

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS**

DAWN MEEGAN, individually, and on behalf	)	
of all others similarly situated,	)	
	)	
Plaintiff,	)	
	)	
v.	)	Case No.: 1:20-cv-00465
	)	
NFI INDUSTRIES, INC.	)	Judge
	)	
Defendant.	)	

**NOTICE OF REMOVAL**

Defendant NFI INDUSTRIES, INC. (“NFI Industries”), by and through its attorneys FAEGRE BAKER DANIELS LLP, respectfully removes the above-captioned matter from the Circuit Court of Cook County, Chancery Division, to the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1332, 1441, and 1446. In support of its Notice of Removal, NFI Industries states as follows:

**I. Procedural History**

1. On December 16, 2019, Plaintiff Dawn Meegan filed her Complaint against NFI Industries in the Circuit Court of Cook County, Chancery Division, alleging a putative class action for violations of the Illinois Biometric Information Privacy Act (“BIPA”), 740 ILCS 14/1, *et seq.* Plaintiff served NFI Industries with the Summons and Complaint on December 20, 2019.

2. Plaintiff is a citizen of the State of Illinois. Compl. ¶ 13.

3. NFI Industries is a corporation incorporated under the laws of the State of Delaware with its principal place of business in New Jersey because its headquarters, which is the location from which company officers and top management provide direction to the rest of the organization,

is in New Jersey. (Exhibit A, Decl. of Jack Bolotin ¶ 3). Accordingly, it is a citizen of both Delaware and New Jersey.

4. Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1446(a), a true and correct copy of all process, pleadings, and orders served upon NFI Industries is attached hereto as Exhibit B.

5. Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1446(b)(1), Fed. R. Civ. Proc. 6(a), and *Murphy Brothers, Inc. v. Michetti Pipe Stringing, Inc.*, 526 U.S. 344 (1999), NFI Industries has timely removed this action because this Notice of Removal is filed within 30 days after NFI Industries' receipt of service of the initial pleading setting forth the claims for relief upon which the action is based.

## **II. This Court has Complete Diversity Jurisdiction.**

6. This Court has complete diversity jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1332(a).

7. This is an action between citizens of different states. Plaintiff was a citizen of Illinois at the time she filed her Complaint. Upon information and belief, Plaintiff remained a citizen of Illinois at the time of removal. NFI Industries is a citizen of Delaware and New Jersey.

8. The amount in controversy exceeds \$75,000 because Plaintiff seeks a statutory penalty for "each violation" of up to \$5,000, and because Plaintiff alleges that each time she clocked into and out of work using her "fingerprint" over her alleged four-month period of employment constituted one or more violations of BIPA. (Compl. ¶¶ 41-42, 44, 78, 88, 97). Based on this approach, even the most conservative estimate would have Plaintiff clocking in and out far in excess of the 16 times necessary to exceed the jurisdictional amount-in-controversy threshold (i.e.,  $16 * \$5,000 = \$80,000$ ) over her alleged four months of employment.

## **III. This Court also has Jurisdiction Under the Class Action Fairness Act.**

9. The Class Action Fairness Act provides the statutory basis for original jurisdiction in federal court over putative class actions in which (1) the aggregate number of members in the

proposed class is 100 or more; (2) the amount in controversy “exceeds the sum or value of \$5,000,000, exclusive of interests and costs”; and (3) the parties are minimally diverse, meaning “any member of a class of plaintiffs is a citizen of a State different from any defendant.” 28 U.S.C. § 1332(d)(2)(A), (d)(5)(B).

10. The putative class action in the Complaint satisfies the requirements of CAFA. While the precise number in the proposed class cannot be determined until discovery, the aggregate putative class size according to Plaintiff’s allegations is, at a minimum, 4,000 members. (Exhibit A, Decl. of Jack Bolotin ¶¶ 5, 6).

11. The Complained alleges reckless or intentional violations of BIPA, which carry statutory damages of \$5,000 for “each violation.” *See* 740 ILCS 14/20. Thus, even if each class member is entitled to recover for only one “violation,” recovery of greater than the \$5,000,000 jurisdictional threshold is not “legally impossible” ( $4,000 * \$5,000 = \$20,000,000$ ). *See Spivey v. Vertrue*, 528 F.3d 982, 986 (7th Cir. 2008).

12. The parties are also minimally diverse in that Plaintiff is a citizen of Illinois and NFI Industries is a citizen of New Jersey and Delaware.

#### **IV. Venue Is Proper Here.**

13. Venue is proper in this Court pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1441(a), which permits any civil action brought in any state court in which the District Courts of the United States have original jurisdiction to be removed to the District Court of the United States for that district and division embracing the place where the state court action is pending.

14. NFI Industries reserves the right to amend or supplement this Notice of Removal.

15. In accordance with 28 U.S.C. § 1446(d), a copy of this Notice of Removal is being filed with the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County, Chancery Division, and is being served on Plaintiff.

16. NFI Industries submits this Notice of Removal without waiving any defenses to the claims asserted by Plaintiff or conceding that Plaintiff pled claims upon which relief can be granted.

Dated: January 21, 2020

FAEGRE BAKER DANIELS LLP

s/ Gregory P. Abrams

Gregory P. Abrams, #6280767

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[*Pro Hac Vice* Forthcoming]

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Minneapolis, MN 55402

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Facsimile: (612) 766-1600

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

The undersigned attorney hereby states that on January 21, 2020 he filed the foregoing document using the CM/ECF Filing System, which will send an email notification to the attorneys listed below. The foregoing document will also be served via overnight delivery upon all attorneys of record.

Brandon M. Wise  
Paul A. Lesko  
PEIFFER WOLF CARR & KANE, APLC  
818 Lafayette Ave., Floor 2  
St. Louis, MO 63104  
bwise@pwcklegal.com  
plesko@pwcklegal.com

s/ Gregory P. Abrams

# EXHIBIT A

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS

DAWN MEEGAN, individually, and on behalf	)	
of all others similarly situated,	)	
	)	
Plaintiff,	)	
	)	
v.	)	Case No.:
	)	
NFI INDUSTRIES, INC.,	)	Judge
	)	
Defendant.	)	

**DECLARATION IN SUPPORT OF NFI INDUSTRIES' INC., NOTICE OF REMOVAL**

I, Jack Bolotin, declare and state as follows:

1. I am currently employed as the Director of Finance and Treasury for NFI Industries, Inc. ("NFI Industries").

2. I make this declaration based on my personal knowledge and on my review of company records maintained in the regular course of NFI Industries' business.

3. NFI Industries is a corporation incorporated under the laws of the state of Delaware. Its company headquarters are in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, which is the location from which the majority of NFI Industries' corporate officers and other top management personnel direct the operations of the company. For example, NFI Industries' CEO and CFO work out of NFI Industries' New Jersey office. In addition, NFI's Finance and Human Resources Departments are also located in Cherry Hill, New Jersey.

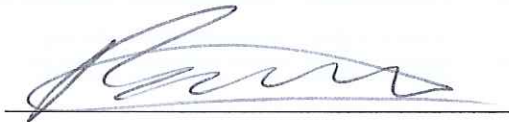
4. I understand that the Plaintiff in this case seeks to certify a class of "all individuals working for [NFI Industries] or any its affiliated facilities in the State of Illinois who had their fingerprints collected, captured, received, obtained, maintained, stored, or disclosed by [NFI Industries] during the applicable statutory period."

5. My job duties as Director of Finance and Treasury for NFI Industries include being familiar with and having access to the company's time reporting and payroll systems. I have reviewed company records relating to individuals assigned to work at NFI Industries in Illinois who have utilized timeclocks from Kronos, Inc. for the five-year period beginning December 16, 2014.

6. There are at least 4,000 individuals who fit that description.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Dated: January 21, 2020

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "John", is written over a horizontal line.



## **EXHIBIT B**

Return Date: No return date scheduled  
Hearing Date: 4/15/2020 9:30 AM - 9:30 AM  
Courtroom Number: 2308  
Location: District 1 Court  
Cook County, IL



FILED  
12/18/2019 11:43 AM  
DOROTHY BROWN  
CIRCUIT CLERK  
COOK COUNTY, IL  
2019CH14479

7778671

2120 - Served	2121 - Served
2220 - Not Served	2221 - Not Served
2320 - Served By Mail	2321 - Served By Mail
2420 - Served By Publication	2421 - Served By Publication

Summons - Alias Summons

(08/01/18) CCG 0001 A

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS**

DAWN MEEGAN

(Name all parties)

v.

NFI INDUSTRIES, INC.

Case No. 2019CH14479

**SUMMONS**     **ALIAS SUMMONS**

To each Defendant: NFI Industries - Serve: Triad1828 Centre, 2 Cooper Street, Camden, NJ 08102

**YOU ARE SUMMONED** and required to file an answer to the complaint in this case, a copy of which is hereto attached, or otherwise file your appearance and pay the required fee **within thirty (30) days after service of this Summons**, not counting the day of service. To file your answer or appearance you need access to the internet. Please visit [www.cookcountyclerkofcourt.org](http://www.cookcountyclerkofcourt.org) to initiate this process. Kiosks with internet access are available at all Clerk's Office locations. Please refer to the last page of this document for location information.

**If you fail to do so, a judgment by default may be entered against you for the relief requested in the complaint.**

To the Officer:

This Summons must be returned by the officer or other person to whom it was given for service, with endorsement of service and fees, if any, immediately after service. If service cannot be made, this Summons shall be returned so endorsed. This Summons may not be served later than thirty (30) days after its date.

Dorothy Brown, Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois  
[cookcountyclerkofcourt.org](http://cookcountyclerkofcourt.org)

FILED DATE: 12/18/2019 11:43 AM 2019CH14479

Summons - Alias Summons

(08/01/18) CCG 0001 B

E-filing is now mandatory for documents in civil cases with limited exemptions. To e-file, you must first create an account with an e-filing service provider. Visit <http://efile.illinoiscourts.gov/service-providers.htm> to learn more and to select a service provider. If you need additional help or have trouble e-filing, visit <http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/FAQ/gethelp.asp>, or talk with your local circuit clerk's office.

Atty. No.: 62258  
Atty Name: Brandon M. Wise  
Atty. for: DAWN MEEGAN  
Address: 818 Lafayette Ave., Floor 2  
City: St. Louis  
State: MO Zip: 63104  
Telephone: (314) 833-4825  
Primary Email: bwise@pwcklegal.com

Witness: 12/18/2019 11:43 AM DOROTHY BROWN

DOROTHY BROWN, Clerk of Court



Date of Service: \_\_\_\_\_  
(To be inserted by officer on copy left with Defendant or other person):

FILED DATE: 12/18/2019 11:43 AM 2019CH14479

FILED DATE: 12/18/2019 11:43 AM 2019CH14479

**CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY OFFICE LOCATIONS**

Richard J Daley Center  
50 W Washington  
Chicago, IL 60602

District 2 - Skokie  
5600 Old Orchard Rd  
Skokie, IL 60077

District 3 - Rolling Meadows  
2121 Euclid  
Rolling Meadows, IL 60008

District 4 - Maywood  
1500 Maybrook Ave  
Maywood, IL 60153

District 5 - Bridgeview  
10220 S 76th Ave  
Bridgeview, IL 60455

District 6 - Markham  
16501 S Kedzie Pkwy  
Markham, IL 60428

Domestic Violence Court  
555 W Harrison  
Chicago, IL 60607

Juvenile Center Building  
2245 W Ogden Ave, Rm 13  
Chicago, IL 60602

Criminal Court Building  
2650 S California Ave, Rm 526  
Chicago, IL 60608

**Daley Center Divisions/Departments**

Civil Division  
Richard J Daley Center  
50 W Washington, Rm 601  
Chicago, IL 60602  
Hours: 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

Chancery Division  
Richard J Daley Center  
50 W Washington, Rm 802  
Chicago, IL 60602  
Hours: 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

Domestic Relations Division  
Richard J Daley Center  
50 W Washington, Rm 802  
Chicago, IL 60602  
Hours: 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

Civil Appeals  
Richard J Daley Center  
50 W Washington, Rm 801  
Chicago, IL 60602  
Hours: 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

Criminal Department  
Richard J Daley Center  
50 W Washington, Rm 1006  
Chicago, IL 60602  
Hours: 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

County Division  
Richard J Daley Center  
50 W Washington, Rm 1202  
Chicago, IL 60602  
Hours: 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

Probate Division  
Richard J Daley Center  
50 W Washington, Rm 1202  
Chicago, IL 60602  
Hours: 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

Law Division  
Richard J Daley Center  
50 W Washington, Rm 801  
Chicago, IL 60602  
Hours: 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

Traffic Division  
Richard J Daley Center  
50 W Washington, Lower Level  
Chicago, IL 60602  
Hours: 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

Chancery Division Civil Cover Sheet

General Chancery Section

(5/26/16) CCCH 0623

Hearing Date: 4/15/2020 9:30 AM - 9:30 AM

Courtroom Number: 2308

Location: District 1 Court

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS

COOK COUNTY DEPARTMENT, CHANCERY DIVISION

FILED

12/16/2019 5:09 PM  
DOROTHY BROWN  
CIRCUIT CLERK  
COOK COUNTY, IL  
2019CH14479

7752407

Dawn Meegan

Plaintiff

w.

NFI Industries, Inc.

Defendant

No. 2019CH14479

CHANCERY DIVISION CIVIL COVER SHEET  
GENERAL CHANCERY SECTION

A Chancery Division Civil Cover Sheet - General Chancery Section shall be filed with the initial complaint in all actions filed in the General Chancery Section of Chancery Division. The information contained herein is for administrative purposes only. Please check the box in front of the appropriate category which best characterizes your action being filed.

- 0005  Administrative Review
- 0001  Class Action
- 0002  Declaratory Judgment
- 0004  Injunction

- 0007  General Chancery
- 0010  Accounting
- 0011  Arbitration
- 0012  Certiorari
- 0013  Dissolution of Corporation
- 0014  Dissolution of Partnership
- 0015  Equitable Lien
- 0016  Interpleader
- 0017  Mandamus
- 0018  Ne Exeat

- 0019  Partition
- 0020  Quiet Title
- 0021  Quo Warranto
- 0022  Redemption Rights
- 0023  Reformation of a Contract
- 0024  Rescission of a Contract
- 0025  Specific Performance
- 0026  Trust Construction
- Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

By: Brandon M. Wise  
 Atty. No.: 62258  Pro se 99500  
 Name: Brandon M. Wise  
 Atty. for: Plaintiff  
 Address: 818 Lafayette Ave., Floor 2  
 City/State/Zip: St. Louis, MO 63104  
 Telephone: (314) 833-4827  
 Primary Email: bwise@pwcklegal.com  
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 Tertiary Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Pro Se Only:**  I have read and agree to the terms of the *Clerk's Office Electronic Notice Policy* and choose to opt in to electronic notice from the **Clerk's Office** for this case at this Email address:  
 \_\_\_\_\_

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS  
COUNTY DEPARTMENT, CHANCERY DIVISION

DAWN MEEGAN, individually, and on behalf of all  
others similarly situated,

*Plaintiff,*

v.

NFI INDUSTRIES, INC.,

*Defendant.*

Case No. 2019CH14479

**CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT**

Named Plaintiff Dawn Meegan ("Meegan" or "Plaintiff"), by and through her attorneys, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated (the "Class"), brings the following Class Action Complaint ("Complaint") pursuant to the Illinois Code of Civil Procedure, 735 ILCS §§ 5/2-801 and 2-802, against Defendant NFI Industries, Inc. ("NFI" or "Defendant"), its subsidiaries and affiliates, to redress and curtail Defendant's unlawful collection, use, storage, and disclosure of Plaintiff's sensitive biometric data. Plaintiff alleges as follows upon personal knowledge as to themselves, their own acts and experiences and, as to all other matters, upon information and belief, including investigation conducted by her attorneys.

**NATURE OF THE ACTION**

1. Defendant NFI is a warehouse and distribution center that provides transit, warehousing, brokerage, and real estate services to clients. NFI has locations throughout the Chicagoland area.

2. While many employers use conventional methods for tracking time worked (such as ID badge swipes or punch clocks), Defendant's and its affiliated facilities' employees are required to have their fingerprints scanned by a biometric timekeeping device.

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3. Biometrics are not relegated to esoteric corners of commerce. Many businesses – such as Defendant – and financial institutions have incorporated biometric applications into their workplace in the form of biometric timeclocks, and into consumer products, including such ubiquitous consumer products as checking accounts and cell phones.

4. Unlike ID badges or time cards – which can be changed or replaced if stolen or compromised – fingerprints are unique, permanent biometric identifiers associated with each employee. This exposes NFI employees to serious and irreversible privacy risks. For example, if a database containing fingerprints or other sensitive, proprietary biometric data is hacked, breached, or otherwise exposed – like in the recent Yahoo, eBay, Equifax, Uber, Home Depot, MyFitnessPal, Panera, Whole Foods, Chipotle, Omni Hotels & Resorts, Trump Hotels, Facebook/Cambridge Analytica, and Suprema data breaches or misuses – employees have no means by which to prevent identity theft, unauthorized tracking or other unlawful or improper use of this highly personal and private information.

5. In 2015, a data breach at the United States Office of Personnel Management exposed the personal identification information, including biometric data, of over 21.5 million federal employees, contractors, and job applicants. U.S. Off. of Personnel Mgmt., *Cybersecurity Incidents* (2018), available at <https://www.opm.gov/cybersecurity/cybersecurity-incidents>.

6. An illegal market already exists for biometric data. Hackers and identity thieves have targeted Aadhaar, the largest biometric database in the world, which contains the personal and biometric data – including fingerprints, iris scans, and a facial photograph – of over a billion Indian citizens. See Vidhi Doshi, *A Security Breach in India Has Left a Billion People at Risk of Identity Theft*, The Washington Post (Jan. 4, 2018), available at [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2018/01/04/a-security-breach-in-india-has-left-a-billion-people-at-risk-of-identity-theft/?utm\\_term=.b3c70259d38](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2018/01/04/a-security-breach-in-india-has-left-a-billion-people-at-risk-of-identity-theft/?utm_term=.b3c70259d38). In January 2018, an

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Indian newspaper reported that the information housed in Aadhaar was available for purchase for less than \$8 and in as little as 10 minutes. Rachna Khaira, *Rs 500, 10 Minutes, and You Have Access to Billion Aadhaar Details*, The Tribune (Jan. 4, 2018), available at <http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/rs-500-10-minutes-and-you-have-access-to-billion-aadhaar-details/523361.html>.

7. In the United States, law enforcement, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, have attempted to turn states' Department of Motor Vehicles databases into biometric data goldmines, using facial recognition technology to scan the faces of thousands of citizens, all without their notice or consent. Drew Harwell, *FBI, ICE Find State Driver's License Photos Are a Gold Mine for Facial-Recognition Searches*, The Washington Post (July 7, 2019), available at [https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2019/07/07/fbi-ice-find-state-drivers-license-photos-are-gold-mine-facial-recognition-searches/?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.da9afb2472a9](https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2019/07/07/fbi-ice-find-state-drivers-license-photos-are-gold-mine-facial-recognition-searches/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.da9afb2472a9).

8. This practice has been criticized by lawmakers. Some states, including Illinois, have refused to comply with law enforcement's invasive requests. *State Denying Facial Recognition Requests*, Jacksonville Journal-Courier (July 9, 2019), available at <https://www.myjournalcourier.com/news/article/State-denying-facial-recognition-requests-14081967.php>.

9. In August 2019, it was widely reported that Suprema, a security company responsible for a web-based biometrics lock system that uses fingerprints and facial geometry scans in 1.5 million locations around the world, maintained biometric data and other personal information on a publicly accessible, unencrypted database. *Major Breach Found in Biometrics System Used by Banks, UK police and Defence Firms*, The Guardian (Aug. 14, 2019), available at <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2019/aug/14/major-breach-found-in-biometrics-system-used-by-banks-uk-police-and-defence-firms>.



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10. Recognizing the need to protect its citizens from situations like these, Illinois enacted the Biometric Information Privacy Act (“BIPA”), 740 ILCS 14/1, *et seq.*, specifically to regulate companies that collect and store Illinois citizens’ biometrics, such as fingerprints.

11. Notwithstanding the clear and unequivocal requirements of the law, Defendant disregards employees’ statutorily protected privacy rights and unlawfully collects, stores, disseminates, and uses its employees’ biometric data in violation of BIPA. Specifically, Defendant has violated and continues to violate BIPA because it did not and continues not to:

- a. Properly inform Plaintiff and others similarly situated in writing of the specific purpose and length of time for which their fingerprints were being collected, stored, and used, as required by BIPA;
- b. Receive a written release from Plaintiff and others similarly situated to collect, store, or otherwise use their fingerprints, as required by BIPA;
- c. Develop and adhere to a publicly available retention schedule and guidelines for permanently destroying Plaintiff’s and other similarly-situated individuals’ fingerprints, as required by BIPA; and
- d. Obtain consent from Plaintiff and others similarly situated to disclose, redisclose, or otherwise disseminate their fingerprints to a third party as required by BIPA.

12. Accordingly, Plaintiff seeks an Order: (1) declaring that Defendant’s conduct violates BIPA; (2) requiring Defendant to cease the unlawful activities discussed herein; and (3) awarding statutory damages to Plaintiffs and the proposed Class.

#### **PARTIES**

13. Plaintiff Dawn Meegan is a natural person and a citizen of the State of Illinois.

14. Defendant NFI is a limited liability corporation existing under the laws of the State of New Jersey, with its principal place of business in Cherry Hill, New Jersey. NFI is registered with the Illinois Secretary of State and conducts business in the State of Illinois, including Cook County.

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## JURISDICTION AND VENUE

15. This Court has jurisdiction over Defendant pursuant to 735 ILCS 5/2-209 because it conducts business transactions in Illinois, committed statutory violations and tortious acts in Illinois, and is registered to conduct business in Illinois.

16. Venue is proper in Cook County because Plaintiff resides in Cook County and the statutory violations alleged herein occurred in Cook County.

## FACTUAL BACKGROUND

### I. The Biometric Information Privacy Act

17. In the early 2000s, major national corporations started using Chicago and other locations in Illinois to test “new applications of biometric-facilitated financial transactions, including finger-scan technologies at grocery stores, gas stations, and school cafeterias.” 740 ILCS § 14/5(c). Given its relative infancy, an overwhelming portion of the public became wary of this then-growing yet unregulated technology. *See* 740 ILCS § 14/5.

18. In late 2007, a biometrics company called Pay by Touch, which provided major retailers throughout the State of Illinois with fingerprint scanners to facilitate consumer transactions, filed for bankruptcy. That bankruptcy was alarming to the Illinois Legislature because suddenly there was a serious risk that millions of fingerprint records – which, like other unique biometric identifiers, can be linked to people’s sensitive financial and personal data – could now be sold, distributed, or otherwise shared through the bankruptcy proceedings without adequate protections for Illinois citizens. The bankruptcy also highlighted the fact that most consumers who used the company’s fingerprint scanners were completely unaware that the scanners were not actually transmitting fingerprint data to the retailer who deployed the scanner, but rather to the now-bankrupt company, and that their unique biometric identifiers could now be sold to unknown third parties.

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19. Recognizing the “very serious need [for] protections for the citizens of Illinois when it [came to their] biometric information,” Illinois enacted BIPA in 2008. *See* Illinois House Transcript, 2008 Reg. Sess. No. 276; 740 ILCS § 14/5.

20. Additionally, to ensure compliance, BIPA provides that, for each violation, the prevailing party may recover \$1,000 or actual damages, whichever is greater, for negligent violations and \$5,000, or actual damages, whichever is greater, for intentional or reckless violations. 740 ILCS 14/20.

21. BIPA is an informed consent statute which achieves its goal by making it unlawful for a company to, among other things, collect, capture, purchase, receive through trade, or otherwise obtain a person’s or a customer’s biometric identifiers or biometric information, unless it first:

- a. Informs the subject in writing that a biometric identifier or biometric information is being collected, stored and used;
- b. Informs the subject in writing of the specific purpose and length of term for which a biometric identifier or biometric information is being collected, stored, and used; and
- c. Receives a written release executed by the subject of the biometric identifier or biometric information.

*See* 740 ILCS § 14/15(b).

22. BIPA specifically applies to employees who work in the State of Illinois. BIPA defines a “written release” specifically “in the context of employment [as] a release executed by an employee as a condition of employment.” 740 ILCS 14/10.

23. Biometric identifiers include retina and iris scans, voiceprints, scans of hand and face geometry, and – most importantly here – fingerprints. *See* 740 ILCS § 14/10. Biometric information is separately defined to include any information based on an individual’s biometric identifier that is used to identify an individual. *Id.*

24. BIPA also establishes standards for how companies must handle Illinois citizens’ biometric identifiers and biometric information. *See, e.g.*, 740 ILCS § 14/15(c)-(d). For example, BIPA

prohibits private entities from disclosing a person's or customer's biometric identifier or biometric information without first obtaining consent for such disclosure. *See* 740 ILCS § 14/15(d)(1).

25. BIPA also prohibits selling, leasing, trading, or otherwise profiting from a person's biometric identifiers or biometric information (740 ILCS § 14/15(c)) and requires companies to develop and comply with a written policy – made available to the public – establishing a retention schedule and guidelines for permanently destroying biometric identifiers and biometric information when the initial purpose for collecting such identifiers or information has been satisfied or within three years of the individual's last interaction with the company, whichever occurs first. 740 ILCS § 14/15(a).

26. The Illinois legislature enacted BIPA due to the increasing use of biometric data in financial and security settings, the general public's hesitation to use biometric information, and – most significantly – the unknown ramifications of biometric technology. Biometrics are biologically unique to the individual and, once compromised, an individual is at heightened risk for identity theft and left without any recourse.

27. BIPA provides individuals with a private right of action, protecting their right to privacy regarding their biometrics as well as protecting their rights to know the precise nature for which their biometrics are used and how they are being stored and ultimately destroyed. Unlike other statutes that only create a right of action if there is a qualifying data breach, BIPA strictly regulates the manner in which entities may collect, store, use, and disseminate biometrics and creates a private right of action for lack of statutory compliance.

28. Plaintiff, like the Illinois legislature, recognizes how imperative it is to keep biometric information secure. Biometric information, unlike other personal identifiers such as a social security number, cannot be changed or replaced if hacked or stolen.

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## II. Defendant Violates the Biometric Information Privacy Act.

29. By the time BIPA passed through the Illinois legislature in mid-2008, most companies who had experimented using employees' biometric data as an authentication method stopped doing so.

30. However, Defendant failed to take note of the shift in Illinois law governing the collection and use of biometric data. As a result, Defendant continues to collect, store, use, and disseminate employees' biometric data in violation of BIPA.

31. Specifically, when employees are hired by NFI, they are required to have their fingerprints captured and stored to enroll them in its Kronos employee database(s).

32. NFI uses an employee time tracking system supplied by Kronos that requires employees to use their fingerprint as a means of authentication. Unlike a traditional timeclock, all NFI employees must use their fingerprints to "punch" in and out of work.

33. Upon information and belief, NFI fails to inform its employees that it discloses their fingerprint data to at least one out-of-state third-party vendor, Kronos; fails to inform its employees that it discloses their fingerprint data to other, currently unknown third parties, which host the biometric data in their data centers; fails to inform its employees of the purposes and duration for which it collects their sensitive biometric data; and fails to obtain written releases from employees before collecting their fingerprints.

34. Furthermore, Defendant failed to develop and adhere to a written, publicly available policy identifying its retention schedule and guidelines for permanently destroying employees' fingerprints when the initial purpose for collecting or obtaining their fingerprints is no longer relevant, as required by BIPA.

35. The Pay by Touch bankruptcy, which triggered the passage of BIPA, highlights why such conduct – where individuals are aware that they are providing a fingerprint but are not aware to

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whom or for what purposes they are doing so – is dangerous. This bankruptcy spurred Illinois citizens and legislators into realizing that it is crucial for individuals to understand when providing biometric identifiers such as a fingerprint, who exactly is collecting their biometric data, where it will be transmitted, for what purposes it will be transmitted, and for how long. Defendant disregards these obligations and their employees' statutory rights and instead unlawfully collects, stores, uses, and disseminates employees' biometric identifiers and information, without ever receiving the individual's informed written consent required by BIPA.

36. Upon information and belief, Defendant lacks retention schedules and guidelines for permanently destroying Plaintiff's and other similarly-situated individuals' biometric data and has not and will not destroy Plaintiff's and other similarly-situated individuals' biometric data when the initial purpose for collecting or obtaining such data has been satisfied or within three years of the employee's last interaction with each company.

37. NFI employees are not told what might happen to their biometric data if and when Defendant merges with another company or worse, if and when Defendant's business folds, or when the other third parties' that have received their biometric data businesses fold.

38. Since Defendant neither publishes BIPA-mandated data retention policies nor discloses the purposes for their collection of biometric data, NFI employees have no idea whether Defendant sells, discloses, re-discloses, or otherwise disseminates their biometric data. Moreover, Plaintiff and others similarly situated are not told to whom Defendant currently discloses their biometric data to, or what might happen to their biometric data in the event of a merger or a bankruptcy.

39. These violations have raised a material risk that Plaintiff's and other similarly-situated individuals' biometric data will be unlawfully accessed by third parties.

40. By and through the actions detailed above, Defendant disregarded Plaintiff's and other similarly-situated individuals' legal rights in violation of BIPA.

### III. Plaintiff Dawn Meegan's Experience

41. Plaintiff Dawn Meegan worked as a Warehouse Associate from May 2016 until August 2016.

42. As a condition of employment, Plaintiff was required to scan her fingerprints so Defendant could use it as an authentication method to track her time.

43. Defendant subsequently stored Plaintiff's fingerprint data in its Kronos database(s).

44. Plaintiff was required to scan her fingerprints each time she clocked in for work and clocked out of work.

45. Plaintiff has never been informed of the specific limited purposes or length of time for which Defendant collected, stored, used, and/or disseminated her biometric data.

46. Plaintiff is unaware of any written, publicly available biometric data retention policy developed by Defendant, nor has she ever been informed whether Defendant will ever permanently delete her biometric data.

47. Plaintiff has never been provided with nor ever signed a written release allowing Defendant to collect, store, use, or disseminate her biometric data.

48. Plaintiff has continuously and repeatedly been exposed to the risks and harmful conditions created by Defendant's violations of BIPA alleged herein.

49. No amount of time or money can compensate Plaintiff if her biometric data is compromised by the lax procedures through which Defendant captured, stored, used, and disseminated hers and other similarly-situated individuals' biometrics. Moreover, Plaintiff would not have provided her biometric data to Defendant if she had known that it would retain such information for an indefinite period of time without her consent.

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50. A showing of actual damages is not necessary in order to state a claim under BIPA. *See Rosenbarb v. Six Flags Ent. Corp.*, 2019 IL 123186, ¶ 40 (“[A]n individual need not allege some actual injury or adverse effect, beyond violation of his or her rights under the Act, in order to qualify as an “aggrieved” person and be entitled to seek liquidated damages and injunctive relief pursuant to the Act”).

51. Nonetheless, Plaintiff is aggrieved because she suffered an injury-in-fact based on Defendant’s violations of her legal rights. Defendant has intentionally interfered with Plaintiff’s right to possess and control her own sensitive biometric data. Additionally, Plaintiff suffered an invasion of a legally protected interest when Defendant secured her personal and private biometric data at a time when it had no right to do so, a gross invasion of her right to privacy. BIPA protects consumers like Flores from this precise conduct. Defendant had no lawful right to secure this data or share it with third parties absent a specific legislative license to do so.

52. Plaintiff’s biometric data is economically valuable, and such value will increase as the commercialization of biometrics continues to grow.

53. Plaintiff also suffered an injury in fact because Defendant has improperly disseminated her biometric identifiers and/or biometric information to at least one third party, Kronos, without her consent, in violation of BIPA.

54. Plaintiff also suffered an informational injury because Defendant has failed to provide her with information to which she was entitled by statute. Through BIPA, the Illinois legislature has created a right: an individual’s right to receive certain information prior to a company securing his or her highly personal, private, and proprietary biometric data; and an injury – not receiving this extremely critical information.

55. Pursuant to 740 ILCS § 14/15(b), Plaintiff was entitled to receive certain information prior to Defendant securing her biometric data; namely, information advising her of the specific



limited purpose(s) and length of time for which Defendant collects, stores, uses and disseminates her private biometric data; information regarding Defendant's biometric retention policy; and a written release allowing Defendant to collect, store, use, and disseminate her private biometric data. By depriving Plaintiff of this information, Defendant injured her. *Public Citizen v. U.S. Department of Justice*, 491 U.S. 440, 449 (1989); *Federal Election Commission v. Akins*, 524 U.S. 11 (1998).

56. Plaintiff has plausibly inferred actual and ongoing harm in the form of monetary damages for the value of the collection and retention of her biometric data; in the form of monetary damages by not obtaining compensation as a result of being denied access to material information about Defendant's policies and practices; in the form of the unauthorized disclosure of her confidential biometric data to third parties; in the form of interference with her right to control and possess her confidential biometric data; and, in the form of the exposure to substantial and irreversible loss of privacy.

57. As Plaintiff is not required to allege or prove actual damages in order to state a claim under BIPA, she seeks statutory damages under BIPA as compensation for the injuries caused by Defendant. *Rosenbach*, 2019 IL 123186, ¶ 40.

#### CLASS ALLEGATIONS

58. Pursuant to the Illinois Code of Civil Procedure, 735 ILCS 5/2-801, Plaintiff brings claims on her own behalf and as a representative of all other similarly-situated individuals to recover statutory penalties, prejudgment interest, attorneys' fees and costs, and other damages owed under BIPA, 740 ILCS § 14/1, *et seq.*

59. As discussed *supra*, Section 14/15(b) of BIPA prohibits a company from, among other things, collecting, capturing, purchasing, receiving through trade, or otherwise obtaining a person's or a customer's biometric identifiers or biometric information, unless it first (1) informs the individual in writing that a biometric identifier or biometric information is being collected or stored; (2) informs

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the individual in writing of the specific purpose and length of time for which a biometric identifier or biometric information is being collected, stored, and used; **and** (3) receives a written release executed by the subject of the biometric identifier or biometric information. 740 ILCS § 14/15.

60. Plaintiff seeks class certification under the Illinois Code of Civil Procedure, 735 § ILCS 5/2-801 for the following class of similarly-situated individuals under BIPA:

All individuals working for Defendant or any of its affiliated facilities in the State of Illinois who had their fingerprints collected, captured, received, obtained, maintained, stored, or disclosed by Defendant during the applicable statutory period.

61. This action is properly maintained as a class action under 735 ILCS § 5/2-801 because:

- A. The class is so numerous that joinder of all members is impracticable;
- B. There are questions of law or fact that are common to the class;
- C. The claims of the Plaintiff are typical of the claims of the class; and,
- D. The Plaintiff will fairly and adequately protect the interests of the class.

#### Numerosity

62. The total number of putative class members exceeds fifty (50) individuals. The exact number of class members can easily be determined from NFI's payroll records.

#### Commonality

63. There is a well-defined commonality of interest in the substantial questions of law and fact concerning and affecting the Class in that Plaintiff and all members of the Class have been harmed by Defendant's failure to comply with BIPA. The common questions of law and fact include, but are not limited to the following:

- A. Whether Defendant collected, captured or otherwise obtained Plaintiff's and the Class's biometric identifiers or biometric information;
- B. Whether Defendant properly informed Plaintiff and the Class of its purposes for collecting, using, storing and disseminating their biometric identifiers or biometric information;
- C. Whether Defendant obtained a written release (as defined in 740 ILCS §

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- 14/10) to collect, use, store and disseminate Plaintiff's and the Class's biometric identifiers or biometric information;
- D. Whether Defendant has disclosed or re-disclosed Plaintiff's and the Class's biometric identifiers or biometric information;
  - E. Whether Defendant has sold, leased, traded, or otherwise profited from Plaintiff's and the Class's biometric identifiers or biometric information;
  - F. Whether Defendant developed a written policy, made available to the public, establishing a retention schedule and guidelines for permanently destroying biometric identifiers and biometric information when the initial purpose for collecting or obtaining such identifiers or information has been satisfied or within three years of their last interaction with the individual, whichever occurs first;
  - G. Whether Defendant complies with any such written policy (if one exists);
  - H. Whether Defendant used Plaintiff's and the Class's fingerprints to identify them;
  - I. Whether Defendant's violations of BIPA have raised a material risk that Plaintiff's biometric data will be unlawfully accessed by third parties;
  - J. Whether the violations of BIPA were committed negligently; and
  - K. Whether the violations of BIPA were committed intentionally and/or recklessly.
64. Plaintiff anticipates that Defendant will raise defenses that are common to the class.

#### Adequacy

65. Plaintiff will fairly and adequately protect the interests of all members of the class, and there are no known conflicts of interest between Plaintiff and class members. Plaintiff, moreover, has retained experienced counsel that are competent in the prosecution of complex litigation and who have extensive experience acting as class counsel.

#### Typicality

66. The claims asserted by Plaintiff are typical of the class members she seeks to represent. Plaintiff has the same interests and suffers from the same unlawful practices as the class members.

67. Upon information and belief, there are no other class members who have an interest

individually controlling the prosecution of his or her individual claims, especially in light of the relatively small value of each claim and the difficulties involved in bringing individual litigation against one's employer. However, if any such class member should become known, he or she can "opt out" of this action pursuant to 735 ILCS § 5/2-801.

#### **Predominance and Superiority**

68. The common questions identified above predominate over any individual issues, which will relate solely to the quantum of relief due to individual class members. A class action is superior to other available means for the fair and efficient adjudication of this controversy because individual joinder of the parties is impracticable. Class action treatment will allow a large number of similarly-situated persons to prosecute their common claims in a single forum simultaneously, efficiently and without the unnecessary duplication of effort and expense if these claims were brought individually. Moreover, as the damages suffered by each class member are relatively small in the sense pertinent to class action analysis, the expenses and burden of individual litigation would make it difficult for individual class members to vindicate their claims.

69. Additionally, important public interests will be served by addressing the matter as a class action. The cost to the court system and the public for the adjudication of individual litigation and claims would be substantially more than if claims are treated as a class action. Prosecution of separate actions by individual class members would create a risk of inconsistent and varying adjudications, establish incompatible standards of conduct for defendants and/or substantially impair or impede the ability of class members to protect their interests. The issues in this action can be decided by means of common, class-wide proof. In addition, if appropriate, the Court can and is empowered to fashion methods to efficiently manage this action as a class action.

**FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

**Violation of 740 ILCS § 14/15(a): Failure to Institute, Maintain and Adhere to a Written, Publicly-Available Retention Schedule**

70. Plaintiff incorporates the foregoing allegations as if fully set forth herein.

71. BIPA mandates that companies in possession of biometric data establish and maintain a satisfactory biometric data retention – and, importantly, deletion – policy. Specifically, those companies must: (i) make publicly available a written policy establishing a retention schedule and guidelines for permanent deletion of biometric data (at most, three years after the company's last interaction with the individual); and (ii) actually adhere to that retention schedule and actually delete the biometric information. *See* 740 ILCS § 14/15(a).

72. Defendant fails to comply with these BIPA mandates.

73. Defendant NFI is a corporation registered to do business in Illinois during the statutory period and thus qualifies as a “private entity” under BIPA. *See* 740 ILCS 14/10.

74. Plaintiff and the Class are individuals who have had their “biometric identifiers” collected by Defendant (in the form of their fingerprints), as explained in detail in Sections II and III, *supra*. *See* 740 ILCS § 14/10.

75. Plaintiff's and the Class's biometric identifiers were used to identify them and, therefore, constitute “biometric information” as defined by BIPA. *See* 740 ILCS § 14/10.

76. Defendant failed to publish a publicly available retention schedule or guidelines for permanently destroying biometric identifiers and biometric information as specified by BIPA. *See* 740 ILCS § 14/15(a).

77. Upon information and belief, Defendant lacks retention schedules and guidelines for permanently destroying Plaintiff's and the Class's biometric data and has not and will not destroy Plaintiff's and the Class's biometric data when the initial purpose for collecting or obtaining such data has been satisfied or within three years of the individual's last interaction with the company.

78. On behalf of herself and the Class, Plaintiff seeks: (1) declaratory relief; (2) injunctive and equitable relief as is necessary to protect the interests of Plaintiffs and the Class by requiring Defendant to comply with BIPA's requirements for the collection, storage, and use of biometric identifiers and biometric information as described herein; (3) statutory damages of \$5,000 for each intentional and/or reckless violation of BIPA pursuant to 740 ILCS 14/20(2) or, in the alternative, statutory damages of \$1,000 for each negligent violation of BIPA pursuant to 740 ILCS 14/20(1); and (4) reasonable attorneys' fees and costs and other litigation expenses pursuant to 740 ILCS 14/20(3).

### **SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION**

#### **Violation of 740 ILCS § 14/15(b): Failure to Obtain Informed Written Consent and Release Before Obtaining Biometric Identifiers or Information**

79. Plaintiff incorporates the foregoing allegations as if fully set forth herein.

80. BIPA requires companies to obtain informed written consent from employees before acquiring their biometric data. Specifically, BIPA makes it unlawful for any private entity to "collect, capture, purchase, receive through trade, or otherwise obtain a person's or a customer's biometric identifiers or biometric information unless [the entity] first: (1) informs the subject...in writing that a biometric identifier or biometric information is being collected or stored; (2) informs the subject...in writing of the specific purpose and length of term for which a biometric identifier or biometric information is being collected, stored, and used; **and** (3) receives a written release executed by the subject of the biometric identifier or biometric information..." 740 ILCS 14/15(b) (*emphasis added*).

81. Defendant fails to comply with these BIPA mandates.

82. Defendant is a corporation registered to do business in Illinois during the statutory period and thus qualifies as a "private entity" under BIPA. *See* 740 ILCS 14/10.

83. Plaintiff and the Class are individuals who have had their "biometric identifiers" collected by Defendant (in the form of their fingerprints), as explained in detail in Sections II and III, *supra*. *See* 740 ILCS § 14/10.

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84. Plaintiff's and the Class's biometric identifiers were used to identify them and, therefore, constitute "biometric information" as defined by BIPA. *See* 740 ILCS § 14/10.

85. Defendant systematically and automatically collected, captured, purchased, received through trade, or otherwise obtained Plaintiff's and the Class's biometric identifiers and/or biometric information without first obtaining the written release required by 740 ILCS 14/15(b)(3).

86. Defendant never informed Plaintiff and the Class in writing that their biometric identifiers and/or biometric information were being collected, captured, purchased, received through trade, or otherwise obtained, nor did Defendant inform Plaintiff and the Class in writing of the specific purpose(s) and length of term for which their biometric identifiers and/or biometric information were being collected, captured, purchased, received through trade, or otherwise obtained as required by 740 ILCS 14/15(b)(1)-(2).

87. By collecting, capturing, purchasing, receiving through trade, or otherwise obtaining Plaintiff's and the Class's biometric identifiers and biometric information as described herein, Defendant violated Plaintiff's and the Class's rights to privacy in their biometric identifiers and/or biometric information as set forth in BIPA. *See* 740 ILCS 14/1, *et seq.*

88. On behalf of herself and the Class, Plaintiff seeks: (1) declaratory relief; (2) injunctive and equitable relief as is necessary to protect the interests of Plaintiff and the Class by requiring Defendant to comply with BIPA's requirements for the collection, storage, use and dissemination of biometric identifiers and biometric information as described herein; (3) statutory damages of \$5,000 for each intentional and/or reckless violation of BIPA pursuant to 740 ILCS 14/20(2) or, in the alternative, statutory damages of \$1,000 for each negligent violation of BIPA pursuant to 740 ILCS 14/20(1); and (4) reasonable attorneys' fees and costs and other litigation expenses pursuant to 740 ILCS 14/20(3)

**THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION**

**Violation of 740 ILCS § 14/15(d): Disclosure of Biometric Identifiers and Information Before Obtaining Consent**

89. Plaintiff incorporates the foregoing allegations as if fully set forth herein.

90. BIPA prohibits private entities from disclosing a person's or customer's biometric identifier or biometric information without first obtaining consent for that disclosure. *See* 740 ILCS 14/15(d)(1).

91. Defendant fails to comply with this BIPA mandate.

92. Defendant is a corporation registered to do business in Illinois during the statutory period and thus qualifies as a "private entity" under BIPA. *See* 740 ILCS 14/10.

93. Plaintiff and the Class are individuals who have had their "biometric identifiers" collected by Defendant (in the form of their fingerprints), as explained in detail in Sections II and III, *supra*. *See* 740 ILCS § 14/10.

94. Plaintiff's and the Class's biometric identifiers were used to identify them and, therefore, constitute "biometric information" as defined by BIPA. *See* 740 ILCS § 14/10.

95. Defendant systematically and automatically disclosed, redisclosed, or otherwise disseminated Plaintiff's and the Class's biometric identifiers and/or biometric information without first obtaining the consent required by 740 ILCS 14/15(d)(1).

96. By disclosing, redisclosing, or otherwise disseminating Plaintiff's and the Class's biometric identifiers and biometric information as described herein, Defendant violated Plaintiff's and the Class's rights to privacy in their biometric identifiers and/or biometric information as set forth in BIPA. *See* 740 ILCS 14/1, *et seq.*

97. On behalf of herself and the Class, Plaintiff seeks: (1) declaratory relief; (2) injunctive and equitable relief as is necessary to protect the interests of Plaintiff and the Class by requiring Defendant to comply with BIPA's requirements for the collection, storage, use and dissemination of

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biometric identifiers and biometric information as described herein; (3) statutory damages of \$5,000 for each intentional and/or reckless violation of BIPA pursuant to 740 ILCS § 14/20(2) or, in the alternative, statutory damages of \$1,000 for each negligent violation of BIPA pursuant to 740 ILCS § 14/20(1); and (4) reasonable attorneys' fees and costs and other litigation expenses pursuant to 740 ILCS § 14/20(3).

### PRAYER FOR RELIEF

Wherefore, Plaintiff Dawn Meegan respectfully requests that this Court enter an Order:

- A. Certifying this case as a class action on behalf of the Class defined above, appointing Plaintiff Dawn Meegan as Class Representative, and appointing Peiffer Wolf Carr & Kane, APLC, as Class Counsel;
- B. Declaring that Defendant's actions, as set forth above, violate BIPA;
- C. Awarding statutory damages of \$5,000 for *each* intentional and/or reckless violation of BIPA pursuant to 740 ILCS § 14/20(2) or, in the alternative, statutory damages of \$1,000 for *each* negligent violation of BIPA pursuant to 740 ILCS § 14/20(1);
- D. Declaring that Defendant's actions, as set forth above, were intentional or reckless;
- E. Awarding injunctive and other equitable relief as is necessary to protect the interests of Plaintiff and the Class, including an Order requiring Defendant to collect, store, use, destroy, and disseminate biometric identifiers and/or biometric information in compliance with BIPA;
- F. Awarding Plaintiff and the Class their reasonable attorneys' fees and costs and other litigation expenses pursuant to 740 ILCS § 14/20(3);
- G. Awarding Plaintiff and the Class pre- and post-judgment interest, to the extent allowable; and,
- H. Awarding such other and further relief as equity and justice may require.

Date: December 16, 2019

Respectfully Submitted,

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Cook County Atty # 62258

**ATTORNEYS FOR PLAINTIFF  
AND THE PUTATIVE CLASS**

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Cook County, IL

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# EXHIBIT A

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IN THE CIRCUIT COURT  
TWENTIETH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
ST. CLAIR COUNTY, ILLINOIS

SAROYA ROBERSON, individually and on  
behalf of all others similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

v.

SYMPHONY POST ACUTE CARE  
NETWORK; SYMPHONY SYCAMORE  
LLC; SYMPHONY HEALTHCARE LLC;  
SYMPHONY M.L. LLC; SYMPHONY  
MONARCH HOLDINGS, LLC; and DOE  
DEFENDANTS 1-100,

Defendants.

Case No. 17 -L- 733



**MEMORANDUM AND ORDER**  
**ON CLASS CERTIFICATION**

The case comes before the Court on Plaintiff's Motion for Class Certification ("Motion").

The issues have been briefed and argued by the parties.<sup>1</sup> The Court hereby **ORDERS**:

**I. NATURE OF THE CASE AND PLAINTIFF'S MOTION FOR CLASS CERTIFICATION.**

Plaintiff Saroya Roberson worked at a nursing home in Swansea, Illinois. Plaintiff alleges that as part of timekeeping while she worked at this location, Defendants and others captured her biometric information or biometric identifiers (a palm scan) within the meaning of the Illinois Biometric Privacy Information Act, 740 ILCS 14/1 ("BIPA"). Defendants' opposition brief does not dispute Roberson's biometric information or biometric identifiers were so captured.

BIPA manifests the Illinois General Assembly's findings that:

<sup>1</sup> Arguments were heard on December 20, 2018 before Judge Julia R. Gomric. On February 8, 2019, after hearing, but before Judge Gomric ruled on the pending Motion for Class Certification, the court granted Symphony Sycamore LLC's Motion for Substitution as a Matter of Right, and this case was subsequently assigned to the undersigned. The court has reviewed the court file and report of proceedings held on December 20, 2018 and is ready to proceed without the need for additional hearing.

(1) Biometrics are uniquely sensitive identifiers. “Biometrics are unlike other unique identifiers . . . [and] are biologically unique to the individual; therefore, once compromised, the individual has no recourse, is at heightened risk for identity theft, and is likely to withdraw from biometric-facilitated transactions.” 740 ILCS § 14/5(c).

(2) Biometric technology is a new frontier subject to unpredictable developments. “The full ramifications of biometric technology are not fully known.” *Id.* at § 14/5(f).

(3) People are apprehensive of transactions involving their biometrics. The “overwhelming majority of members of the public are weary of the use of biometrics when such information is tied to finances and other personal information” and are “deterred from partaking in biometric identifier-facilitated transactions.” *Id.* at § 14/5(d)-(e).

(4) Regulation of biometric collection, use, and storage serves the public interest. The “public welfare, security and safety will be served by regulating the collection, use, safeguarding, handling, storage, retention, and destruction of biometric identifiers and information.” *Id.* at § 14/5(g).

Accordingly, BIPA puts certain requirements on parties dealing with biometric identifiers or biometric information, including:

(b) No private entity may collect, capture, purchase, receive through trade, or otherwise obtain a person's or a customer's biometric identifier or biometric information, unless it first:

(1) informs the subject or the subject's legally authorized representative in writing that a biometric identifier or biometric information is being collected or stored;

(2) informs the subject or the subject's legally authorized representative in writing of the specific purpose and length of term for which a biometric identifier or biometric information is being collected, stored, and used; and

(3) receives a written release executed by the subject of the biometric identifier or biometric information or the subject's legally authorized representative.

740 ILCS 14/5(b) (2018).

Plaintiff alleges none of these requirements were met when capturing her biometric information. Defendants' opposition to the Motion does not dispute this.

BIPA further provides a right of action for violations of its requirements:

Sec. 20. Right of action. Any person aggrieved by a violation of this Act shall have a right of action in a State circuit court . . . against an offending party. A prevailing party may recover for each violation:

(1) against a private entity that negligently violates a provision of this Act, liquidated damages of \$1,000 or actual damages, whichever is greater;

(2) against a private entity that intentionally violates a provision of this Act, liquidated damages of \$5,000 or actual damages, whichever is greater; . . . .

740 ILCS 14/20 (2018). Plaintiff brought this action pursuant to these and other provisions of BIPA.

Plaintiff alleges the Swansea, Illinois location where her biometric identifiers were captured is part of a network, the Symphony Post Acute Network ("SPAN" or the "Network"). She seeks to certify a class of Illinois citizens who had their biometric information or biometric identifiers captured, collected, etc. at any Illinois location in the Network (and associated subclasses discussed below):

All Illinois citizens whose biometric information was collected, captured, purchased, received through trade, or otherwise obtained in Illinois at any location associated with the Symphony Post Acute Care Network, a/k/a Symphony Post Acute Network, as set forth in the Illinois Biometric Information Privacy Act, 740 ILCS 14/5 *et seq.*

Excluded from the proposed Class are employees, officers, directors, subsidiaries and affiliates of any person or business associated with the Symphony Post Acute Care Network, a/k/a Symphony Post Acute Network, the judge or any officer of the court presiding over this action.

## II. LAW REGARDING A DETERMINATION OF CLASS CERTIFICATION.

"In determining whether to certify a proposed class, the trial court . . . should avoid

deciding the underlying merits of the case or resolving unsettled legal questions.” *CE Design Ltd. v. C & T Pizza, Inc.*, 2015 IL App (1st) 131465 (2015), ¶ 9. “In making its decision as to whether to certify a class, the court may consider any matters of fact or law properly presented by the record, which includes the pleadings, depositions, affidavits, answers to interrogatories, and any evidence that may be adduced at the hearings.” *Bueker*, 2016 IL App (5th) 150282 at ¶ 22. “To determine whether the proposed class should be certified, the court accepts the allegations of the complaint as true.” *Clark*, 343 Ill. App. 3d at 544-45. *See also CD Design*, 2015 IL App (1st) 131465 at ¶ 9 (“In determining whether to certify a proposed class, the trial court accepts the allegations of the complaint as true . . . .”); *S37 Mgmt.*, 2011 IL App (1st) 102496 at ¶ 15 (same).

The factors which the Court must consider on a motion for class certification are the familiar framework established by statute. For a suit to proceed as a class action in Illinois, the Court must find that: (1) the class is so numerous that joinder of all members is impracticable; (2) there are questions of fact or law common to the class, which predominate over any questions affecting only individual members; (3) the representative parties will fairly and adequately protect the interests of the class; and (4) a class action is an appropriate method for the fair and efficient adjudication of the controversy. 735 ILCS 5/2-801 (2018). *See also e.g. Clark, et al. v. TAP Pharm. Prods., Inc., et al.*, 343 Ill. App. 3d 538, 544-45 (5th Dist. 2003).

### III. FIRST FACTOR: NUMEROSITY (735 ILCS 5-2/801(1)).

Section 801(1) requires not only that the number of plaintiffs be numerous, but also that joinder of plaintiffs in one individual action be impractical. 735 ILCS 5/2-801(1). Where there are a number of potential claimants, and the individual amount claimed by each is small,

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making redress on an individual level difficult, if not impossible, Illinois courts have been particularly receptive to proceeding on a class action basis. *Miner v. Gillette Co.*, 87 Ill.2d 7 (1981). Avoiding unnecessary burdens on the courts themselves is also a legitimate concern. “Affirming the trial court’s class certification order will avoid the filing of numerous, repetitive cases placing a burden on the court.” *Fakhoury v. Pappas*, 395 Ill. App. 3d 302, 316 (1st Dist. 2009).

Plaintiff states that Defendants have identified, at a minimum, 552 workers who would be members of the class from the Swansea, Illinois location alone. Defendants’ opposition to the Motion does not dispute this; in fact, Defendants’ opposition does not mention numerosity at all. Accordingly, the Court finds that the numerosity factor is satisfied. *See Wood River Area Dev. Corp. v. Germania Fed. Sav. and Loan Ass’n*, 198 Ill. App. 3d 445 (5th Dist. 1990).

**IV. SECOND FACTOR: COMMON AND PREDOMINANT ISSUES OF FACT OR LAW (735 ILCS 5-2/801(2)).**

Section 801(2) requires “questions of fact or law common to the class.” 735 ILCS 5/2-801(2) (2018). As the statute is phrased in the alternative, certification requires “only that there be either a predominating common issue of law or fact, not both.” *Martin v. Heindol Commodities, Inc.*, 117 Ill.2d 67, 81 (1994).

Plaintiff suggests that a case presents common issues when defendants have engaged in the same or similar course of conduct, and that this is particularly true where – as here – the claims are based predominantly upon the application of a single statute or statutory scheme. “A common question may be shown when the claims of the individual class members are based upon the common application of a statute . . . .” *Clark*, 343 Ill. App. 3d at 548. *See also Bueker*, 2016 IL App (5th) 150282, ¶ 27 (“With regard to the commonality requirement, a common issue



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may be shown where the claims of the individual class members are based upon the common application of a statute or where the proposed class members are aggrieved by the same or similar conduct or pattern of conduct.”); *Hall*, 376 Ill. App. 3d at 831 (same).<sup>2</sup> Defendants’ opposition to the Motion did not dispute this general premise.

Thus, according to Plaintiff, “Examination quickly establishes that commonality is easily satisfied in this case. All class members are citizens of Illinois. All are proceeding principally under a single Illinois statute, BIPA. Each was subjected to an identical course of conduct by defendants: The capture of their biometric information.”

Plaintiff further goes on to enumerate specific questions of law or fact which she states will predominate:

- a. Whether the Defendants captured, collected, stored or used the biometric information of the Plaintiff and the Class?
- b. If the Defendants captured, collected, stored or used the biometric information of the Plaintiff and the Class, did the Defendants inform the Plaintiff and the Class in writing that a biometric identifier or biometric information was being collected or stored?
- c. If the Defendants captured, collected, stored or used the biometric information of the Plaintiff and the Class, did the Defendants inform the Plaintiff and the Class in writing of the specific purpose and length of term for which a biometric identifier or biometric information was being collected, stored, and used?
- d. If the Defendants captured, collected, stored or used the biometric information of the Plaintiff and the Class, did the Defendants receive a written release executed by the Plaintiff and the Class of the biometric identifier or biometric information or the Plaintiff’s or Class’ legally

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<sup>2</sup> Bearing in mind that the court does not consider the merits at this stage, see *supra*, the Court also does not consider which class members will ultimately prevail. “That some members of the class are not entitled to relief because of some particular factor will not bar the class action.” *Clark*, 343 Ill. App. 3d at 549. See also *Hall*, 376 Ill. App. 3d at 831-32 (“That some members of the class are not entitled to relief will not bar the class action.”).

authorized representative?

- e. If the Defendants captured, collected, stored or used the biometric information of the Plaintiff and the Class, did the Defendants develop a written policy, made available to the public, establishing a retention schedule and guidelines for permanently destroying biometric identifiers and biometric information when the initial purpose for collecting or obtaining such identifiers or information has been satisfied or within 3 years of the individual's last interaction with the private entity, whichever occurs first?
- f. Whether Defendants' violations of BIPA were negligent, or instead, intentional or reckless, within the meaning of 740 ILCS 14/20?

Thus, Plaintiff summarizes: "Defendants' compliance with the requirements of BIPA – a single statutory scheme – is the central question in this case. This same question will predominate for each and every class member."

Defendants argue that common questions do not predominate in this case. Defendants assert that "The purpose of the predominance requirement is to ensure that the proposed class is sufficiently cohesive to warrant adjudication by representation . . ." *Smith v. Illinois Cent. R.R. Co.*, 223 Ill. 2d 441, 448 (2006)." According to Defendants, to satisfy this predominance requirement, a plaintiff must show that "successful adjudication of the class representative's individual claim 'will establish a right of recovery in other class members' such that 'all that should remain is for other class members to file proof of their claim., *Id.* (quotation omitted); *see also Mashal v. City of Chicago*, 2012 IL 112341, ¶133 (same)."

Defendants then go on to provide a list of issues they claim defeat commonality and predominance in this case:

- a. whether a class member used the same type of "finger or hand print reader/scanner" that Roberson used,

- b. whether a class member has suffered a sufficient injury to invoke BIPA's private right of action,
- c. whether a class member has suffered actual injury such that actual damages could be recovered in excess of the BIPA's liquidated damages,
- d. whether that injury exceeds the liquidated damages provision in BIPA,
- e. whether that injury was suffered at the hands of any person or business that is in fact "associated with the Symphony Post-Acute Care Network, a/k/a Symphony Post-Acute Network,"
- f. whether that entity acted negligently or willfully with respect to that particular class member,
- g. whether that class member's claim is subject to any affirmative defenses, like consent or ratification.

First, since the hearing on Plaintiff's Motion on December 20, 2018, the Supreme Court of Illinois has ruled that "an individual need not allege some injury or adverse effect, beyond violation of this or her right under [BIPA], in order to qualify as an 'aggrieved' person and be entitled to seek liquidated damages and injunctive relief pursuant to the Act." *Rosenbach v. Six Flags Entertainment Corp.*, 2019 IL 123186, slip op. at p.13 (Ill. Jan. 25, 2019). As such, many of the arguments raised above are moot.

Moreover, it is well-established that by themselves, such issues do not defeat class certification. "Individual questions of injury and damages do not defeat class certification." *Clark*, 343 Ill. App. 3d at 549. *See also Hall*, 376 Ill. App. 3d at 832 (same). At most, if damage questions do present significant issues, they can be handled in ancillary proceedings. "It is appropriate to litigate the questions of law or fact common to all members of the class and, after the determination of the common questions, to determine in an ancillary proceeding or proceedings the questions that may be peculiar to individual class members." *Clark*, 343 Ill.

App. 3d at 548 (internal quotations omitted). In fact, Defendants' own cited authority establishes that these differences (if true) are generally not grounds to defeat class certification. *Walczak v. Onyx Acceptance Corp.*, 365 Ill. App. 3d 664, 679 (2nd Dist. 2006). ("Moreover, we note that, generally, individual counterclaims or defenses do not render a case unsuitable for class action.")

More broadly, Defendants' characterization of the common issues in this case, and which of them will predominate, is questionable. *Smith* was a toxic tort case involving a train derailment, and then a resulting chemical spill, with all the attenuated questions as to proximate causation of bodily injury resulting from a complicated series of events. *Smith*, 233 Ill.2d 442-58. This is not that case. This case involves a single statutory scheme – BIPA – and the issues presented can be summarized in a straightforward way: Did the Network capture biometric information from members of the class, and if so, did they comply with BIPA while doing so? These questions are what will consume "the bulk of the time at trial." *Smith*, 233 Ill.2d at 458.

That BIPA's straightforward, statutory requirements may have been met in some cases, but not others, does not preclude class certification, as Defendants suggest. First, this invites the Court to determine the merits of the case, which the Court does not do at this stage, as has already been established.

Second, the fact that some class members may recover, but not all, is no impediment to class certification. "That some members of the class are not entitled to relief because of some particular factor will not bar the class action." *Clark*, 343 Ill. App. 3d at 549. See also *Hall*, 376 Ill. App. 3d at 831-32 ("That some members of the class are not entitled to relief will not bar the

class action.”).

Third, the flexibility of the class action procedure ensures that even if the issues Defendants raise do become significant at some future point in time, the Court has the ability to address such matters then. “If individual damage determinations are necessary, the court can utilize various procedures to determine damages, including the creation of subclasses.” *Bueker*, 2016 IL App (5th), ¶ 31 (citing *Hall*, 376 Ill. App. 3d at 832). “Furthermore, if the class becomes unmanageable at some later time in the litigation, the court always has the option to set aside the class certification or a portion of it.” *Id.* (citing *Purcell & Wardrobe Chtd. v. Hertz Corp.*, 175 Ill.App.3d 1069, 1075 (1st Dist. 1988)).

Finally, while the Court finds that common questions of fact or law will predominate this case as a whole, it alternately finds that issue certification would be appropriate as well. Even in cases involving the most complex questions of injury or damages – and again, this is not that case, as it arises under a single simple statute – classes may be certified as to issues, such as legal issues, or the issue of liability. Even the cases Defendants themselves cite recognize this. *See e.g. Smith*, 223 Ill.2d at 457 (“the trial court in this case did not limit class certification to the issue of liability . . . .”); *Bueker*, 2016 IL App (5th) 150282, ¶ 34 (courts have the ability to limit certification for liability purposes only). Thus, in the alternative, the commonality and predominance of legal and liability issues in this case demonstrate it is also appropriately suited for certification as to common legal issues, and to issues concerning liability.

**V. THIRD FACTOR: ADEQUATE REPRESENTATION OF THE INTERESTS OF THE CLASS (735 ILCS 5-2/801(3)).**

Section 801(3) requires that the “representative parties will fairly and adequately protect the interests of the class.” 735 ILCS 5/2-801(2) (2018). Adequate representation has

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two components: (1) adequacy of the named Plaintiff; and (2) adequacy of the named Plaintiff's attorneys. See *Miner v. Gillette Co.*, 87 Ill.2d 7 (1981). As Defendant posits, "[t]he purpose of the adequate representation requirement is to ensure that all class members will receive proper, efficient, and appropriate protection of their interests in the presentation of the claim. *Walczak*, 365 Ill. App. 3d at 678.

Defendants do not argue that Plaintiff's attorneys are inadequate. Accordingly, the Court accepts that they will provide proper, efficient, and appropriate protection of the interests of the class in presenting the claims.

Defendants do, however, challenge the adequacy of Plaintiff Roberson. The principal argument made by Defendants is that the interests of Roberson are antagonistic to those of the class, as class members may want to seek a monetary award, and that (according to Defendants) during her deposition Roberson disclaimed any intention of seeking a monetary recovery.

This is wholly unpersuasive. Plaintiff, by way of her pleadings, discovery responses, statements of her attorneys, and otherwise, has made it abundantly clear on multiple occasions that she seeks a monetary recovery in this action, not only on her own behalf, but also on behalf of the other class members. Her deposition responses did not contradict that. In fact, Plaintiff stated she wants the law (BIPA) enforced, and BIPA expressly provides for monetary awards.

The rest of Defendants' adequacy arguments are much in the same vein. Quizzing Plaintiff on what she understands about Defendants' corporate structure, or how the law interprets "injury" or "damages," does nothing to demonstrate Plaintiff's inadequacy as a class

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representative, as it does nothing to show that Plaintiff is either antagonistic to the class or will fail to properly pursue the interests of the class. It merely demonstrates that Plaintiff, a layperson, does not understand the intricacies of the law or lawsuits. But that is why a representative is – not only encouraged, but outright *required* – to hire effective legal counsel.

In short, the quantum of understanding necessary on the part of a representative is not nearly as complex as Defendants would have it. “The plaintiff class representative need only have a marginal familiarity with the facts of his case and does not need to understand the legal theories upon which his case is based to a greater extent.” *Clark*, 343 Ill. App. 3d at 550-51 (internal quotations omitted). The Court finds that the adequacy of representation requirement is fulfilled in this case.

**VI. FOURTH FACTOR: THE CLASS ACTION PROCEDURE IS THE APPROPRIATE METHOD FOR THE FAIR AND EFFICIENT ADJUDICATION OF THE CONTROVERSY (735 ILCS 5-2/801(4)).**

Finally, the fourth statutory factor requires the Court to consider whether “[t]he class action is an appropriate method for the fair and efficient adjudication of the controversy.” 735 ILCS 5/2-801(d) (2018). The balance of Defendants’ remaining arguments are entered on this factor.

One of these arguments centers around who was Plaintiff’s employer. Defendants seem to invest this with independent legal significance. But this was already addressed in the context of Defendants’ § 2-615 motion to dismiss. The terms “employer” and “employee” appear nowhere in BIPA, nor do any related terms. In fact, BIPA expressly contemplates many circumstances well outside the employment context, such as “finger-scan technologies at grocery stores, gas stations, and school cafeterias.” 740 ILCS 14-5(b) (2018).

Accordingly, dividing the world up into “Employer Defendants” and “Non-Employer

Defendants” is meaningless for purposes of BIPA liability, which applies to any “private entity” (740 ILCS 14/10-15 (2018)) who constitutes an “offending party” (740 ILCS 14-20 (2018)).

To the extent Defendants’ argument asks this Court to first construe those terms, and then to apply them to the facts of this case, the Court must decline. This involves disputed issues of fact, going to the merits of the case, and/or unsettled legal issues. As previously established, it is not the province of the Court to decide these issues on a motion to certify a class. Nor will the Court render an advisory opinion. Indeed, issues like this weigh affirmatively in *favor* of class certification, as they will be common questions to which any affected class member will seek an answer – no matter what that answer may be.

Much the same is true for Defendants’ other arguments, which may be broadly classified as “corporate liability.” Defendants claim each Network location is independently owned and operated, and argue that only some defendants will be liable as to some class members, mentioning in passing things such as the statutes regarding limited liabilities. Defendants make a further argument that they cannot be held liable for anything other than events occurring in Swansea. Defendants even go so far as to as to argue there are “constitutional concerns” as to the rights of any non-party entities. Defendants do not provide any explanation, however, as to how Defendants would have standing to raise any such concerns on behalf of entities with whom they also disavow any connection.

For her part, Plaintiff points out that she has pleaded from the outset of the case a variety of theories assessing mutual liability of the Network. Those theories include topics such as *respondeat superior*, *alter ego*, agency, joint enterprise, civil conspiracy, etc. Plaintiff points out any assertion by Defendants as to who did or did not operate any given Network location



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simply begs the questions this lawsuit will answer. Plaintiff further contends that the fact Defendants raise these common questions shows all the more strongly why this case should proceed as a class action.

Both sides have presented discovery responses, discovery productions, public documents, Network documents, *etc.* in support of their positions. The Court has reviewed all of these materials. The Court finds that none of these materials conclusively resolves such issues either way.

Accordingly, the Court concludes that the parties have legitimate disputes of material facts over these issues, and those issues intersect in several instances with unresolved questions of law. The Court further finds that many of these arguments go to the merits of the case. As such, the Court will not resolve them on a motion for class certification. Nor will the Court issue an advisory opinion.

Once again, the presence of such sweeping issues – essentially, “who is liable for what, and to whom” – argues in favor of class certification, not against it. Seeking the answers to these questions – questions applicable across the class, and the common answers which will be generated – makes proceeding on a class basis an appropriate method for the fair and efficient adjudication of these controversies.

#### **VII. ORDER AND FINDINGS.**

Pursuant to the foregoing analysis, the Court finds the case is proper to proceed as a class action in accordance with 735 ILCS 5/2-801 (2018). The Court hereby certifies the following class:

All Illinois citizens whose biometric information was collected, captured, purchased, received through trade, or otherwise obtained in Illinois at any location associated with

the Symphony Post Acute Care Network, a/k/a Symphony Post Acute Network, as set forth in the Illinois Biometric Information Privacy Act, 740 ILCS 14/5 *et seq.*

Excluded from the proposed Class are employees, officers, directors, subsidiaries and affiliates of any person or business associated with the Symphony Post Acute Care Network, a/k/a Symphony Post Acute Network, the judge or any officer of the court presiding over this action.

The Court also finds it appropriate to certify the following subclass:

All Illinois citizens whose biometric information was collected, captured, purchased, received through trade, or otherwise obtained in Illinois at the Symphony Post Acute Care Network, a/k/a Symphony Post Acute Network location in Swansea, Illinois, as set forth in the Illinois Biometric Information Privacy Act, 740 ILCS 14/5 *et seq.*

Excluded from the proposed Class are employees, officers, directors, subsidiaries and affiliates of any person or business associated with the Symphony Post Acute Care Network, a/k/a Symphony Post Acute Network, the judge or any officer of the court presiding over this action.

The Court finds it appropriate to certify each of these classes as to all issues in this case. The Court further finds it appropriate to certify these classes as to legal and factual issues concerning the liability of the Network and those associated with it. The Court reserves jurisdiction to certify further subclasses or otherwise amend these certifications as circumstances warrant.

SO ORDERED:

DATE: March 12, 2019.



Hon. Kevin T. Hoerner

Return Date: No return date scheduled  
Hearing Date: 4/15/2020 9:30 AM - 9:30 AM  
Courtroom Number: 2308  
Location: District 1 Court  
Cook County, IL

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# GROUP EXHIBIT B

## PEIFFER WOLF CARR & KANE, APLC

Peiffer Wolf Carr & Kane, APLC ("PWCK") was founded in 2013. Joseph Peiffer, PWCK's managing partner, previously was a litigation partner at Fishman Haygood, LLP in New Orleans. PWCK handles a wide variety of cases, including a variety of collective, class, and mass actions. Since its inception, PWCK has acquired talented attorneys from coast to coast, becoming a national litigation firm.

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#### ATTORNEY PROFILES

Brandon Wise joined the firm after managing his own solo practice that focus on class, collective, and employment matters. Brandon has successfully litigated collective and class action cases in St. Louis, Southern Illinois, and Central Illinois. Brandon has served as class or collective counsel in the following resolved collective and class matters:

*Volz, et al. v. Provider Plus, Inc., et al.*, a Fair Labor Standards Act ("FLSA") collective action involving 45 collective action members. The confidential settlement agreement was approved by Judge Mummert within hours of its submission to the court.

*Carver, et al. v. Foresight Energy LP, et al.*, WARN Act litigation brought on behalf of a class of former coal miners. Mr. Wise secured the first reported decision, a significant legal victory, regarding the WARN Act's "natural disaster" exception. 2016 WL 3812376 (Opinion entered July 12, 2016). After the defendants' motion to dismiss was denied, the parties reached a class-wide settlement of \$550,000 for a class of 75 employees.

*Volz v. Tricorp management Company, et al.*, a FLSA collective in class action where Mr. Wise was appointed Class Counsel. The parties reached a \$350,000 settlement for bartenders, servers, hosts, and other tipped employees of the largest T.G.I. Friday's franchisee in the Midwest.

*Morris v. Imperial Towers Condominium Assn.*, Biometric Information Privacy Act ("BIPA") class action settlement approved naming Brandon Wise as Class Counsel. The \$120,000 settlement for 60 class members is one of the highest BIPA class settlements per class member in the country.

Brandon currently serves as class or putative class counsel in other matters, as well.

Paul Lesko joined PWCK in August of 2016, co-founding the St. Louis office of the firm with Brandon Wise. His practice consists of representing individuals, startups, and small companies that have been harmed by larger corporations. With his biotech background, Paul focuses on prosecuting complex technological cases, including patent and class actions. Paul has specific experience litigating GMO crop cases as well as cases focusing on pesticide and herbicide technologies.

Joseph Peiffer is the managing member of PWCK. His practices consist of representing individuals and institutions that have been harmed by investment banks and brokerage firms, prosecuting ERISA class actions, and representing victims of labor trafficking and those who have suffered catastrophic injury. He has co-authored a

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treatise *Litigating Business and Commercial Tort Cases*, which is published by Thompson West.

Joe has also taught and lectured extensively. He co-created and taught a class entitled *Storytelling and Advocacy* at Loyola Law School. Also, at Loyola Law School, he has taught a course entitled "The Basics of Arbitration" and he also serves as an adjunct professor teaching *Trial Advocacy*. He has guest lectured at Tulane Law School in its *Securities Regulations* class and Syracuse Law School on securities arbitration. He has spoken at many national conventions on a variety of topics including prosecuting large, multi-client claims, broker's deficient advice to retire and FINRA arbitration.

Joe has represented hundreds of individual retirees against their brokers in FINRA arbitration. The highlights of this practice include representing 32 Exxon retirees in a 90-day FINRA arbitration against Securities America that resulted in a \$22 million verdict – one of the largest ever awarded by a FINRA arbitration panel. He has also represented hundreds of Xerox and Kodak retirees against their broker resulting from the broker's fraudulent advice to retire and subsequent unsuitable investments. He has represented hundreds of families in cases involving private placements and Ponzi schemes.

His financial services fraud practice also includes representing hospitals and municipalities around the country in cases involving their issuance of auction rate securities. He also serves as co-lead counsel on several ERISA class actions against large financial services firms alleging that they did not prudently invest retirement money and had conflicts of interest. He also is on the plaintiffs' steering committee in a nationwide antitrust class action involving the illegal tying of cable set-top boxes to the provision of premium cable services. Joe also currently represents hundreds of clients in cases involving serious injuries sustained by pharmaceutical products.

Finally, he represents victims of human trafficking and labor exploitation. In one such case, the plaintiffs have alleged that the defendants have failed to pay overtime, improperly deducted for employee housing, and held the plaintiffs passports while in the United States. He has travelled extensively to the Philippines for this case and another one involving a rig explosion where two of his clients working on a rig owned by Black Elk exploded.

Joe was one of three Louisiana lawyers ranked by Chambers USA for securities litigation in 2011. He has been named a 2013 Rising Star by his peers in the Class Action Administration organization. He has been quoted by USA Today, Wall Street Journal, the Associated Press, New York Times, New York Daily News, The Los Angeles Times, Business Week, Investment News, and many other publications. Mr. Peiffer has also appeared on CNN. He was named as one of the fifty Leaders in Law by New Orleans City Business Magazine.

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He has also successfully risen into the leadership of several national bar associations. He twice served as the chairman of the Business Torts Section of the American Association for Justice. He currently serves as President of PIABA – a nationwide bar association of lawyers that represent individuals and institutions in arbitrations to recover money lost by investment banks and brokerage firms.

Joe graduated from Tulane School of Law, cum laude, in 1999. While at Tulane, he served on the Tulane Law Review and was involved with the Tulane Legal Assistance Program. Prior to attending Tulane, he graduated from Bowling Green State University in 1996 with a degree in communications.

Adam Wolf has developed a national reputation as a leading appellate, complex litigation, and civil rights litigator. He successfully argued a case in the United States Supreme Court, *Safford Unified School District No. 1 v. Redding*, 557 U.S. 364 (2009), that defined the scope of the Fourth Amendment regarding strip searches in public schools. The Court's opinion in *Safford* marked the first time in forty years that the Supreme Court ruled in favor of a student who claimed that her school violated her constitutional rights. For his efforts in this case, Mr. Wolf was named Attorney of the Year in California by California Lawyer Magazine.

Mr. Wolf has argued in numerous federal and state courts of appeals, in addition to the United States Supreme Court. He has represented groups and individuals whose constitutional rights have been violated, organizations who seek to vindicate their rights, and governmental entities who were harmed by corporate misconduct.

Mr. Wolf has lectured around the country regarding constitutional law and civil rights. He has been quoted in hundreds of domestic and international newspapers, including the New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, USA Today, and Wall Street Journal. Additionally, Mr. Wolf has appeared on numerous television and radio programs, including Good Morning America, CBS Evening News, ABC World News, NBC Nightly News, CNN Headline News, National Public Radio, and the BBC.

Mr. Wolf has been appointed to leadership positions in numerous class actions and mass actions throughout the country.

Daniel Carr represents a diverse client base in a variety of commercial disputes, complex litigation, and arbitration. Daniel handles numerous state and federal lawsuits for individuals and businesses, and he currently represents investors, and municipalities in FINRA arbitration proceedings. Together with Joe Peiffer, Daniel also serves as co-counsel in several ERISA and antitrust class action lawsuits and represents individuals in litigation involving pharmaceutical products, labor exploitation, fraudulent investments, and wrongful death.

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Daniel is a member of several nationwide bar associations, including PIABA (Public Investors Arbitration Bar Association), and he previously served on the board of directors of the Business Torts Section of the American Association for Justice.

Daniel received his law degree from Tulane School of Law, *summa cum laude*, in 2006. While at Tulane, he was elected Senior Articles Editor for the Tulane Law Review, and he worked as a fellow in the Legal Analysis Program. Following law school, Daniel was privileged to serve as a law clerk to Judge Jacques L. Wiener, Jr., on the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.

Jason Kane is a securities attorney practicing out of the firm's Upstate New York office. He has extensive experience representing investors in Financial Industry Regulatory Authority arbitrations and New York State Courts.

Jason graduated from the State University of New York at Geneseo in 2004 having earned his B.A. in Economics. Thereafter, Jason attended the Syracuse University College of Law, and received his Juris Doctorate, *Cum Laude*, in 2007.

While attending the Syracuse University College of Law, Jason served as a form and accuracy editor for the Syracuse Journal of International Law and Commerce. He also gained valuable experience as a student law clerk for Magistrate Judge George H. Lowe and served as a volunteer at the United States Attorney's Office in the Northern District of New York where he assisted the Assistant United States Attorneys prosecute their cases.

Jason has represented hundreds of investors in Upstate New York and around the country in some of the highest profile securities cases originating out of Upstate New York. He has recovered millions of dollars in FINRA arbitration and mediation while representing individuals against their former brokers and brokerage firms. He often assists his victimized clients through the regulatory investigations that result from the large scale scams perpetrated by their unscrupulous brokers.

#### REPRESENTATIVE CASES

PWCK attorneys were appointed class counsel or serve as counsel in numerous class and collective actions, including:

*Whitley, et al. v. J.P. Morgan Chase & Co., et al.*, a class action lawsuit on behalf of retirement investors against J.P. Morgan Chase & Co. and various other J.P. Morgan entities over the sale and administration of the JP Morgan Stable Value Fund. Received preliminary approval for a class wide settlement of \$75 million.



*Volz, et al. v. Provider Plus, Inc., et al.*, a Fair Labor Standards Act ("FLSA") collective action involving 45 collective action members. The confidential settlement agreement was approved by Judge Mummert.

*Nevarez v. Forty Niners Football Company*, a certified class action, on behalf of nearly 5,000 class members with mobility disabilities who were denied equal access to Levi's Stadium in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

*Baricuarto, et al. v. Industrial Personnell and Management Services, Inc. et al.*, a human trafficking case that required extensive travel and litigation in the Philippines, and resulted in a multi-million dollar settlement.

*In re Pacific Fertility Center Litigation*, a putative class action on behalf of nearly 1,000 people whose embryos were compromised in a freezer tank at a fertility center.

*Amador v. California Culinary Academy*, representing a certified class of former students of for-profit school California Culinary Academy regarding class members' student loans.

*Bilewicz v. FMR LLC*, a case brought on behalf of current and former employees of Fidelity Investments, alleging that Fidelity violated ERISA by offering exclusively high-fee Fidelity mutual fund products in its retirement plan and by repeatedly adding funds to the plan with little or no track record. Plaintiffs further alleged that the Fidelity plan's fees are very high for a multi-billion dollar plan, and Fidelity has failed to follow sound fiduciary practices for multi-billion dollar plans. This case was successfully settled, and PWCK was approved as co-class counsel in that action.

*Carver, et al. v. Foresight Energy LP, et al.*, WARN Act litigation brought on behalf of a class of former coal miners. PWCK secured the first reported decision, a significant legal victory, regarding the WARN Act's "natural disaster" exception. 2016 WL 3812376 (Opinion entered July 12, 2016). After the defendants' motion to dismiss was denied, the parties reached a proposed class-wide settlement of \$550,000 for a class of 75 employees.

*Volz v. Tricorp management Company, et al.*, a FLSA collective in class action where PRW Legal attorney was appointed class counsel. Settled for \$350,000, for bartenders, servers, hosts, and other tipped employees of the largest T.G.I. Friday's franchisee in the Midwest.

*Hanson v. Berthel Fisher & Company Financial Services, Inc., et al.*, a securities class action filed on behalf of investors in a real estate investment program that raised approximately \$26 million from the investing public. Claims were predicated upon the role played by Berthel Fisher, the managing broker-dealer of the program that allegedly organized and oversaw the securities offering by the Program while aware of misrepresentations and

omissions in the Program's offering documents.

*Booth et al. v. Strategic Realty Trust, Inc., et al.*, a securities class action where plaintiffs contended that throughout the offering period, the Strategic Realty Trust offering materials contained materially inaccurate and incomplete statements about the company's investment strategy, internal controls, and governance mechanisms. Plaintiffs alleged that their investments lost value as a result of defendants' acts and omissions.

*Thieriot v. Celtic Ins. Co.*, a certified class action where settlement was approved on behalf of a class of people who were overcharged by a health insurer in violation of state law.

PWCK currently serves as counsel for plaintiffs in numerous other class and mass actions, including:

*In re: FedLoan Student Loan Servicing Litigation*, 2:18-md-02883 (E.D. Penn.) consolidated multi-district litigation involving one of the nation's largest student loan servicers. Attorney Brandon Wise was appointed to the Plaintiffs' Executive Committee.

*In re: Dicamba Herbicides Litigation*, 1:18-md-02820-SNLJ (E.D. Mo), consolidated multi-district litigation involving the alleged unlawful release of a genetically modified seed and herbicide system.

*Albers, et al. v. Deloitte & Touche LLP, et al.*, a mass securities action where PWCK represents over 100 investors with claims exceeding \$100 million in action alleging violations of state securities laws.

*Yao-Yi Liu et al. v. Wilmington Trust Company*, a class action lawsuit on behalf of investors of a fraudulent scheme against Wilmington Trust alleging that Wilmington Trust breached its duties as an escrow agent and aided the perpetrators of the scheme.

*In re Platinum and Palladium Antitrust Litigation*, a case involving claims against BASF Metals, Goldman Sachs, HSBC, and Standard Bank. Plaintiffs allege that Defendants were involved in an unlawful price-setting process of platinum and palladium in violation of the Sherman Act.

*Fouts v. Bank of Nova Scotia, New York Agency et al.*, a class action filed on behalf of holders of debt with interest rates linked to the US Treasuries auction rates, alleging violations of the federal antitrust and commodities laws arising from manipulation of the prices of Treasury securities and related financial instruments through collusion by the primary dealers of U.S. Treasury Department securities.

*In re Fidelity ERISA Float Litigation*, a case involving claims brought by participants in various ERISA plans administered by Fidelity, on behalf of those plans, alleging that Fidelity violated ERISA by improperly using "float" income received as interest on plan assets to pay itself fees and failing to crediting the amount of that float income to the plans or their participants.

*American Chemicals & Equipment Inc. 401(K) Retirement Plan v. Principal Management Corporation, et al.*, a case involving claims brought by ACE 401(k) Plan, on behalf of the shareholders of six mutual funds, against the investment advisors for those funds. Plaintiff alleges that the defendants breached their statutory fiduciary duty under Section 36(b) of the Investment Company Act of 1940 ("ICA"), 15 U.S.C. § 80a-35(b), by charging unfair and excessive fees for their advisory services and retaining excess profits derived from economies of scale.

*Jennifer Roth v. Life Time Fitness, Inc.*, a class action lawsuit filed on behalf of fitness instructors seeking unpaid wages for work that was required by Defendants. Plaintiff alleges that fitness instructors were not compensated for the work they performed before and after fitness classes.

*Carol Prock v. Thompson National Properties, LLC, et al.*, a securities class action filed on behalf of investors in the TNP 6700 Santa Monica Boulevard, a real estate investment program that raised approximately \$17 million from the investing public. Claims are predicated upon alleged material misrepresentations and omissions in the program's offering documents by its sponsor and officers and directors of the sponsor.

*In re Dental Supplies Antitrust Litigation*, a class action lawsuit filed on behalf of dental practices, orthodontic practices, and dental laboratories alleging that the country's three largest distributors of dental supplies and equipment agreed not to compete on price and caused injury to plaintiffs in the form of artificially inflated prices.

*Matthew Fero et al. v. Excellus Health Plan Inc.*, a class action lawsuit filed on behalf of plaintiffs whose personal information was compromised as a result of a data breach that is alleged to have gone undetected for a 600-day period.

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**CURRICULUM VITAE**

**EDUCATION:**

Bachelor of Science – Agricultural and Environmental Communications  
and Education  
University of Illinois, 2004

Juris Doctorate  
University of Illinois, 2007

**MEMBERSHIPS:**

Illinois State Bar Association  
American Bar Association  
Illinois Trial Lawyers' Association  
The Association For The Advancement Of Artificial Intelligence

**ADMITTED TO PRACTICE:**

Supreme Court of Illinois  
Supreme Court of the United States of America  
United States District Court for the Central District of Illinois  
United States District Court for the Southern District of Illinois  
United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois

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### **PRACTICE EMPHASIS:**

My practice is primarily focused on the areas of personal injury, premises liability, automobile negligence, nursing home abuse, medical malpractice, and catastrophic injuries.

I also write and regularly speak with lawyers and business owners about how technology is changing the practice of law and law firm management. I am currently focusing my efforts in this regard on technological advancements like Blockchain, Artificial Intelligence, and other emerging technologies that many experts predict will disrupt the legal profession in an unprecedented way.

### **PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS:**

Barrister member of Lincoln-Douglas American Inn of Court  
November 2011 - Present

Vice Chair – Law Practice Management Committee – American Bar Association, Young Lawyers Division – 2011

Chair – Law Practice Management Committee – American Bar Association, Young Lawyers Division – August 2013 – August 2014

The National Trial Lawyers: “Top 100 Trial Lawyers” – 2014 – Present

The National Trial Lawyers: “Top 40 Under 40” – 2015 – Present

American Society of Legal Advocates: “Top Litigation Lawyer Under 40 in the State of Illinois - 2016

Law Bulletin Publishing Company’s Leading Lawyers Division: “Emerging Lawyer” – 2015 – Present

The American Society of Legal Advocates: “Top 40 Under 40 Litigation lawyers in the State of Illinois” – 2016 – Present

Member of ISBA Assembly – Illinois State Bar Association – Elected 2016 for a Three Year Term

Member of ISBA Standing Committee on Law Office Management & Economics, 2017 - Present

### **SPEAKING EVENTS AND PUBLISHED ARTICLES**

Speaker at the "Transportation Law Seminar" presented by the Illinois Trial Lawyers Association Education Fund, March 27, 2010

Speaker at the "Motor Vehicle Crashes from Occurrence to Trial – Plaintiff and Defense Perspectives," February 15, 2012

Speaker at the "IICLE Pre-Trial Preparation in Civil Practice Seminar – Requests to Admit or Deny," March 30, 2012

Moderator and Speaker at the "Advanced Evidentiary Issues at Trial," January 31, 2013

Speaker at the "ITLA Workers' Compensation Seminar – Traveling Employees & *Venture-Newberg, Perini, Stone & Webster v. IWCC*," November 2, 2013

Speaker at the "Shotgun Seminar" Presented by the Illinois Trial Lawyers Association Education Fund in St. Louis, Missouri – "Common Carrier Liability," September 25, 2015

"Lawyers in Small Firms and Solo Practice Must Understand Technology that Impacts the Practice of Law," Published in The Bottom Line, Publication for the Illinois State Bar Association's Section on Law Office Management & Economics in September of 2017

Speaker at the "Medical Evidence for Lawyers" Presented by the Illinois Institute for Continuing Legal Education - "Securing Medical Records and Opinions, Conducting Discovery, Disclosure Requirements and HIPAA Issues," November 3, 2017

Speaker at the Lincoln-Douglas Inn of Court - "How Technologies Like Artificial Intelligence and Blockchain are Disrupting the Practice of Law and Why Lawyers Should Care," November 15, 2017

Speaker and Moderator for "Ethics Institute: Legal Tech" Presented by IICLE - "Emerging Technologies that are Predicted to Disrupt the Legal Profession," June 6, 2018

"What Every Lawyer Lawyer Should Know About the Internet of Things," Published in The Bottom Line, Publication for the Illinois State Bar Association's Section on Law Office Management & Economics in June 2019

**REPRESENTATIVE CASES:**

*Venture-Newberg Perini Stone & Webster v. Illinois Workers' Compensation Comm'n*, 2013 IL 115728

*Prime Ins. Syndicate, Inc. v. Woods*, 406 Ill. App. 3d 1225, 998 N.E.2d 722, 2011 Ill. App. Unpub. LEXIS 154, 376 Ill. Dec. 180, 2011 WL 11066011 (Ill. App. Ct. 4th Dist. 2011) (Rule 23 Order)

*Farris v. Sullivan*, 2013 IL App (4th) 120753-U, 2013 Ill. App. Unpub. LEXIS 1142, 2013 WL 2387716 (Ill. App. Ct. 4th Dist. 2013) (Rule 23 Order)

*Crim v. Dietrich*, 2016 IL App (4th) 150843

Return Date: No return date scheduled  
Hearing Date: 4/15/2020 9:30 AM - 9:30 AM  
Courtroom Number: 2308  
Location: District 1 Court  
Cook County, IL

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DOROTHY BROWN  
CIRCUIT CLERK  
COOK COUNTY, IL  
2019CH14479

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS  
COUNTY DEPARTMENT, CHANCERY DIVISION

DAWN MEEGAN,  
INDIVIDUALLY AND ON BEHALF OF  
ALL OTHERS SIMILARLY SITUATED,

*Plaintiff,*

v.

NFI INDUSTRIES, INC.,

*Defendant.*

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Case No.: 2019CH14479

Judge: Neil H. Cohen

PLAINTIFF'S MOTION FOR CLASS CERTIFICATION AND REQUEST FOR DISCOVERY ON CERTIFICATION ISSUES

In this case, Plaintiff Dawn Meegan (“Plaintiff”) alleges that Defendant NFI Industries, Inc. (“Defendant”) systematically violated the Biometric Information Privacy Act (“BIPA”), 740 ILCS 14/1, *et seq.* This case is well suited for class certification pursuant to 735 ILCS 5/2-801. Specifically, Plaintiff seeks to certify a class consisting of several hundred or more individuals who had their biometrics collected, captured, and/or stored by Defendant in the State of Illinois during the applicable statutory period in violation of BIPA. The question of liability is a legal question that can be answered in one fell swoop. As Plaintiff’s claims and the claims of similarly-situated individuals all arise from Defendant’s uniform policies and practices, they satisfy the requirement of 735 ILCS 5/2-801 and should be certified. Notably, to Plaintiff’s Counsel’s knowledge, the only BIPA class certification decisions issued to date have granted class certification. See, *In re Facebook Biometric Info. Privacy Litig.*, 326 F.R.D. 535 (N.D. Cal. 2018) (granting class certification) *aff’d Patel v. Facebook, Inc.*, 932 F.3d 1264 (9th Cir. 2019); and Ex. A, Mem. and Order, *Roberson v. Symphony Post Acute Care Network, et al.*, 17-L-733 (St. Clair County) (same).

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Plaintiff moves for class certification to protect members of the proposed class, individuals whose proprietary and legally protected personal and private biometric data was invaded by Defendant. Plaintiff believes that the evidence and argumentation submitted with this motion are sufficient to allow the class to be certified now. However, in the event the Court (or Defendant) wishes for the parties to undertake formal discovery prior to the Court's consideration of this motion, Plaintiff requests that the Court allow Plaintiff to supplement her briefing and defer the response and reply deadlines.

## I. RELEVANT BACKGROUND

### A. The Biometric Information Privacy Act

Major national corporations started using Chicago and other locations in Illinois in the early 2000s to test "new [consumer] applications of biometric-facilitated financial transactions, including finger-scan technologies at grocery stores, gas stations, and school cafeterias." 740 ILCS 14/5(c). Given its relative infancy, an overwhelming portion of the public became wary of this then-growing, yet unregulated, technology. *See* 740 ILCS 14/5.

The Biometric Information Privacy Act, 740 ILCS 14/1, *et seq.* was enacted in 2008, arising from concerns that these experimental uses of finger-scan technologies created a "very serious need of protections for the citizens of Illinois when it comes to biometric information." Illinois House Transcript, 2008 Reg. Sess. No. 276. Under the Act, it is unlawful for a private entity to, among other things, "collect, capture, purchase, receive through trade, or otherwise obtain a person's or a customer's biometric identifiers or biometric information unless it first:

- (1) Informs the subject . . . in writing that a biometric identifier or biometric information is being collected or stored;
- (2) Informs the subject . . . in writing of the specific purpose and length of term for which a biometric identifier or biometric information is being collected, stored, and used; and

- (3) Receives a written release executed by the subject of the biometric identifier or biometric information.”

740 ILCS 14/15(b).

Although there may be benefits with using biometrics, there are also serious risks. Unlike ID badges or time cards – which can be changed or replaced if stolen or compromised – biometrics, including fingerprints, are unique, permanent biometric identifiers associated with each individual. These biometrics are biologically unique to the individual; once compromised, the individual has *no* means by which to prevent identity theft, unauthorized tracking, or other unlawful or improper use of this information. This exposes individuals to serious and irreversible privacy risks. For example, if a biometric database is hacked, breached, or otherwise exposed – as in the recent Equifax and Uber data breaches – individuals have no means to prevent the misappropriation and theft of their proprietary biometric makeup. Thus, recognizing the need to protect its citizens from harms like these, Illinois enacted BIPA specifically to regulate the collection, use, safeguarding, handling, storage, retention, and destruction of biometric identifiers and information.

#### **B. Factual Allegations**

Plaintiff filed this class action against Defendant on December 16, 2019, to redress Defendant’s unlawful collection, use, storage, and disclosure of biometric information of Illinois citizens under BIPA. In his Class Action Complaint, Plaintiff provided allegations that Defendant has and continues to violate BIPA through the collection of fingerprint-based biometrics without: (1) informing individuals in writing of the purpose and length of time for which fingerprint(s) were being collected, stored and used; (2) providing a publicly available retention schedule or guidelines for permanent destruction of the data; and (3) obtaining a written release, as required by BIPA. *See* Complaint (“Compl.”) at ¶¶ 2-4, 28-57, 70-97.

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Accordingly, Defendant's practices violated BIPA. As a result of Defendant's violations, Plaintiff and similarly-situated individuals were subject to Defendant's uniform policies and practices and were victims of its scheme to unlawfully collect, store, and use individuals' biometric data in direct violation of BIPA.

Plaintiff now seeks class certification for the following similarly-situated individuals, defined as:

All individuals working for Defendant or any of its affiliated facilities in the State of Illinois who had their fingerprints collected, captured, received, obtained, maintained, stored, or disclosed by Defendant during the applicable statutory period.

*Id.* at ¶ 60.

Given Defendant's standard practices defined above and the straightforward and common legal questions presented in this case, Plaintiff now moves for class certification. Notably, this motion is being filed shortly after the Complaint was filed and before the Defendant has responded. For the reasons discussed herein, Plaintiff's request should be granted.

## II. STANDARD FOR CLASS CERTIFICATION

"The basic purpose of a class action is the efficiency and economy of litigation." *CE Design Ltd. v. C & T Pizza, Inc.*, 2015 IL App. (1st) 131465, ¶ 9 (Ill. App. Ct. May 8, 2015) (citing *Miner v. Gillette Co.*, 87 Ill. 2d 7, 14 (1981)). "In determining whether to certify a proposed class, the trial court accepts the allegations of the complaint as true and should err in favor of maintaining class certification." *CE Design Ltd.*, 2015 IL App. (1st) 131465, ¶ 9 (citing *Ramirez v. Midway Moving & Storage, Inc.*, 378 Ill. App. 3d 51, 53 (2007)). Under Section 2-801 of the Code of Civil Procedure, a class may be certified if the following four requirements are met:

- (1) the class is so numerous that a joinder of all members is impracticable;
- (2) there are questions of fact or law common to the class that predominate over any questions affecting only individual members;

- (3) the representative parties will fairly and adequately protect the interest of the class; and
- (4) the class action is an appropriate method for the fair and efficient adjudication of the controversy.

*See Smith v. Illinois Cent. R.R. Co.*, 223 Ill. 2d 441, 447 (2006) (citing 735 ILCS 5/2-801). Notably, “[a] trial court has broad discretion in determining whether a proposed class meets the requirements for class certification.” *CE Design Ltd.*, 2015 IL App. (1st) 131465, ¶ 9 (citing *Ramirez*, 378 Ill. App. 3d at 53). Here, the allegations and facts in this case amply demonstrate that the four certification factors are met.

### III. ARGUMENT

Plaintiff’s claims here are especially suited for class certification because Defendant treated all class members identically for the purposes of applying BIPA. All of the putative class members in this case were uniformly subjected to the same illegal and unlawful collection, storage, and use of their biometric data by Defendant throughout the class period. Plaintiff meets each of the statutory requirements for maintenance of this suit as a class action. Thus, the class action device is ideally suited and is far superior to burdening the Court with many individual lawsuits to address the same issues, undertake the same discovery, and rely on the same testimony.

#### A. The Class Is So Numerous That Joinder of All Members Is Impracticable.

Numerosity is not dependent on a plaintiff setting forth a precise number of class members or a listing of their names. *See Cruz v. Unilock Chicago*, 383 Ill. App. 3d 752, 771 (2d Dist. 2008) (“Of course, plaintiffs need not demonstrate a precise figure for the class size, because a good-faith, nonspeculative estimate will suffice; rather, plaintiffs need demonstrate only that the class is sufficiently numerous to make joinder of all of the members impracticable.”) (internal citations omitted); *Hayna v. Arby’s, Inc.*, 99 Ill. App. 3d 700, 710-11 (1st Dist. 1981) (“It is not necessary

that the class representative name the specific individuals who are possibly members of the class.”). Courts in Illinois generally find numerosity when the class is comprised of at least 40 members. *See Wood River Area Dev. Corp. v. Germania Fed. Sav. Loan Ass'n*, 198 Ill. App. 3d 445, 450 (5th Dist. 1990).

In the present case, there can be no serious dispute that Plaintiff meets the numerosity requirement. The class of potential plaintiffs is sufficiently large to make joinder impracticable. As result of Defendant's violations of BIPA, Plaintiff and all similar-situated individuals were subject to Defendant's uniform policies and practices and were victims of Defendant's schemes to unlawfully collect, store and use their extremely personal and private biometric data in direct violation of BIPA. The precise number in the class cannot be determined until discovery records are obtained from Defendant. Nevertheless, class membership can be easily determined by reviewing Defendant's records. A review of Defendant's files regarding the collection, storage and use of biometric data performed during the class period is all that is needed to determine membership in Plaintiff's proposed classes. *See e.g., Chultem v. Ticor Title Ins. Co.*, 401 Ill. App. 3d 226, 233 (1st Dist. 2010) (reversing Circuit Court's denial of class certification and holding that class was certifiable over defendants' objection that "the proposed class was not ascertainable, because the process of reviewing defendants' transaction files to determine class membership would be burdensome"); *Young v. Nationwide Mut. Ins. Co.*, 693 F.3d 532, 539-40 (6th Cir. 2012)<sup>1</sup> (rejecting the argument that manual review of files should defeat certification agreeing with district court's reasoning that, if manual review was a bar, "defendants against whom claims of wrongful

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<sup>1</sup> "Section 2-801 is patterned after Rule 23 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and, because of this close relationship between the state and federal provision, 'federal decisions interpreting Rule 23 are persuasive authority with regard to questions of class certification in Illinois.'" *Cruz*, 383 Ill. App. 3d at 761 (quoting *Avery v. State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Co.*, 216 Ill.2d 100, 125 (2005)).

conduct have been made could escape class-wide review due solely to the size of their businesses or the manner in which their business records were maintained,” and citing numerous courts that are in agreement, including *Perez v. First Am. Title Ins. Co.*, 2009 WL 2486003, at \*7 (D. Ariz. Aug. 12, 2009) (“Even if it takes a substantial amount of time to review files and determine who is eligible for the [denied] discount, that work can be done through discovery”). Once Defendant’s records are obtained, the Court will know the precise number of persons affected.

Absent certification of this class action, putative class members may never know that their legal rights have been violated and as a result may never obtain the redress to which they are entitled under BIPA. Illinois courts have noted that denial of class certification where members of the putative class have no knowledge of the lawsuit may be the “equivalent of closing the door of justice” on the victims. *Wood River Area Dev. Corp. v. Germania Fed. Sav. & Loan Assn.*, 198 Ill.App.3d 445, 452 (5th Dist. 1990). Further, recognizing the need to protect its citizens from harms such as identity theft, Illinois enacted BIPA specifically to regulate the collection, use, safeguarding, handling, storage, retention, and destruction of biometric identifiers and information. A class action would help ensure that Plaintiff and all other similarly-situated individuals have a means of redress against Defendant for its widespread violations of BIPA.

**B. Common Questions Of Law And Fact Exist That Predominate Over Any Questions Solely Affecting Individual Members Of The Class.**

Courts analyze commonality and predominance under Section 2-801 by identifying the substantive issues that will control the outcome of the case. *See Bemis v. Safeco Ins. Co. of Am.*, 407 Ill. App. 3d 1164, 1167 (5th Dist. 2011); *Cruz*, 383 Ill. App. 3d at 773. The question then becomes whether those issues will predominate and whether they are common to the class, meaning that “favorable adjudication of the claims of the named plaintiffs will establish a right of recovery in other class members.” *Cruz*, 383 Ill. App. 3d at 773. As stated by the Court of Appeals,

the question is will “common . . . issues be the subject of the majority of the efforts of the litigants and the court[?]” *Bemis*, 407 Ill. App. 3d at 1168. The answer here is “yes.”

At the heart of this litigation is the culpable conduct of the Defendant under BIPA. The issues are simple and straightforward legal questions that plainly lend themselves to class-wide resolution. Notwithstanding the clear and unequivocal requirements of the law, Defendant disregarded Plaintiff’s and other similarly-situated individuals’ statutorily-protected privacy rights and unlawfully collected, stored, and used their biometric data in direct violation of BIPA. Specifically, Defendant has violated BIPA because it failed to: (1) inform Plaintiff or the putative class in writing of the specific purpose and length of time for which their biometrics were being collected, stored, and used, as required by BIPA; (2) provide a publicly available retention schedule and guidelines for permanently destroying Plaintiff’s and the putative class’s biometrics, as required by BIPA; and (3) receive a written release from Plaintiff or the putative class to collect, capture, or otherwise obtain their biometrics, as required by BIPA. Defendant treated the entire proposed class in precisely the same manner, resulting in identical violations of BIPA. These common biometric-collection practices create common issues of law and fact. In fact, the legality of Defendant’s collection, storage, and use of biometric data is the focus of this litigation.

Indeed, once this Court determines whether Defendant’s practice of collecting, storing, and using individuals’ biometric data without adhering to the specific requirements of BIPA constitutes violations thereof, liability for the claims of class members will be determined in one stroke. The material facts and issues of law are substantially the same for the members of the class, and therefore these common issues could be tried such that proof as to one claimant would be proof as to all members of the class. This alone establishes predominance. The only remaining questions will be whether Defendant’s violations caused members of the class to suffer damages and the

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proper measure of damages and injunctive relief, which in and of themselves are questions common to the class. Accordingly, a favorable adjudication of the Plaintiff's claims in this case will establish a right of recovery to all other class members, and thus the commonality and predominance requirements weigh in favor of certification of the class.

C. The Named Plaintiff and Class Counsel Are Adequate Representatives of The Class.

When evaluating adequacy, courts look to whether the named plaintiff has the same interests as those of the class and whether he or she will fairly represent them. *See CE Design Ltd.*, 2015 IL App. (1st) 131465, ¶ 16. In this case, Plaintiff's interest arises from statute. The class representative, Dawn Meegan, is a member of the proposed class and will fairly and adequately protect the class's interests. Plaintiff was required to scan her fingerprint to enable Defendant to use it as an authentication method to track her time. Defendant subsequently stored Plaintiff's biometrics in its database(s). Each time Plaintiff began and ended her workday, he was required to scan her finger. Plaintiff has never been informed of the specific limited purposes (if any) of length of time for which Defendant collected, stored, or used her fingerprints. Plaintiff has never been informed of any biometric data retention policy developed by Defendant, nor has she ever been informed of whether Defendant will ever permanently delete any stored biometrics. Finally, Plaintiff has never been provided nor did she ever sign a written release allowing Defendant to collect, store, or use her biometrics. Thus, Plaintiff was a victim of the same uniform policies and practices of Defendant as the individuals she seeks to represent and is not seeking any relief that is potentially antagonistic to other members of the class. What is more, Plaintiff has the interests of those class members in mind, as demonstrated by her willingness to sue on a class-wide basis and step forward as the class representative, which subjects Plaintiff to discovery. This qualifies



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Plaintiff as a conscientious representative plaintiff and satisfies the adequacy of representation requirement.

Proposed Class Counsel, Peiffer Wolf Carr & Kane, APLC (“PWCK”), will also fairly and adequately represent the class. Proposed Class Counsel are highly qualified and experienced attorneys. (See Exhibit B - PWCK Firm Resume). PWCK attorneys, are recognized attorneys in class action lawsuits and have been designated as class counsel in numerous class actions in state and federal courts. (*Id.*). Thus, proposed Class Counsel, too, are adequate and have the ability and resources to manage this lawsuit.

**D. A Class Action Is The Appropriate Method For Fair And Efficient Adjudication Of This Controversy.**

Finally, a class action is the most appropriate method for the fair and efficient adjudication of this controversy, rather than bringing individual suits which could result in inconsistent determinations and unjust results. “It is proper to allow a class action where a defendant is alleged to have acted wrongfully in the same basic manner toward an entire class.” *P.J.’s Concrete Pumping Service, Inc. v. Nextel West Corporation*, 345 Ill. App. 3d 992, 1003 (2d Dist. 2004). “The purported class representative must establish that a successful adjudication of its individual claims will establish a right of recovery or resolve a central issue on behalf of the class members.” *Id.*

Here, Plaintiff’s claim stems from Defendant’s common and uniform policies and practices, resulting in common violations of BIPA for all members of the class. Thus, class certification will obviate the need for unduly duplicative litigation that might result in inconsistent judgments concerning Defendant’s practices. *Wenthold v. AT&T Technologies, Inc.*, 142 Ill. App. 3d 612 (1st Dist. 1986). Without a class, the Court would have to hear dozens of additional individual cases raising identical questions of liability. Moreover, class members are better served

by pooling resources rather than attempting to litigate individually. *CE Design Ltd.*, 2015 IL App. (1st) 131465, ¶¶ 28-30 (certifying TCPA class where statutory damages were alleged and rejecting arguments that individual lawsuits would be superior). In the interests of justice and judicial efficiency, it is desirable to concentrate the litigation of all class members' claims in a single forum. For all of these reasons, the class action is the most appropriate mechanism to adjudicate the claims in this case.

**E. In The Event The Court Or Defendant Seeks More Factual Information Regarding This Motion, The Court Should Allow Supplemental And Deferred Briefing Following Discovery.**

There is no meaningful need for discovery for the Court to certify a class in this matter; Defendant's practices and policies are uniform. If, however, the Court wishes for the Parties to engage in discovery, the Court should keep the instant motion pending during the discovery period, allow Plaintiff a supplemental brief, and defer Defendant's response and Plaintiff's reply. Plaintiff is moving as early as possible for class certification in part to avoid the "buy-off problem," which occurs when a defendant seeks to settle with a class representative on individual terms in an effort to moot the class claims asserted by the class representative. Plaintiff is also moving for class certification now because the class should be certified, and because no meaningful discovery is necessary to establish that fact. The instant motion is far more than a placeholder or barebones memorandum. Rather, Plaintiff's full arguments are set forth based on the facts known at this extremely early stage of litigation. Should the Court wish for more detailed factual information, the briefing schedule should be extended.

**IV. Conclusion**

For the reasons stated above, Plaintiff respectfully requests that the Court enter an Order: (1) certifying Plaintiff's claims as a class action; (2) appointing Plaintiff as Class Representative; (3) appointing Peiffer Wolf Carr & Kane as Class Counsel; and (4) authorizing court-facilitated

notice of this class action to the class. In the alternative, this Court should allow discovery, allow Plaintiff to supplement this briefing, and defer response and reply briefs.

Date: December 18, 2019

Respectfully Submitted,

By: /s/ Brandon M. Wise

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Paul A. Lesko - #6288806

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**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that on this date, I filed the foregoing document with the clerk of the Court using the Illinois E-Filing System, which should further distribute a true and accurate copy of the foregoing to all counsel of record.

/s/ Brandon M. Wise

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# ClassAction.org

This complaint is part of ClassAction.org's searchable class action lawsuit database and can be found in this post: [NFI Industries Hit with Former Employee's Class Action Over Alleged Fingerprint Scanning](#)

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