUNICATIONS, LP

**DEFENDANTS** 

### ORIGINAL COMPLAINT - CLASS AND COLLECTIVE ACTION

comes now Plaintiff Daniel Fryer ("Plaintiff"), individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated, by and through his attorneys Sean Short and Josh Sanford of the Sanford Law Firm, PLLC, and for his Original Complaint – Class and Collective Action against Defendant Prime Communications, LP ("Defendant"), he does hereby state and allege as follows:

This case assigned to District Judge Marshall and to Magistrate Judge Kearney

#### I. PRELIMINARY STATEMENTS

- 1. This is a class and a collective action brought by Daniel Fryer, individually and on behalf of all hourly-paid Store Managers employed by Defendant at any time within a three-year period preceding the filing of this Complaint.
- 2. Plaintiff bring this action under the Fair Labor Standards Act, 29 U.S.C. § 201, et seq. ("FLSA") and the Arkansas Minimum Wage Act, Ark. Code Ann. § 11-4-201, et seq. ("AMWA"), for declaratory judgment, monetary damages, liquidated damages, prejudgment interest, and costs, including reasonable attorneys' fees, as a result of Defendant's failure to pay Plaintiff and other hourly-paid Store Managers lawful overtime compensation for hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours per week.

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3. Upon information and belief, for at least three (3) years prior to the filing of this Complaint, Defendant has willfully and intentionally committed violations of the FLSA and the AMWA as described, *infra*.

#### II. JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 4. The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Arkansas has subject matter jurisdiction over this suit under the provisions of 28 U.S.C. § 1331 because this suit raises federal questions under the FLSA.
- 5. This complaint also alleges AMWA violations, which arise out of the same set of operative facts as the federal cause of action herein alleged; accordingly, this state cause of action would be expected to be tried with the federal claim in a single judicial proceeding. Therefore, this Court has supplemental jurisdiction over Plaintiff's AMWA claims pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1367(a).
- 6. Defendant conducts business within the State of Arkansas, operating as a retailer of wireless communication products, services and accessories.
  - 7. Plaintiff was employed by Defendant in Little Rock.
- 8. The acts alleged in this Complaint had their principal effect within the Western Division of the Eastern District of Arkansas, and venue is proper in this Court pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391.

#### III. THE PARTIES

9. Plaintiff repeats and re-alleges all the preceding paragraphs of this Complaint as if fully set forth in this section.

Plaintiff Daniel Fryer is a resident and domiciliary of the State of Arkansas,

who worked for Defendant from May 27, 2014, until November 30, 2018, as a Store

Manager.

11. At all times material herein, Plaintiff has been entitled to the rights,

protections and benefits provided under the FLSA and the AMWA.

12. Defendant Prime Communications, LP is a foreign limited partnership,

registered to do business in the State of Arkansas, with a principal address of 300 S

Spring Street, Suite 900, Little Rock, Arkansas 72201.

13. Defendant has employees that handle, sell, or otherwise work on goods or

materials that have been moved in or produced for commerce, such as computer

equipment and mobile phones.

14. At all relevant times, Defendant continuously employed at least four (4)

employees.

15. At all relevant times. Defendant's gross volume of sales made or business

done has exceeded \$500,000.00 per year.

16. Defendant's registered agent for service of process is Capitol Corporate

Services, Inc., 300 South Spring Street, Suite 900, Little Rock, Arkansas 72201.

IV. FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

17. Plaintiff repeats and re-alleges all previous paragraphs of this Complaint

as if fully set forth in this section.

18. Plaintiff worked for Defendant as a Store Manager in Monroe, Louisiana,

from May 27, 2014, until approximately December of 2017; in December of 2017,

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Plaintiff relocated to Defendant's Little Rock store where he continued working as a

Store Manager until his employment ended on November 30, 2018.

19. Plaintiff and other Store Managers regularly worked in excess of forty (40)

hours per week throughout their tenure with Defendant.

20. Plaintiff and other Store Managers were classified as hourly employees

and paid an hourly rate.

21. Plaintiff and other Store Managers were also paid non-discretionary

money awards and bonuses up to once per month when certain objective and

measurable criteria were met.

22. In addition, Defendant paid Plaintiff and other Store Managers one-and-

one-half (1.5) times their base hourly rate, exclusive of the non-discretionary bonus, for

each hour they worked over forty (40) in a workweek.

23. However, Defendant did not include the bonuses and money awards paid

to Plaintiff and other Store Managers in their regular rates when calculating their

overtime pay.

24. Section 778.208 of Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations requires

that non-discretionary bonuses, such as shift and hour-based premiums, "must be

totaled in with other earnings to determine the regular rate on which overtime pay must

be based."

25. Defendant violated the FLSA and AMWA by not including the non-

discretionary bonuses of Plaintiff and other Store Managers in their regular rate when

calculating their overtime pay.

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26. Although Defendant routinely scheduled Plaintiff and other Store

Managers to work in excess of forty (40) hours per week, it was Defendant's commonly

applied practice to not pay Plaintiff and other Store Managers one and one-half (1.5)

times their regular rate for all hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours per workweek.

27. Plaintiff and other Store Managers regularly worked 50 to 55 hours or

more per week but were told they could not be clocked in for more than 47.5 hours per

week.

28. Defendant's pay practices were the same for all hourly Store Managers at

both the Monroe and Little Rock locations.

29. The pay practices that violate the FLSA and AMWA alleged herein were

the same at all of Defendant's U.S. facilities because the policy was a centralized

human resources policy implemented uniformly from the corporate headquarters in

Texas.

30. At all relevant times herein, Defendant has deprived Plaintiff and all others

similarly situated of a proper overtime premium for all of the hours they worked in

excess of forty (40) hours in a week.

31. Defendant knew, or showed reckless disregard for whether, the way it

paid Plaintiff and other Store Managers violated the FLSA and AMWA.

V. REPRESENTATIVE ACTION ALLEGATIONS

A. FLSA § 216(b) Collective

32. Plaintiff repeats and re-alleges all the preceding paragraphs of this

Complaint as if fully set forth in this section.

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33. Plaintiff bring this claim for relief for violation of the FLSA as a collective

action pursuant to Section 16(b) of the FLSA, 29 U.S.C. § 216(b).

34. Plaintiff brings this FLSA claim on behalf of all Store Managers employed

by Defendant at any time within the applicable statute of limitations period, who were

denied a proper overtime premium of one and one-half (1.5) times their regular rate for

all hours worked in excess of forty (40) per week and who are entitled to payment of the

following types of damages:

A. Payment for all hours worked, including payment of a lawful overtime

premium for all hours worked for Defendant in excess of forty (40) hours in a workweek;

B. Liquidated damages; and

C. Attorneys' fees and costs.

35. In conformity with the requirements of FLSA Section 16(b), Plaintiff has

attached hereto as Exhibit "A" his written Consent to Join this lawsuit.

36. The relevant time period dates back three (3) years from the date on

which Plaintiff's Original Complaint—Class and Collective Action was filed and

continues forward through the date of judgment pursuant to 29 U.S.C. § 255(a).

37. The members of the proposed FLSA Collective are similarly situated in

that they share these traits:

A. They were paid hourly rates;

B. They recorded their time in the same manner; and

C. They were subject to Defendant's common practice of not paying a lawful

overtime premium for all hours worked over forty (40) hours per work week.

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38. The employment relationships between Defendant and every proposed

FLSA Collective member are the same and differ only by name, location, and rate of

pay. The key issues do not vary substantially among the proposed FLSA Collective

members.

39. Plaintiff is unable to state the exact number of the potential members of

the FLSA Collective but believe that the group exceeds 1,000 persons.

40. Defendant can readily identify the members of the Section 16(b)

Collective. The names, physical addresses, electronic mailing addresses and phone

numbers of the FLSA collective action members are available from Defendant, and a

Court-approved Notice should be provided to the FLSA collective action members via

first class mail, email and text message to their last known physical and electronic

mailing addresses and cell phone numbers as soon as possible, together with other

documents and information descriptive of Plaintiff's FLSA claim.

B. AMWA Rule 23 Class

41. Plaintiff brings this action on behalf of himself and all other similarly

situated employees, former and present, who were and/or are affected by Defendant's

willful and intentional violation of the AMWA pursuant to Rule 23 of the Federal Rules of

Civil Procedure.

42. Plaintiff proposes to represent the class of Store Managers who are/were

employed by Defendant within the relevant time period within the State of Arkansas.

43. Common questions of law and fact relate to all members of the proposed

class, such as whether Defendant paid the members of the proposed class for all hours

worked, including overtime in accordance with the AMWA.

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44. Common questions of law and fact predominate over any questions

affecting only the individual named Plaintiff, and a class action is superior to other

available methods for fairly and efficiently adjudicating the claims of the members of the

proposed AMWA class.

45. The class members have no interest in individually controlling the

prosecution of separate actions because the policy of the AMWA provides a bright-line

rule for protecting all non-exempt employees. To wit: "It is declared to be the public

policy of the State of Arkansas to establish minimum wages for workers in order to

safeguard their health, efficiency, and general well-being and to protect them as well as

their employers from the effects of serious and unfair competition resulting from wage

levels detrimental to their health, efficiency, and well-being." Ark. Code Ann. § 11-4-202.

46. Plaintiff is unable to state the exact number of the potential members of

the AMWA class but believes that the class exceeds 25 persons. Therefore, the class is

so numerous that joinder of all members is impracticable.

47. At the time of the filing of this Complaint, neither Plaintiff nor Plaintiff's

counsel know of any litigation already begun by any members of the proposed class

concerning the allegations in this Complaint.

48. Concentrating the litigation in this forum is highly desirable because

Defendants do business in the Eastern District of Arkansas and because Plaintiff and all

proposed class members work or worked in Arkansas.

49. No difficulties are likely to be encountered in the management of the class.

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50. The claims of Plaintiff are typical of the claims of the proposed class in

that Plaintiff was paid an hourly wage by Defendant and experienced the same

violations of the AMWA that all other class members suffered.

51. Plaintiff and her counsel will fairly and adequately protect the interests of

the class.

52. Plaintiff's counsel is competent to litigate Rule 23 class actions and other

complex litigation matters, including wage and hour cases like this one, and to the

extent, if any, that they find that they are not, they are able and willing to associate

additional counsel.

53. Prosecution of separate actions by individual members of the class would

create the risk of inconsistent or varying adjudications with respect to individual

members of the class, establishing incompatible standards of conduct for Defendant.

VI. FIRST CLAIM FOR RELIEF (Individual Claim for Violation of the FLSA)

54. Plaintiff repeats and re-allege all previous paragraphs of this Complaint as

if fully set forth in this section.

55. Plaintiff asserts this claim for damages and declaratory relief pursuant to

the FLSA.

56. At all relevant times, Defendant has been, and continues to be, an

enterprise engaged in commerce within the meaning of the FLSA, 29 U.S.C. § 203.

57. At all relevant times, Defendant was Plaintiff's "employer" within the

meaning of the FLSA, 29. U.S.C. § 203.

58. 29 U.S.C. § 207 requires any enterprise engaged in commerce to pay all

employees one and one-half (1.5) times their regular wage for all hours worked over

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forty (40) hours in a week, unless an employee meets certain exemption requirements

of 29 U.S.C. § 213 and all accompanying Department of Labor regulations.

59. Defendant violated Section 778.208 of Title 29 of the Code of Federal

Regulations by not including non-discretionary bonuses paid to Plaintiff in his regular

rate when calculating his overtime pay.

60. Despite the entitlement of Plaintiff to overtime payments under the FLSA,

Defendants failed to pay Plaintiff an overtime rate of one and one-half (1.5) times his

regular rate of pay for all hours worked over forty (40) in each one-week period.

61. Defendant's failure to pay Plaintiff overtime wages owed was willful.

62. By reason of the unlawful acts alleged herein, Defendant is liable to

Plaintiff for monetary damages, liquidated damages, and costs, including reasonable

attorneys' fees, for all violations that occurred within the three (3) years prior to the filing

of this Complaint.

63. Alternatively, should the Court find that Defendant acted in good faith in

failing to pay Plaintiff as provided by the FLSA, Plaintiff is entitled to an award of

prejudgment interest at the applicable legal rate.

VII. SECOND CLAIM FOR RELIEF (Collective Action Claim for Violation of FLSA)

64. Plaintiff repeats and re-alleges all the preceding paragraphs of this

Original Complaint as if fully set forth in this section.

65. Plaintiff brings this collective action on behalf of all other Store Managers

employed by Defendant to recover monetary damages owed by Defendant to Plaintiff

and members of the putative collective for unpaid overtime compensation for all the

hours they worked in excess of forty (40) each week.

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66. Plaintiff brings this action on behalf of himself and all other hourly-paid

employees, former and present, who were and/or are affected by Defendant's willful and

intentional violation of the FLSA.

67. 29 U.S.C. § 207 requires employers to pay employees one and one-half

(1.5) times the employee's regular rate for all hours that the employee works in excess

of forty (40) per week.

68. Defendant violated Section 778.208 of Title 29 of the Code of Federal

Regulations by not including non-discretionary bonuses paid to Plaintiff and those

similarly situated in their regular rate when calculating their overtime pay.

69. In the past three years, Defendant has employed hundreds of Store

Managers.

70. Like Plaintiff, other Store Managers regularly worked more than forty (40)

hours in a week.

71. Defendant failed to pay these workers at the proper overtime rate for all

hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours in a week, despite their entitlement thereto.

72. Because these employees are similarly situated to Plaintiff, and are owed

overtime for the same reasons, the opt-in collective may be properly defined as:

All Store Managers who worked within the past three (3) years.

73. Defendant's conduct and practices, as described above, have been and

continue to be willful, intentional, unreasonable, arbitrary and in bad faith.

74. By reason of the unlawful acts alleged in this Complaint, Defendant is

liable to Plaintiff and all those similarly situated for, and Plaintiff and all those similarly

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situated seek, unpaid overtime wages, liquidated damages, and costs, including

reasonable attorney's fees as provided by the FLSA.

75. Alternatively, should the Court find that Defendant acted in good faith in

failing to pay Plaintiff and all those similarly situated as provided by the FLSA, Plaintiff

and all those similarly situated are entitled to an award of prejudgment interest at the

applicable legal rate.

VIII. THIRD CLAIM FOR RELIEF (Individual Claim for Violation of the AMWA)

76. Plaintiff repeats and re-allege all previous paragraphs of this Complaint as

if fully set forth in this section.

77. Plaintiff asserts this claim for damages and declaratory relief pursuant to

the AMWA.

78. At all times relevant herein, Defendant was Plaintiff's "employer" within the

meaning of the AMWA, Ark. Code Ann. § 11-4-203(4).

79. Arkansas Code Annotated § 11-4-211 requires employers to pay all

employees one and one-half (1.5) times regular wages for all hours worked over forty

(40) hours in a week, unless an employee meets the exemption requirements of 29

U.S.C. § 213 and accompanying Department of Labor regulations.

80. Defendant failed to pay Plaintiff an overtime premium for all hours worked

in excess of forty (40) hours in a week as required under the AMWA.

81. Despite the entitlement of Plaintiff to payment of lawful overtime payments

under the AMWA, Defendant failed to pay Plaintiff a lawful overtime premium.

82. Defendant's conduct and practices, as described above, were willful,

intentional, unreasonable, arbitrary and in bad faith.

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83. By reason of the unlawful acts alleged herein, Defendant is liable to

Plaintiff for, and Plaintiff seeks, monetary damages, liquidated damages, prejudgment

interest, civil penalties and costs, including reasonable attorney's fees as provided by

the AMWA.

84. Alternatively, should the Court find the Defendant acted in good faith in

failing to pay Plaintiff as provided by the AMWA, Plaintiff is entitled to an award of

prejudgment interest at the applicable legal rate.

IX. FOURTH CLAIM FOR RELIEF (Class Action Claim for Violation of the AMWA)

85. Plaintiff repeats and re-alleges all previous paragraphs of this Complaint

as though fully incorporated in this section.

86. Plaintiff, individually and on behalf of the members of the proposed class,

asserts this claim for damages and declaratory relief pursuant to the AMWA.

87. At all relevant times, Defendant has been an "employer" of Plaintiff and

the members of the proposed class within the meaning of the AMWA, Arkansas Code

Annotated § 11-4-203(4).

88. Arkansas Code Annotated §§ 11-4-210 and 211 require employers to pay

all employees a minimum wage for all hours worked up to forty (40) in one week and to

pay one and one-half (1.5) times regular wages for all hours worked over forty (40)

hours in a week, unless an employee meets the exemption requirements of 29 U.S.C. §

213 and accompanying Department of Labor regulations.

89. Defendant classified Plaintiff and members of the proposed class as non-

exempt from the overtime requirements of the AMWA.

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90. Despite the entitlement of Plaintiff and the members of the proposed class

to overtime payments under the AMWA, Defendant failed to pay Plaintiff and the

members of the proposed class an overtime rate of one and one-half (1.5) times their

regular rates of pay for all hours worked over forty (40) per workweek.

Plaintiff proposes to represent the AMWA liability class of individuals 91.

defined as follows:

**All Arkansas Store Managers** within the past three (3) years.

92. Defendant's conduct and practices, as described above, were willful,

intentional, unreasonable, arbitrary and in bad faith.

93. By reason of the unlawful acts alleged herein, Defendant is liable to

Plaintiff and the proposed class for monetary damages, liquidated damages, costs, and

a reasonable attorney's fee provided by the AMWA for all violations which occurred

within the three (3) years prior to the filing of this Complaint, plus periods of equitable

tolling.

94. Alternatively, should the Court find that Defendant acted in good faith in

failing to pay Plaintiff and members of the proposed class as provided by the AMWA,

Plaintiff and members of the proposed class are entitled to an award of prejudgment

interest at the applicable legal rate.

IX. PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, premises considered, Plaintiff Daniel Fryer, individually and on

behalf of all others similarly situated, respectfully prays as follows:

Α. That Defendant be summoned to appear and answer this Complaint;

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B. That Defendant be required to account to Plaintiff, the collective action

members and the Court for all of the hours worked by them and all monies paid to them;

C. A declaratory judgment that Defendant's practices alleged herein violate

the FLSA and attendant regulations at 29 C.F.R. §516 et seq.;

D. A declaratory judgment that Defendant's practices alleged herein violate

the AMWA and the related regulations;

E. Certification of, and proper notice to, together with an opportunity to

participate in the litigation, all qualifying current and former employees;

F. Judgment for damages for all unpaid overtime compensation under the

FLSA and attendant regulations at 29 C.F.R. §516 et seg.;

G. Judgment for damages for all unpaid overtime compensation under the

AMWA and the related regulations;

H. Judgment for liquidated damages pursuant to the FLSA and attendant

regulations at 29 C.F.R. §516 et seq., in an amount equal to all unpaid overtime

compensation;

I. Judgment for liquidated damages pursuant to the AMWA and the related

regulations;

J. For a reasonable attorney's fee, costs and pre-judgment interest; and

K. Such other and further relief as this Court may deem necessary, just and

proper.

Respectfully submitted,

DANIEL FRYER, Individually and on Behalf of All Others Similarly Situated, PLAINTIFF

SANFORD LAW FIRM, PLLC One Financial Center 650 South Shackleford, Suite 411 Little Rock, Arkansas 72211 Telephone: (501) 221-0088 Facsimile: (888) 787-2040

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Josh Sanford

Ark. Bar No. 2001037 josh@sanfordlawfirm.com

The JS 44 (Rev. 06/17)

CIVIL COVER SHEET 4:18-cv-927-DPM

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						
DANIEL FRYER, Individually and on Behalf of All Others Similarly Situated				PRIME COMMUNICATIONS, LP						
(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff Pulaski				County of Residence of First Listed Defendant						
(EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)				(IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY)						
				NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED.						
(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, Address, and Telephone Number) Josh Sanford, SANFORD LAW FIRM, PLLC, One Financial Cente 650 South Shackleford, Suite 411, Little Rock, Arkansas 72211				Attomeys (If Known)						
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VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT: CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION UNDER RULE 23, F.R.Cv.P.				JURY DEMAND: ☐ Yes > No						
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VIII. RELATED CASI IF ANY	(See instructions):	JUDGE			DOCKI	ET NUMBER				
DATE 12 /12/	10	SIGNATURE OF A	PRNEY	OF RECORD						
V/17/	18									
FOR OFFICE USE ONLY  RECEIPT # A	MOUNT	APPLYING IFP		JUDGE		MAG. JUD	)GE			

## **ClassAction.org**

This complaint is part of ClassAction.org's searchable class action lawsuit database and can be found in this post: <u>Prime Communications Sued by Former Store Manager Over Allegedly Unpaid Overtime Wages</u>