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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

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PEDRO MARTINEZ, Individually and as the
representative of a class of similarly situated
persons,

Case No. 17-cv- 7196

Plaintiff,

- against -

BLT RESTAURANT GROUP, LLC d/b/a BLT
Restaurants and ESQUARED HOSPITALITY, LLC
a/k/a E2 Hospitality,

Defendants.

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COMPLAINT – CLASS ACTION

INTRODUCTION

1. Plaintiff, Pedro Martinez (“Plaintiff” or “Martinez”), brings this action on behalf of himself and all other persons similarly situated against BLT Restaurant Group, LLC d/b/a BLT Restaurants and Esquared Hospitality, LLC a/k/a E2 Hospitality (Collectively referred to as “BLT Group” or “Defendants”), and states as follows:

2. Plaintiff is a visually-impaired and legally blind person who requires screen-reading software to read website content using his computer. Plaintiff uses the terms “blind” or “visually-impaired” to refer to all people with visual impairments who meet the legal definition of

blindness in that they have a visual acuity with correction of less than or equal to 20 x 200. Some blind people who meet this definition have limited vision; others have no vision.

3. Based on a 2010 U.S. Census Bureau report, approximately 8.1 million people in the United States are visually impaired, including 2.0 million who are blind, and according to the American Foundation for the Blind's 2015 report, approximately 400,000 visually impaired persons live in the State of New York.

4. Plaintiff brings this civil rights action against BLT Group for their failure to design, construct, maintain, and operate their website to be fully accessible to and independently usable by Plaintiff and other blind or visually-impaired persons. Defendants are denying blind and visually-impaired persons throughout the United States with equal access to the goods and services BLT Group provides to their non-disabled customers through <http://www.blrestaurants.com> and <http://e2hospitality.com> (hereinafter "the websites"). Defendants' denial of full and equal access to its website, and therefore denial of its products and services offered, and in conjunction with its physical locations, is a violation of Plaintiff's rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act (the "ADA").

5. The websites provide to the public a wide array of the goods, services, price specials, employment opportunities and other programs offered by BLT Group. Yet, the websites contain thousands of access barriers that make it difficult if not impossible for blind and visually-impaired customers to use the website. In fact, the access barriers make it impossible for blind and visually-impaired users to even complete a transaction on the websites. Thus, BLT Group excludes the blind and visually-impaired from the full and equal participation in the growing Internet economy that is increasingly a fundamental part of the common marketplace and daily living. In the wave of technological advances in recent years, assistive computer technology is

becoming an increasingly prominent part of everyday life, allowing blind and visually-impaired persons to fully and independently access a variety of services.

6. The blind have an even greater need than the sighted to shop and conduct transactions online due to the challenges faced in mobility. The lack of an accessible website means that blind people are excluded from experiencing transacting with defendant's websites and from purchasing goods or services from defendant's websites.

7. Despite readily available accessible technology, such as the technology in use at other heavily trafficked retail websites, which makes use of alternative text, accessible forms, descriptive links, resizable text and limits the usage of tables and javascript, Defendants have chosen to rely on an exclusively visual interface. BLT Group's sighted customers can independently browse, select, and buy online without the assistance of others. However, blind persons must rely on sighted companions to assist them in accessing and purchasing on the websites.

8. By failing to make the website accessible to blind persons, Defendants are violating basic equal access requirements under both state and federal law.

9. Congress provided a clear and national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities when it enacted the ADA. Such discrimination includes barriers to full integration, independent living, and equal opportunity for persons with disabilities, including those barriers created by websites and other public accommodations that are inaccessible to blind and visually impaired persons. Similarly, New York state law requires places of public accommodation to ensure access to goods, services, and facilities by making reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities.

10. Plaintiff browsed bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com to find the location of BLT Steak restaurant and intended to make a reservation and an online purchase of a \$100 gift

certificate on bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com. However, unless Defendants remedy the numerous access barriers on their websites, Plaintiff and Class members will continue to be unable to independently navigate, browse, use, and complete a transaction on the websites.

11. Because Defendant's websites, bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com, are not equally accessible to blind and visually-impaired consumers, they violate the ADA. Plaintiff seeks a permanent injunction to cause a change in BLT Group's policies, practices, and procedures so that Defendant's website will become and remain accessible to blind and visually-impaired consumers. This complaint also seeks compensatory damages to compensate Class members for having been subjected to unlawful discrimination.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

12. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction over this action under 28 U.S.C. § 1331 and 42 U.S.C. § 12181, as Plaintiff's claims arise under Title III of the ADA, 42 U.S.C. § 12181 *et seq.*, and 28 U.S.C. § 1332, because this is a class action, as defined by 28 U.S.C. § 1332(d)(1)(B), in which a member of the putative class is a citizen of a different state than Defendant, and the amount in controversy exceeds the sum or value of \$5,000,000, excluding interest and costs. See 28 U.S.C. § 133(d)(2).

13. This Court also has supplemental jurisdiction over pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1367, over Plaintiff's pendent claims under the New York State Human Rights Law, N.Y. Exec. Law, Article 15 (Executive Law § 290 *et seq.*) and the New York City Human Rights Law, N.Y.C. Administrative Code § 8-101 *et seq.* ("City Law").

14. Venue is proper in this District of New York pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1391(b)-(c) and 144(a) because Plaintiff resides in this District, Defendant conducts and continues to conduct a substantial and significant amount of business in this District, and a substantial portion of the conduct complained of herein occurred in this District.

15. Defendants are registered to do business in New York State and have been conducting business in New York State, including in this District. Defendant maintains Brick-and-mortar places of accommodation in this District which are subject to personal jurisdiction in this District. Defendant also has been and is committing the acts alleged herein in this District and has been and is violating the rights of consumers in this District and has been and is causing injury to consumers in this District. A substantial part of the act and omissions giving rise to Plaintiff's claims have occurred in this District. Specifically, Plaintiff attempted to make a dinner reservation and to purchase a \$100 gift certificate on Defendant's websites, bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com.

PARTIES

16. Plaintiff, is and has been at all relevant times a resident of Kings County, State of New York.

17. Plaintiff is legally blind and a member of a protected class under the ADA, 42 U.S.C. § 12102(1)-(2), the regulations implementing the ADA set forth at 28 CFR §§ 36.101 *et seq.*, the New York State Human Rights Law and the New York City Human Rights Law. Plaintiff, Pedro Martinez, cannot use a computer without the assistance of screen reader software. Plaintiff, Pedro Martinez, has been denied the full enjoyment of the facilities, goods and services of bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com, as well as to the facilities, goods and services of Defendant's brick and mortar locations, as a result of accessibility barriers on the websites.

18. Defendant, BLT Restaurant Group, LLC d/b/a BLT Restaurants, is a New York Domestic Limited Liability Company with its principle place of business located at 950 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022.

19. Defendant, Esquared Hospitality, LLC a/k/a E2 Hospitality, is a Delaware Foreign Limited Liability Company with its principle place of business located at 950 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022.

20. Defendants own and operate BLT Steak Restaurant (hereinafter, “BLT Steak Restaurant” or “Restaurant”), which is a place of public accommodation.

21. BLT Steak Restaurant provides to the public important and enjoyable goods and services such as food, beverage, and gift certificates. Defendant also provides to the public a website known as bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com which provides consumers with access to an array of goods and services offered to the public by the BLT Steak Restaurant, including, the ability to view food and cocktail menus, the ability to purchase gift certificates and make reservations, and information about the Restaurant’s location. The inaccessibility of bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com has deterred Plaintiff from making a dinner reservation and buying BLT Steak gift certificates.

22. Defendant’s locations are public accommodations within the definition of Title III of the ADA, 42 U.S.C. § 12181(7). Defendant’s website is a service, privilege, or advantage that is heavily integrated with Defendant’s physical stores and operates as a gateway thereto.

NATURE OF THE CASE

23. The Internet has become a significant source of information, a portal, and a tool for conducting business, doing everyday activities such as shopping, learning, banking, researching, as well as many other activities for sighted, blind and visually-impaired persons alike.

24. The blind access websites by using keyboards in conjunction with screen-reading software which vocalizes visual information on a computer screen. Except for a blind person whose residual vision is still sufficient to use magnification, screen access software

provides the only method by which a blind person can independently access the Internet. Unless websites are designed to allow for use in this manner, blind persons are unable to fully access Internet websites and the information, products and services contained therein.

25. For screen-reading software to function, the information on a website must be capable of being rendered into text. If the website content is not capable of being rendered into text, the blind user is unable to access the same content available to sighted users.

26. Blind users of Windows operating system-enabled computers and devices have several screen-reading software programs available to them. Job Access With Speech, otherwise known as “JAWS” is currently the most popular, separately purchase and downloaded screen-reading software program available for blind computer users.

27. The international website standards organization, the World Wide Web Consortium, known throughout the world as W3C, has published version 2.0 of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (“WCAG 2.0”). WCAG 2.0 are well-established guidelines for making websites accessible to blind and visually-impaired persons. These guidelines are universally followed by most large business entities and government agencies to ensure their websites are accessible. Many Courts have also established WCAG 2.0 as the standard guideline for accessibility. The federal government has also promulgated website accessibility standards under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. These guidelines are readily available via the Internet, so that a business designing a website can easily access them. These guidelines recommend several basic components for making websites accessible, including but not limited to: adding invisible alt-text to graphics, ensuring that all functions can be performed using a keyboard and not just a mouse, ensuring that image maps are accessible, and adding headings so that blind persons can easily navigate the site. Without these very basic components, a website will be inaccessible to a blind person using a screen reader.

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

28. Defendant, BLT Group, operates BLT Steak Restaurant which is located at 106 East 57th Street, New York, NY 10019 and which provides food, cocktails, and the ability to purchase gift certificates.

29. Bltreasure.com and e2hospitality.com are a service and benefit offered by BLT Group and BLT Steak Restaurant in New York State and throughout the United States. Bltreasure.com and e2hospitality.com are owned, controlled and/or operated by BLT Group.

30. Bltreasure.com and e2hospitality.com are commercial websites that offer products and services for online sale that are available in the BLT Steak Restaurant. The online store allows the user to browse menu and cocktail items, make reservations, purchase gift certificates, and perform a variety of other functions.

31. Among the features offered by bltreasure.com and e2hospitality.com are the following:

(a) learning restaurant information including, allowing persons who wish to dine at BLT Steak to learn its location, hours of operation, and phone numbers;

(b) an online store, allowing customers to purchase gift certificates which can be e-mailed or mailed to the purchaser; and

(c) making a reservation or reserving a private event.

32. This case arises out of BLT Group's policy and practice of denying the blind access to the websites, including the goods and services offered by BLT Steak Restaurant through the websites. Due to BLT Group's failure and refusal to remove access barriers to the websites, blind individuals have been and are being denied equal access to BLT Steak Restaurant, as well as to the numerous goods, services and benefits offered to the public through the websites.

33. BLT Group denies the blind access to goods, services and information made available through the websites by preventing them from freely navigating bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com.

34. The websites contain access barriers that prevent free and full use by Plaintiff and blind persons using keyboards and screen-reading software. These barriers are pervasive and include, but are not limited to: lack of alt-text on graphics, inaccessible drop-down menus, the lack of navigation links, the lack of adequate prompting and labeling, the denial of keyboard access, empty links that contain no text, redundant links where adjacent links go to the same URL address, and the requirement that transactions be performed solely with a mouse.

35. Alternative text (“Alt-text”) is invisible code embedded beneath a graphical image on a website. Web accessibility requires that alt-text be coded with each picture so that a screen-reader can speak the alternative text while sighted users see the picture. Alt-text does not change the visual presentation except that it appears as a text pop-up when the mouse moves over the picture. There are many important pictures on the websites that lack a text equivalent. The lack of alt-text on these graphics prevents screen readers from accurately vocalizing a description of the graphics (screen-readers detect and vocalize alt-text to provide a description of the image to a blind computer user). As a result, Plaintiff and blind bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com customers are unable to determine what is on the websites, browse the websites or investigate BLT Steak Restaurant’s web pages and/or make purchases.

36. The websites also lack prompting information and accommodations necessary to allow blind shoppers who use screen-readers to locate and accurately fill-out online forms. On shopping sites such as bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com, these forms include search fields to locate gift certificates, fields that specify the number of items desired, and fields used to fill-out personal information, including address and credit card information. Due to lack of

adequate labeling, Plaintiff and blind customers cannot make purchases and reservations or inquiries as to Defendant's gift cards, locations, and events, nor can they enter their personal identification and financial information with confidence and security.

37. Similarly, bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com lack accessible drop-down menus. Drop-down menus allow customers to locate and choose products as well as specify the quantity of certain items. On the websites, blind customers are not aware if the desired products, such as gift certificates or reservations, have been added to the shopping cart because the screen-reader does not indicate the type of product or quantity. Therefore, blind customers are essentially prevented from purchasing any items on the websites.

38. Furthermore, bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com lack accessible image maps. An image map is a function that combines multiple words and links into one single image. Visual details on this single image highlight different "hot spots" which, when clicked on, allow the user to jump to many different destinations within the website. For an image map to be accessible, it must contain alt-text for the various "hot spots." The image maps on the websites' menu page do not contain adequate alt-text and are therefore inaccessible to Plaintiff and the other blind individuals attempting to make a purchase. When Plaintiff tried to access the menu link in order to make a purchase, he was unable to access it completely.

39. Bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com also lack accessible forms. Quantity boxes allow customers to specify the quantity of certain items. On the websites, blind customers are unable to select specific quantity because the screen-reader does not indicate the function of the box. As a result, blind customers are denied access to the quantity box. Furthermore, Plaintiff is unable to locate the shopping cart because the shopping basket form does not specify the purpose of the shopping cart. As a result, blind customers are denied access

to the shopping cart. Consequently, blind customers are unsuccessful in adding products into their shopping carts and are essentially prevented from purchasing items on the websites.

40. Moreover, the lack of navigation links on Defendant's website makes attempting to navigate through the websites even more time consuming and confusing for Plaintiff and blind consumers.

41. Bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com require the use of a mouse to complete a transaction. Yet, it is a fundamental tenet of web accessibility that for a web page to be accessible to Plaintiff and blind people, it must be possible for the user to interact with the page using only the keyboard. Indeed, Plaintiff and blind users cannot use a mouse because manipulating the mouse is a visual activity of moving the mouse pointer from one visual spot on the page to another. Thus, the websites' inaccessible design, which requires the use of a mouse to complete a transaction, denies Plaintiff and blind customers the ability to independently navigate and/or make purchases on bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com.

42. Due to bltrestaurants.com's and e2hospitality.com's inaccessibility, Plaintiff and blind customers must in turn spend time, energy, and/or money to make their purchases at a BLT Steak Restaurant. Some blind customers may require a driver to get to the Restaurant or require assistance in navigating the Restaurant. By contrast, if the websites were accessible, a blind person could independently investigate products and programs and make purchases and reservations via the Internet as sighted individuals can and do. According to WCAG 2.0 Guideline 2.4.1, a mechanism is necessary to bypass blocks of content that are repeated on multiple webpages because requiring users to extensively tab before reaching the main content is an unacceptable barrier to accessing the website. Plaintiff must tab through every navigation bar option and footer on Defendant's websites in an attempt to reach the desired service. Thus, the websites' inaccessible design, which requires the use of a mouse to complete a transaction,

denies Plaintiff and blind customers the ability to browse or independently make purchases on bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com.

43. Bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com thus contain access barriers which deny the full and equal access to Plaintiff, who would otherwise use bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com and who would otherwise be able to fully and equally enjoy the benefits and services of BLT Steak Restaurant in New York State.

44. Plaintiff, Pedro Martinez, has made numerous attempts to browse and to complete a purchase on bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com, most recently in November, 2017, but was unable to do so independently because of the many access barriers on Defendant's websites. These access barriers have caused the websites to be inaccessible to, and not independently usable by, blind and visually-impaired persons. Amongst other access barriers experienced, Plaintiff was unable to make a dinner reservation online and to purchase a \$100 gift certificate.

45. As described above, Plaintiff has actual knowledge of the fact that Defendant's websites, bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com, contain access barriers causing the websites to be inaccessible, and not independently usable by, blind and visually-impaired persons.

46. These barriers to access have denied Plaintiff full and equal access to, and enjoyment of, the goods, benefits and services of bltrestaurants.com, e2hospitality.com and the BLT Steak Restaurant.

47. Defendants engaged in acts of intentional discrimination, including but not limited to the following policies or practices:

(a) constructed and maintained a website that is inaccessible to blind class members with knowledge of the discrimination; and/or

(b) constructed and maintained a website that is sufficiently intuitive and/or obvious that is inaccessible to blind class members; and/or

(c) failed to take actions to correct these access barriers in the face of substantial harm and discrimination to blind class members.

48. Defendants utilize standards, criteria or methods of administration that have the effect of discriminating or perpetuating the discrimination of others.

49. Because of Defendant's denial of full and equal access to, and enjoyment of, the goods, benefits and services of bltrestaurants.com, e2hospitality.com and the BLT Steak Restaurant, Plaintiff and the class have suffered an injury-in-fact which is concrete and particularized and actual and is a direct result of defendant's conduct.

CLASS ACTION ALLEGATIONS

50. Plaintiff, on behalf of himself and all others similarly situated, seeks certification of the following nationwide class pursuant to Rule 23(a) and 23(b)(2) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure: "all legally blind individuals in the United States who have attempted to access Bltrestaurants.com and as a result have been denied access to the enjoyment of goods and services offered in the BLT Steak Restaurant, during the relevant statutory period."

51. Plaintiff seeks certification of the following New York subclass pursuant to Fed.R.Civ.P. 23(a), 23(b)(2), and, alternatively, 23(b)(3): "all legally blind individuals in New York State who have attempted to access bltrestaurants.com and as a result have been denied access to the enjoyment of goods and services offered in the BLT Steak Restaurant, during the relevant statutory period."

52. There are hundreds of thousands of visually-impaired persons in New York State. There are approximately 8.1 million people in the United States who are visually-impaired. *Id.* Thus, the persons in the class are so numerous that joinder of all such persons is

impractical and the disposition of their claims in a class action is a benefit to the parties and to the Court.

53. This case arises out of Defendant's policy and practice of maintaining an inaccessible website denying blind persons access to the goods and services of bltrestaurants.com, e2hospitality.com, and the BLT Steak Restaurant. Due to Defendant's policy and practice of failing to remove access barriers, blind persons have been and are being denied full and equal access to independently browse, select and shop on the websites and by extension the goods and services offered through Defendant's websites to BLT Steak Restaurant.

54. There are common questions of law and fact common to the class, including without limitation, the following:

(a) Whether bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com are a "public accommodation" under the ADA;

(b) Whether bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com are a "place or provider of public accommodation" under the laws of New York;

(c) Whether Defendants, through their websites, bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com, deny the full and equal enjoyment of its goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations to people with visual disabilities in violation of the ADA; and

(d) Whether Defendants, through their website, bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com, deny the full and equal enjoyment of its goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations to people with visual disabilities in violation of the law of New York.

55. The claims of the named Plaintiff are typical of those of the class. The class, similar to the Plaintiff, is severely visually-impaired or otherwise blind, and claims BLT Group has violated the ADA, and/or the laws of New York by failing to update or remove access

barriers on their websites, bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com, so it can be independently accessible to the class of people who are legally blind.

56. Plaintiff will fairly and adequately represent and protect the interests of the members of the Class because Plaintiff has retained and is represented by counsel competent and experienced in complex class action litigation, and because Plaintiff has no interests antagonistic to the members of the class. Class certification of the claims is appropriate pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 23(b)(2) because Defendants have acted or refused to act on grounds generally applicable to the Class, making appropriate both declaratory and injunctive relief with respect to Plaintiff and the Class as a whole.

57. Alternatively, class certification is appropriate under Fed. R. Civ. P. 23(b)(3) because questions of law and fact common to Class members clearly predominate over questions affecting only individual class members, and because a class action is superior to other available methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of this litigation.

58. Judicial economy will be served by maintenance of this lawsuit as a class action in that it is likely to avoid the burden that would be otherwise placed upon the judicial system by the filing of numerous similar suits by people with visual disabilities throughout the United States.

59. References to Plaintiff shall be deemed to include the named Plaintiff and each member of the class, unless otherwise indicated.

FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION

(Violation of 42 U.S.C. §§ 12181 *et seq.* – Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act)

60. Plaintiff repeats, realleges and incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 59 of this Complaint as though set forth at length herein.

61. Title III of the American with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. § 12182(a) provides that “No individual shall be discriminated against on the basis of disability in the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations of any place of public accommodation by any person who owns, leases (or leases to), or operates a place of public accommodation.” Title III also prohibits an entity from “[u]tilizing standards or criteria or methods of administration that have the effect of discriminating on the basis of disability.” 42 U.S.C. § 12181(b)(2)(D)(I).

62. The BLT Steak Restaurant located in New York State is a sales establishment and public accommodation within the definition of 42 U.S.C. §§ 12181(7)(E). bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com are a service, privilege or advantage of BLT Steak Restaurant. Bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com are a service that is by and integrated with the Restaurant.

63. Defendant is subject to Title III of the ADA because it owns and operates the BLT Steak Restaurant.

64. Under Title III of the ADA, 42 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(1)(A)(I), it is unlawful discrimination to deny individuals with disabilities or a class of individuals with disabilities the opportunity to participate in or benefit from the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations of an entity.

65. Under Title III of the ADA, 42 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(1)(A)(II), it is unlawful discrimination to deny individuals with disabilities or a class of individuals with disabilities an opportunity to participate in or benefit from the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodation, which is equal to the opportunities afforded to other individuals.

66. Specifically, under Title III of the ADA, 42 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(2)(A)(II), unlawful discrimination includes, among other things, “a failure to make reasonable

modifications in policies, practices, or procedures, when such modifications are necessary to afford such goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations to individuals with disabilities, unless the entity can demonstrate that making such modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of such goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages or accommodations.”

67. In addition, under Title III of the ADA, 42 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(2)(A)(III), unlawful discrimination also includes, among other things, “a failure to take such steps as may be necessary to ensure that no individual with disability is excluded, denied services, segregated or otherwise treated differently than other individuals because of the absence of auxiliary aids and services, unless the entity can demonstrate that taking such steps would fundamentally alter the nature of the good, service, facility, privilege, advantage, or accommodation being offered or would result in an undue burden.”

68. There are readily available, well-established guidelines on the Internet for making websites accessible to the blind and visually-impaired. These guidelines have been followed by other business entities in making their websites accessible, including but not limited to ensuring adequate prompting and accessible alt-text. Incorporating the basic components to make their website accessible would neither fundamentally alter the nature of Defendant’s business nor result in an undue burden to Defendants.

69. The acts alleged herein constitute violations of Title III of the ADA, 42 U.S.C. § 12101 *et seq.*, and the regulations promulgated thereunder. Patrons of BLT Steak Restaurant who are blind have been denied full and equal access to bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com, have not been provided services that are provided to other patrons who are not disabled, and/or have been provided services that are inferior to the services provided to non-disabled patrons.

70. Defendants have failed to take any prompt and equitable steps to remedy their discriminatory conduct. These violations are ongoing.

71. As such, Defendants discriminate, and will continue in the future to discriminate against Plaintiff and members of the proposed class and subclass on the basis of disability in the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, accommodations and/or opportunities of bltrestaurants.com, e2hospitality.com, and BLT Steak Restaurant in violation of Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 12181 *et seq.* and/or its implementing regulations.

72. Unless the Court enjoins Defendants from continuing to engage in these unlawful practices, Plaintiff and members of the proposed class and subclass will continue to suffer irreparable harm.

73. The actions of Defendants were and are in violation of the ADA, and therefore Plaintiff invokes his statutory right to injunctive relief to remedy the discrimination.

74. Plaintiff is also entitled to reasonable attorneys' fees and costs.

75. Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 12188 and the remedies, procedures, and rights set forth and incorporated therein, Plaintiff prays for judgment as set forth below.

SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION

(Violation of New York State Human Rights Law, N.Y. Exec. Law
Article 15 (Executive Law § 292 *et seq.*))

76. Plaintiff repeats, realleges and incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 75 of this Complaint as though set forth at length herein.

77. N.Y. Exec. Law § 296(2)(a) provides that it is “an unlawful discriminatory practice for any person, being the owner, lessee, proprietor, manager, superintendent, agent, or employee of any place of public accommodation . . . because of the . . . disability of any person,

directly or indirectly, to refuse, withhold from or deny to such person any of the accommodations, advantages, facilities or privileges thereof.”.

78. The BLT Steak Restaurant located in New York State is a sales establishment and public accommodation within the definition of N.Y. Exec. Law § 292(9). bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com are a service, privilege or advantage of BLT Steak Restaurant. Bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com are a service that is by and integrated with the Restaurant.

79. Defendants are subject to the New York Human Rights Law because they own and operates the BLT Steak Restaurant, bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com. Defendants are each a person within the meaning of N.Y. Exec. Law. § 292(1).

80. Defendants are violating N.Y. Exec. Law § 296(2)(a) in refusing to update or remove access barriers to the websites, causing bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com and the services integrated with BLT Steak Restaurant to be completely inaccessible to the blind. This inaccessibility denies blind patrons the full and equal access to the facilities, goods and services that Defendants make available to the non-disabled public.

81. Specifically, under N.Y. Exec. Law § unlawful discriminatory practice includes, among other things, “a refusal to make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures, when such modifications are necessary to afford facilities, privileges, advantages or accommodations to individuals with disabilities, unless such person can demonstrate that making such modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of such facilities, privileges, advantages or accommodations.”

82. In addition, under N.Y. Exec. Law § 296(2)(c)(II), unlawful discriminatory practice also includes, “a refusal to take such steps as may be necessary to ensure that no individual with a disability is excluded or denied services because of the absence of auxiliary

aids and services, unless such person can demonstrate that taking such steps would fundamentally alter the nature of the facility, privilege, advantage or accommodation being offered or would result in an undue burden.”

83. There are readily available, well-established guidelines on the Internet for making websites accessible to the blind and visually-impaired. These guidelines have been followed by other business entities in making their website accessible, including but not limited to: adding alt-text to graphics and ensuring that all functions can be performed by using a keyboard. Incorporating the basic components to make their website accessible would neither fundamentally alter the nature of Defendant’s business nor result in an undue burden to Defendants.

84. Defendant’s actions constitute willful intentional discrimination against the class on the basis of a disability in violation of the New York State Human Rights Law, N.Y. Exec. Law § 296(2) in that Defendants have:

(a) constructed and maintained websites that are inaccessible to blind class members with knowledge of the discrimination; and/or

(b) constructed and maintained websites that are sufficiently intuitive and/or obvious that is inaccessible to blind class members; and/or

(c) failed to take actions to correct these access barriers in the face of substantial harm and discrimination to blind class members.

85. Defendants have failed to take any prompt and equitable steps to remedy their discriminatory conduct. These violations are ongoing.

86. As such, Defendants discriminate, and will continue in the future to discriminate against Plaintiff and members of the proposed class and subclass on the basis of disability in the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages,

accommodations and/or opportunities of bltrestaurants.com, e2hospitality.com, and BLT Steak Restaurant under N.Y. Exec. Law § 296(2) *et seq.* and/or its implementing regulations. Unless the Court enjoins Defendants from continuing to engage in these unlawful practices, Plaintiff and members of the class will continue to suffer irreparable harm.

87. The actions of Defendants were and are in violation of the New York State Human Rights Law and therefore Plaintiff invokes his right to injunctive relief to remedy the discrimination.

88. Plaintiff is also entitled to compensatory damages, as well as civil penalties and fines pursuant to N.Y. Exec. Law § 297(4)(c) *et seq.* for each and every offense.

89. Plaintiff is also entitled to reasonable attorneys' fees and costs.

90. Pursuant to N.Y. Exec. Law § 297 and the remedies, procedures, and rights set forth and incorporated therein, Plaintiff prays for judgment as set forth below.

THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION

(Violation of New York State Civil Rights Law, NY CLS Civ R,
Article 4 (CLS Civ R § 40 *et seq.*))

91. Plaintiff repeats, realleges and incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 90 of this Complaint as though set forth at length herein.

92. Plaintiff served notice thereof upon the attorney general as required by N.Y. Civil Rights Law § 41.

93. N.Y. Civil Rights Law § 40 provides that “all persons within the jurisdiction of this state shall be entitled to the full and equal accommodations, advantages, facilities, and privileges of any places of public accommodations, resort or amusement, subject only to the conditions and limitations established by law and applicable alike to all persons. No persons, being the owner, lessee, proprietor, manager, superintendent, agent, or employee of any such

place shall directly or indirectly refuse, withhold from, or deny to any person any of the accommodations, advantages, facilities and privileges thereof . . .”

94. N.Y. Civil Rights Law § 40-c(2) provides that “no person because of . . . disability, as such term is defined in section two hundred ninety-two of executive law, be subjected to any discrimination in his or her civil rights, or to any harassment, as defined in section 240.25 of the penal law, in the exercise thereof, by any other person or by any firm, corporation or institution, or by the state or any agency or subdivision.”

95. The BLT Steak Restaurant located in New York State is a sales establishment and public accommodation within the definition of N.Y. Civil Rights Law § 40-c(2). Bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com are a service, privilege or advantage of the BLT Steak Restaurant. Bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com are a service that is by and integrated with the Restaurant.

96. Defendants are subject to New York Civil Rights Law because they own and operates BLT Steak Restaurant, bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com. Defendants are each a person within the meaning of N.Y. Civil Law § 40-c(2).

97. Defendants are violating N.Y. Civil Rights Law § 40-c(2) in refusing to update or remove access barriers to bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com, causing the websites and the services integrated with the BLT Steak Restaurant to be completely inaccessible to the blind. This inaccessibility denies blind patrons full and equal access to the facilities, goods and services that Defendants make available to the non-disabled public.

98. There are readily available, well-established guidelines on the Internet for making websites accessible to the blind and visually-impaired. These guidelines have been followed by other business entities in making their website accessible, including but not limited to: adding alt-text to graphics and ensuring that all functions can be performed by using a

keyboard. Incorporating the basic components to make their website accessible would neither fundamentally alter the nature of Defendant's business nor result in an undue burden to Defendants.

99. In addition, N.Y. Civil Rights Law § 41 states that "any corporation which shall violate any of the provisions of sections forty, forty-a, forty-b or forty two . . . shall for each and every violation thereof be liable to a penalty of not less than one hundred dollars nor more than five hundred dollars, to be recovered by the person aggrieved thereby . . ."

100. Specifically, under N.Y. Civil Rights Law § 40-d, "any person who shall violate any of the provisions of the foregoing section, or subdivision three of section 240.30 or section 240.31 of the penal law, or who shall aid or incite the violation of any of said provisions shall for each and every violation thereof be liable to a penalty of not less than one hundred dollars nor more than five hundred dollars, to be recovered by the person aggrieved thereby in any court of competent jurisdiction in the county in which the defendant shall reside . . ."

101. Defendants have failed to take any prompt and equitable steps to remedy their discriminatory conduct. These violations are ongoing.

102. As such, Defendants discriminate, and will continue in the future to discriminate against Plaintiff and members of the proposed class on the basis of disability are being directly indirectly refused, withheld from, or denied the accommodations, advantages, facilities and privileges thereof in § 40 *et seq.* and/or its implementing regulations.

103. Plaintiff is entitled to compensatory damages of five hundred dollars per instance, as well as civil penalties and fines pursuant to N.Y. Civil Rights Law § 40 *et seq.* for each and every offense.

FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION

(Violation of New York City Human Rights Law,
N.Y.C. Administrative Code § 8-102, *et seq.*)

104. Plaintiff repeats, realleges and incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 103 of this Complaint as though set forth at length herein.

105. N.Y.C. Administrative Code § 8-107(4)(a) provides that “it shall be an unlawful discriminatory practice for any person, being the owner, lessee, proprietor, manager, superintendent, agent or employee of any place or provider of public accommodation, because of . . . disability . . . directly or indirectly, to refuse, withhold from or deny to such person, any of the accommodations, advantages, facilities or privileges thereof.”

106. BLT Steak Restaurant located in New York State is a sales establishment and public accommodation within the definition of N.Y.C. Administrative Code § 8-102(9). Bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com are a service, privilege or advantage of the BLT Steak Restaurant. Bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com are a service that is by and integrated with the Restaurant.

107. Defendants are subject to City Law because they own and operates the BLT Steak Restaurant, bltrestaurants.com, and e2hospitality.com. Defendants are each a person within the meaning of N.Y.C. Administrative Code § 8-102(1).

108. Defendants are violating N.Y.C. Administrative Code § 8-107(4)(a) in refusing to update or remove access barriers to bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com, causing bltrestaurants.com, e2hospitality.com and the services integrated with the BLT Steak Restaurant to be completely inaccessible to the blind. This inaccessibility denies blind patrons full and equal access to the facilities, goods, and services that Defendant makes available to the non-disabled public. Specifically, Defendant is required to “make reasonable accommodation to the needs of persons with disabilities . . . any person prohibited by the provisions of [§ 8-107 *et seq.*] from discriminating on the basis of disability shall make reasonable accommodation to enable a

person with a disability to . . . enjoy the right or rights in question provided that the disability is known or should have been known by the covered entity.” N.Y.C. Administrative Code § 8-107(15)(a).

109. Defendant’s actions constitute willful intentional discrimination against the class on the basis of a disability in violation of the N.Y.C. Administrative Code § 8-107(4)(a) and § 8-107(15)(a) in that Defendants have:

(a) constructed and maintained websites that are inaccessible to blind class members with knowledge of the discrimination; and/or

(b) constructed and maintained websites that are sufficiently intuitive and/or obvious that is inaccessible to blind class members; and/or

(c) failed to take actions to correct these access barriers in the face of substantial harm and discrimination to blind class members.

110. Defendants have failed to take any prompt and equitable steps to remedy their discriminatory conduct. These violations are ongoing.

111. As such, Defendants discriminate, and will continue in the future to discriminate against Plaintiff and members of the proposed class and subclass on the basis of disability in the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, accommodations and/or opportunities of bltrestaurants.com, e2hospitality.com and the BLT Steak Restaurant under N.Y.C. Administrative Code § 8-107(4)(a) and/or its implementing regulations. Unless the Court enjoins Defendants from continuing to engage in these unlawful practices, Plaintiff and members of the class will continue to suffer irreparable harm.

112. The actions of Defendants were and are in violation of City law and therefore Plaintiff invokes his right to injunctive relief to remedy the discrimination.

113. Plaintiff is also entitled to compensatory damages, as well as civil penalties and fines under N.Y.C. Administrative Code § 8-120(8) and § 8-126(a) for each offense.

114. Plaintiff is also entitled to reasonable attorneys' fees and costs.

115. Pursuant to N.Y.C. Administrative Code § 8-120(8) and § 8-126(a) and the remedies, procedures, and rights set forth and incorporated therein, Plaintiff prays for judgment as set forth below.

FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION
(Declaratory Relief)

116. Plaintiff repeats, realleges and incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 115 of this Complaint as though set forth at length herein.

117. An actual controversy has arisen and now exists between the parties in that Plaintiff contends, and is informed and believes that Defendants deny, that bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com contain access barriers denying blind customers the full and equal access to the goods, services and facilities of bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com and by extension BLT Steak Restaurant, which BLT Group owns, operates and/or controls, fails to comply with applicable laws including, but not limited to, Title III of the American with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 12182, *et seq.*, N.Y. Exec. Law § 296, *et seq.*, and N.Y.C. Administrative Code § 8-107, *et seq.* prohibiting discrimination against the blind.

118. A judicial declaration is necessary and appropriate at this time in order that each of the parties may know their respective rights and duties and act accordingly.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff respectfully demands judgment in favor of Plaintiff and the class and against the Defendants as follows:

- a) A preliminary and permanent injunction to prohibit Defendant from violating the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 12182, *et seq.*, N.Y. Exec. Law § 296, *et seq.*, and N.Y.C. Administrative Code § 8-107, *et seq.*, and the laws of New York;
- b) A preliminary and permanent injunction requiring Defendants to take all the steps necessary to make their websites, bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com, into full compliance with the requirements set forth in the ADA, and its implementing regulations, so that Bltrestaurants.com is readily accessible to and usable by blind individuals;
- c) A declaration that Defendants own, maintain and/or operate their websites, bltrestaurants.com and e2hospitality.com, in a manner which discriminates against the blind and which fails to provide access for persons with disabilities as required by Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 12182, *et seq.*, N.Y. Exec. Law § 296, *et seq.*, and N.Y.C. Administrative Code § 8-107, *et seq.*, and the laws of New York;
- d) An order certifying this case as a class action under Fed. R. Civ. P. 23(a) & (b)(2) and/or (b)(3), appointing Plaintiff as Class Representative, and his attorneys as Class Counsel;
- e) Compensatory damages in an amount to be determined by proof, including all applicable statutory damages and fines, to Plaintiff and the proposed class for violations of their civil rights under New York State Human Rights Law and City Law;
- f) Plaintiff's reasonable attorneys' fees, expenses, and costs of suit as provided by state and federal law;
- g) For pre- and post-judgment interest to the extent permitted by law; and

h) For such other and further relief which this court deems just and proper.

Dated: Brooklyn, New York
November 26, 2017

SHAKED LAW GROUP, P.C.
Attorneys for Plaintiff

By: *s/Dan Shaked*

Dan Shaked (DS-3331)
44 Court St., Suite 1217
Brooklyn, NY 11201
Tel. (917) 373-9128
Fax (718) 504-7555
e-mail: ShakedLawGroup@Gmail.com

JS 44 (Rev. 11/27/17)

CIVIL COVER SHEET

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

PEDRO MARTINEZ, Individually and as the representative of a class of similarly situated persons

(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff **Kings**
(EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)

(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, Address, and Telephone Number)
Shaked Law Group, P.C.
44 Court St., Suite 1217, Brooklyn, NY 11201
(917) 373-9128

DEFENDANTS

BLT RESTAURANT GROUP, LLC d/b/a BLT Restaurants and ESQUARED HOSPITALITY, LLC a/k/a E2 Hospitality

County of Residence of First Listed Defendant
(IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY)

NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED.

Attorneys (If Known)

II. BASIS OF JURISDICTION (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

- 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff
- 3 Federal Question (U.S. Government Not a Party)
- 2 U.S. Government Defendant
- 4 Diversity (Indicate Citizenship of Parties in Item III)

III. CITIZENSHIP OF PRINCIPAL PARTIES (Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintiff and One Box for Defendant)

- | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| | PTF | DEF | | PTF | DEF |
| Citizen of This State | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | Incorporated or Principal Place of Business In This State | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| Citizen of Another State | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | Incorporated and Principal Place of Business In Another State | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| Citizen or Subject of a Foreign Country | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | Foreign Nation | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |

IV. NATURE OF SUIT (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

Click here for: Nature of Suit Code Descriptions.

CONTRACT	TORTS	FORFEITURE/PENALTY	BANKRUPTCY	OTHER STATUTES	
<input type="checkbox"/> 110 Insurance <input type="checkbox"/> 120 Marine <input type="checkbox"/> 130 Miller Act <input type="checkbox"/> 140 Negotiable Instrument <input type="checkbox"/> 150 Recovery of Overpayment & Enforcement of Judgment <input type="checkbox"/> 151 Medicare Act <input type="checkbox"/> 152 Recovery of Defaulted Student Loans (Excludes Veterans) <input type="checkbox"/> 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits <input type="checkbox"/> 160 Stockholders' Suits <input type="checkbox"/> 190 Other Contract <input type="checkbox"/> 195 Contract Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 196 Franchise	PERSONAL INJURY <input type="checkbox"/> 310 Airplane <input type="checkbox"/> 315 Airplane Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 320 Assault, Libel & Slander <input type="checkbox"/> 330 Federal Employers' Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 340 Marine <input type="checkbox"/> 345 Marine Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 350 Motor Vehicle <input type="checkbox"/> 355 Motor Vehicle Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 360 Other Personal Injury <input type="checkbox"/> 362 Personal Injury - Medical Malpractice	<input type="checkbox"/> 365 Personal Injury - Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 367 Health Care/Pharmaceutical Personal Injury Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability PERSONAL PROPERTY <input type="checkbox"/> 370 Other Fraud <input type="checkbox"/> 371 Truth in Lending <input type="checkbox"/> 380 Other Personal Property Damage <input type="checkbox"/> 385 Property Damage Product Liability	<input type="checkbox"/> 625 Drug Related Seizure of Property 21 USC 881 <input type="checkbox"/> 690 Other LABOR <input type="checkbox"/> 710 Fair Labor Standards Act <input type="checkbox"/> 720 Labor/Management Relations <input type="checkbox"/> 740 Railway Labor Act <input type="checkbox"/> 751 Family and Medical Leave Act <input type="checkbox"/> 790 Other Labor Litigation <input type="checkbox"/> 791 Employee Retirement Income Security Act IMMIGRATION <input type="checkbox"/> 462 Naturalization Application <input type="checkbox"/> 465 Other Immigration Actions	<input type="checkbox"/> 422 Appeal 28 USC 158 <input type="checkbox"/> 423 Withdrawal 28 USC 157 PROPERTY RIGHTS <input type="checkbox"/> 820 Copyrights <input type="checkbox"/> 830 Patent <input type="checkbox"/> 835 Patent - Abbreviated New Drug Application <input type="checkbox"/> 840 Trademark SOCIAL SECURITY <input type="checkbox"/> 861 HIA (1395ff) <input type="checkbox"/> 862 Black Lung (923) <input type="checkbox"/> 863 DIWC/DIWW (405(g)) <input type="checkbox"/> 864 SSID Title XVI <input type="checkbox"/> 865 RSI (405(g)) FEDERAL TAX SUITS <input type="checkbox"/> 870 Taxes (U.S. Plaintiff or Defendant) <input type="checkbox"/> 871 IRS—Third Party 26 USC 7609	<input type="checkbox"/> 375 False Claims Act <input type="checkbox"/> 376 Qui Tam (31 USC 3729(a)) <input type="checkbox"/> 400 State Reapportionment <input type="checkbox"/> 410 Antitrust <input type="checkbox"/> 430 Banks and Banking <input type="checkbox"/> 450 Commerce <input type="checkbox"/> 460 Deportation <input type="checkbox"/> 470 Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations <input type="checkbox"/> 480 Consumer Credit <input type="checkbox"/> 490 Cable/Sat TV <input type="checkbox"/> 850 Securities/Commodities/Exchange <input type="checkbox"/> 890 Other Statutory Actions <input type="checkbox"/> 891 Agricultural Acts <input type="checkbox"/> 893 Environmental Matters <input type="checkbox"/> 895 Freedom of Information Act <input type="checkbox"/> 896 Arbitration <input type="checkbox"/> 899 Administrative Procedure Act/Review or Appeal of Agency Decision <input type="checkbox"/> 950 Constitutionality of State Statutes
REAL PROPERTY	CIVIL RIGHTS	PRISONER PETITIONS			
<input type="checkbox"/> 210 Land Condemnation <input type="checkbox"/> 220 Foreclosure <input type="checkbox"/> 230 Rent Lease & Ejectment <input type="checkbox"/> 240 Torts to Land <input type="checkbox"/> 245 Tort Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 290 All Other Real Property	<input type="checkbox"/> 440 Other Civil Rights <input type="checkbox"/> 441 Voting <input type="checkbox"/> 442 Employment <input type="checkbox"/> 443 Housing/Accommodations <input type="checkbox"/> 445 Amer. w/Disabilities - Employment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 446 Amer. w/Disabilities - Other <input type="checkbox"/> 448 Education	Habeas Corpus: <input type="checkbox"/> 463 Alien Detainee <input type="checkbox"/> 510 Motions to Vacate Sentence <input type="checkbox"/> 530 General <input type="checkbox"/> 535 Death Penalty Other: <input type="checkbox"/> 540 Mandamus & Other <input type="checkbox"/> 550 Civil Rights <input type="checkbox"/> 555 Prison Condition <input type="checkbox"/> 560 Civil Detainee - Conditions of Confinement			

V. ORIGIN (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

- 1 Original Proceeding
- 2 Removed from State Court
- 3 Remanded from Appellate Court
- 4 Reinstated or Reopened
- 5 Transferred from Another District (specify)
- 6 Multidistrict Litigation - Transfer
- 8 Multidistrict Litigation - Direct File

VI. CAUSE OF ACTION

Cite the U.S. Civil Statute under which you are filing (Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity):

Title III of Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. Sec. 12181 et seq.

Brief description of cause:

Plaintiff seeks injunction to discrimination against the visually impaired

VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:

CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION UNDER RULE 23, F.R.Cv.P. DEMAND \$

CHECK YES only if demanded in complaint:
JURY DEMAND: Yes No

VIII. RELATED CASE(S) IF ANY

(See instructions):

JUDGE

DOCKET NUMBER

DATE

12/11/17

SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY OF RECORD

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

RECEIPT #

AMOUNT

APPLYING IFP

JUDGE

MAG. JUDGE

CERTIFICATION OF ARBITRATION ELIGIBILITY

Local Arbitration Rule 83.10 provides that with certain exceptions, actions seeking money damages only in an amount not in excess of \$150,000, exclusive of interest and costs, are eligible for compulsory arbitration. The amount of damages is presumed to be below the threshold amount unless a certification to the contrary is filed.

I, DAN SHAKED, counsel for PEDRO MARTINEZ, do hereby certify that the above captioned civil action is ineligible for compulsory arbitration for the following reason(s):

- monetary damages sought are in excess of \$150,000, exclusive of interest and costs,
- the complaint seeks injunctive relief,
- the matter is otherwise ineligible for the following reason

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT - FEDERAL RULES CIVIL PROCEDURE 7.1

Identify any parent corporation and any publicly held corporation that owns 10% or more of its stocks:

RELATED CASE STATEMENT (Section VIII on the Front of this Form)

Please list all cases that are arguably related pursuant to Division of Business Rule 50.3.1 in Section VIII on the front of this form. Rule 50.3.1 (a) provides that "A civil case is "related" to another civil case for purposes of this guideline when, because of the similarity of facts and legal issues or because the cases arise from the same transactions or events, a substantial saving of judicial resources is likely to result from assigning both cases to the same judge and magistrate judge." Rule 50.3.1 (b) provides that " A civil case shall not be deemed "related" to another civil case merely because the civil case: (A) involves identical legal issues, or (B) involves the same parties." Rule 50.3.1 (c) further provides that "Presumptively, and subject to the power of a judge to determine otherwise pursuant to paragraph (d), civil cases shall not be deemed to be "related" unless both cases are still pending before the court."

NY-E DIVISION OF BUSINESS RULE 50.1(d)(2)

- 1.) Is the civil action being filed in the Eastern District removed from a New York State Court located in Nassau or Suffolk County? Yes No
- 2.) If you answered "no" above:
 - a) Did the events or omissions giving rise to the claim or claims, or a substantial part thereof, occur in Nassau or Suffolk County? Yes No
 - b) Did the events or omissions giving rise to the claim or claims, or a substantial part thereof, occur in the Eastern District? Yes No
 - c) If this is a Fair Debt Collection Practice Act case, specify the County in which the offending communication was received:

If your answer to question 2 (b) is "No," does the defendant (or a majority of the defendants, if there is more than one) reside in Nassau or Suffolk County, or, in an interpleader action, does the claimant (or a majority of the claimants, if there is more than one) reside in Nassau or Suffolk County? Yes No

(Note: A corporation shall be considered a resident of the County in which it has the most significant contacts).

BAR ADMISSION

I am currently admitted in the Eastern District of New York and currently a member in good standing of the bar of this court.

- Yes No

Are you currently the subject of any disciplinary action (s) in this or any other state or federal court?

- Yes (If yes, please explain) No

I certify the accuracy of all information provided above.

Signature: 

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

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

Eastern District of New York

PEDRO MARTINEZ, Individually and as the
representative of a class of similarly situated persons,

Plaintiff(s)

v.

BLT RESTAURANT GROUP, LLC d/b/a BLT
Restaurants and ESQUARED HOSPITALITY, LLC
a/k/a E2 Hospitality

Defendant(s)

Civil Action No. 17-cv- 7196

SUMMONS IN A CIVIL ACTION

To: *(Defendant's name and address)* BLT RESTAURANT GROUP, LLC d/b/a BLT Restaurants
950 THIRD AVENUE
NEW YORK, NY 10022

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:

SHAKED LAW GROUP, P.C.
44 COURT ST., SUITE 1217
BROOKLYN, NY 11201

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.

DOUGLAS C. PALMER
CLERK OF COURT

Date: _____

Signature of Clerk or Deputy Clerk

Civil Action No. 17-cv-

PROOF OF SERVICE

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

This summons for *(name of individual and title, if any)* _____
was received by me on *(date)* _____.

I personally served the summons on the individual at *(place)* _____
_____ on *(date)* _____; or

I left the summons at the individual's residence or usual place of abode with *(name)* _____
_____, a person of suitable age and discretion who resides there,
on *(date)* _____, and mailed a copy to the individual's last known address; or

I served the summons on *(name of individual)* _____, who is
designated by law to accept service of process on behalf of *(name of organization)* _____
_____ on *(date)* _____; or

I returned the summons unexecuted because _____; or

Other *(specify)*:

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

Server's address

Additional information regarding attempted service, etc:

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

Eastern District of New York

PEDRO MARTINEZ, Individually and as the representative of a class of similarly situated persons,

Plaintiff(s)

v.

BLT RESTAURANT GROUP, LLC d/b/a BLT Restaurants and ESQUARED HOSPITALITY, LLC a/k/a E2 Hospitality

Defendant(s)

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)
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)

Civil Action No. 17-cv- 7196

SUMMONS IN A CIVIL ACTION

To: (Defendant's name and address) ESQUARED HOSPITALITY, LLC a/k/a E2 Hospitality
950 THIRD AVENUE
NEW YORK, NY 10022

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:

SHAKED LAW GROUP, P.C.
44 COURT ST., SUITE 1217
BROOKLYN, NY 11201

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.

DOUGLAS C. PALMER
CLERK OF COURT

Date:

Signature of Clerk or Deputy Clerk

Civil Action No. 17-cv-

PROOF OF SERVICE

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

This summons for *(name of individual and title, if any)* _____
was received by me on *(date)* _____ .

I personally served the summons on the individual at *(place)* _____
_____ on *(date)* _____ ; or

I left the summons at the individual's residence or usual place of abode with *(name)* _____
_____, a person of suitable age and discretion who resides there,
on *(date)* _____ , and mailed a copy to the individual's last known address; or

I served the summons on *(name of individual)* _____ , who is
designated by law to accept service of process on behalf of *(name of organization)* _____
_____ on *(date)* _____ ; or

I returned the summons unexecuted because _____ ; or

Other *(specify)*:

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

Server's address

Additional information regarding attempted service, etc: