UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA MIAMI DIVISION CASE NO.:

EDWINS R. MENDIETA and other similarly-situated individuals,

Plaintiff(s),
v.

THE CHILDREN'S PLACE, INC.

Defendant,

COMPLAINT

(OPT-IN PURSUANT TO 29 U.S.C § 216(b))

COMES NOW the Plaintiff EDWINS R. MENDIETA, and other similarly-situated individuals, by and through the undersigned counsel, and hereby sues Defendant THE CHILDREN'S PLACE, INC. and alleges:

JURISDICTION VENUES AND PARTIES

- 1. This is an action to recover money damages for unpaid regular and half-time overtime wages, and retaliation under the laws of the United States. This Court has jurisdiction pursuant to the Fair Labor Standards Act, 29 U.S.C. § 201-219 (Section 216 for jurisdictional placement) ("the Act").
- 2. Plaintiff EDWINS R. MENDIETA is a resident of Dade County within the jurisdiction of this Court. Plaintiff is a covered employee for purposes of the Act.
- 3. Defendant THE CHILDREN'S PLACE, INC. (hereinafter THE CHILDREN'S PLACE, or Defendant) is a foreign corporation registered to do business in the state of Florida, having place of business in Dade County, Florida. At all times, Defendant was engaged in interstate commerce. This Defendant was the employer of Plaintiff and others similarly

- situated within the meaning of Section 3(d) of the "Fair Labor Standards Act" [29 U.S.C. § 203(d)].
- 4. All the action raised in this Complaint took place in Miami-Dade County Florida, within the jurisdiction of this Court.

GENERAL ALLEGATIONS

- 5. This cause of action is brought by Plaintiff EDWINS R. MENDIETA to recover from Defendant unpaid half-time overtime compensation, liquidated damages, retaliatory damages, costs and reasonably attorney's fees under the provisions of Fair Labor Standards Act, as amended, 29 U.S.C. § 201 et seq (the "FLA or the "ACT").
- Corporate Defendant THE CHILDREN'S PLACE is a specialty retailer of children's clothing and accessories. Defendant has a fleet of stores across Miami-Dade County, the United States and Canada.
- 7. Defendant THE CHILDREN'S PLACE employed Plaintiff EDWINS R. MENDIETA from on or about December 01, 2003 to April 03, 2019, or more than 15 years. However, for FLSA's purposes the relevant time of employment is only 26 weeks, which was the period when Plaintiff was promoted to the manager position and he worked overtime hours without being properly compensated. Previously, Plaintiff did not work overtime hours.
- 8. Plaintiff was hired to work as a non-exempted, full-time hourly retail store employee. Plaintiff worked in the store located at 8951 SW 107 Avenue, Miami, Florida 33176.
- 9. Plaintiff worked as an associate since the beginning of his employment, as an associate he worked 40 hours of less and he had different hourly wage rates. Plaintiff's last hourly rate was \$11.97 an hour.
- 10. On or about October 2018, Plaintiff was promoted to store manager. At that time Plaintiff

- was the most experienced employee, working in the store for approximately 14 years plus 10 months. Plaintiff was assigned a salary of \$846.00 weekly.
- 11. As misclassified manager, Plaintiff continued performing his regular duties as an associate, plus additional responsibilities. Plaintiff's main duty was manual and non-exempted in nature. Plaintiff worked as a retail store attendant helping customers, processing payments, replenishing merchandise, unloading and stocking shipments, preparing merchandising displays. He also regularly and customarily performed janitorial work cleaning windows, floors, and bathrooms. In addition, Plaintiff performed some clerical work, printing schedules, handling job applications, and uploading information to a completely automated, technology-driven retail system, in which management skills, if any, were minimized, or were not needed. Plaintiff did not exercise discretion and independent judgment in any matter of significance. Plaintiff was limited to follow standard management policies and operation practices without any deviation from established procedures, or any kind of personal input.
- 12. Within his period as misclassified Manager, Plaintiff was required to work extended hours to complete a heavy workload. Plaintiff did not meet the requirements to be overtime exempted, and he should have been paid for overtime hours.
- 13. Plaintiff had a regular schedule, he worked weeks of 5 days and weeks of 6 days. Usually, Plaintiff worked Monday to Friday minimum from 9:00 AM to 9:00 PM (12 hours daily); on Saturdays and Sundays Plaintiff worked from 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM (8.5 hours daily.
- 14. In every month Plaintiff worked 3 weeks of 6 days, and 1 week of 5 days, meaning that Plaintiff worked 6 weeks of 60 working hours each, and 20 weeks of 68.5 hours each.
- 15. Plaintiff worked more than 40 hours every week period, but he was not paid for overtime

- hours. Plaintiff clocked in and out, and Defendant was able to check the hours worked by Plaintiff and other similarly situated employees.
- 16. Therefore, Defendant willfully failed to pay Plaintiff overtime at the rate of time and a half his regular rate, for every hour that he worked in excess of forty (40), in violation of Section 7 (a) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 207(a)(1).
- 17. Plaintiff was paid by direct deposits, and his paystubs did not reflect the number of hours worked.
- 18. On or about April 3, 2019, Plaintiff was fired by Defendant after one incident with a shoplifter.
- 19. Plaintiff is not in possession of time and payment records, but he will provide a good faith estimate of unpaid wages based on his recollections. Plaintiff will amend his Complaint accordingly when Defendant produce time and payment records.
- 20. Plaintiff EDWINS R. MENDIETA intends to recover half-time overtime for every hour in excess of 40 in a week period, liquidated damages, retaliatory damages, and any other relief as allowable by law.
- 21. The additional persons who may become Plaintiffs in this action are employees and/or former employees of Defendant who are and who were subject to the unlawful payroll practices and procedures of Defendant and were not paid overtime wages at the rate of time and one half of their regular rate of pay for all overtime hours worked in excess of forty.

<u>COUNT I:</u> WAGE AND HOUR FEDERAL STATUTORY VIOLATION; FAILURE TO PAY OVERTIME

22. Plaintiff EDWINS R. MENDIETA re-adopts every factual allegation as stated in paragraphs 1-21 above as if set out in full herein.

- 23. This cause of action is brought by Plaintiff EDWINS R. MENDIETA as a collective action to recover from Defendant overtime compensation, liquidated damages, costs and reasonably attorney's fees under the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act, as amended, 29 U.S.C. § 201 et seq (the "FLA or the "ACT"), on behalf of Plaintiff and all other current and former employees similarly situated to Plaintiff ("the asserted class") and who worked in excess of forty (40) hours during one or more weeks on or after April 2016, (the "material time") without being compensated "at a rate not less than one and a half times the regular rate at which he is employed."
- 24. Defendant THE CHILDREN'S PLACE was and is engaged in interstate commerce as defined in §§ 3 (r) and 3(s) of the Act, 29 U.S.C. § 203(r) and 203(s)(1)(A). Defendant provides is an interstate retail store. Defendant had more than two employees recurrently engaged in commerce or in the production of goods for commerce, by regularly and recurrently using the instrumentalities of interstate commerce. Defendant uses the instrumentalities of interstate commerce to accept and solicit funds from non-Florida sources, by using electronic devices to authorize credit card transactions. Upon information and belief, the annual gross revenue of the Employer/Defendant was always in excess of \$500,000 per annum. Therefore, there is FLSA enterprise coverage.
- 25. Plaintiff and those similarly-situated were employed by an enterprise engage in interstate commerce. Plaintiff and those similarly-situated through their daily activities regularly participated in interstate commerce by performing credit card transactions. In addition, Plaintiff's regularly handled and worked on goods and materials that were produced for commerce and moved across State lines at any time in the course of business. Therefore, there is FLSA individual coverage.

- 26. Defendant THE CHILDREN'S PLACE employed Plaintiff EDWINS R. MENDIETA from on or about December 01, 2003 to April 03, 2019, or more than 15 years. However, for FLSA's purposes the relevant time of employment is only 26 weeks, which was the period when Plaintiff was promoted to the manager position and he worked overtime hours without being properly compensated. Previously, Plaintiff did not work overtime hours.
- 27. Defendant hired to work as a non-exempted, full-time hourly retail store employee. Plaintiff worked in the store located at 8951 SW 107 Avenue, Miami, Florida 33176.
- 28. Plaintiff worked as an associate since the beginning of his employment, as an associate he worked 40 hours of less and he had different hourly wage rates. Plaintiff's last hourly rate was \$11.97 an hour.
- 29. On or about October 2018, Plaintiff was misclassified as store manager. At that time Plaintiff was the most experienced employee, working in the store for approximately 14 years plus 10 months. Plaintiff was assigned a salary of \$846.00 weekly.
- 30. As misclassified manager, Plaintiff continued performing his regular duties as an associate, plus additional responsibilities and more working hours. Plaintiff's main duty was manual and non-exempted in nature. Within his period as misclassified manager, Plaintiff was required to work extended hours to meet the requirements of a heavy workload.
- 31. Plaintiff had a regular schedule, he worked weeks of 5 days and weeks of 6 days. Usually, Plaintiff worked Monday to Friday minimum from 9:00 AM to 9:00 PM (12 hours daily); on Saturdays and Sundays Plaintiff worked from 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM (8.5 hours daily).
- 32. In every month Plaintiff worked 3 weeks of 6 days, and 1 week of 5 days, meaning that Plaintiff worked 6 weeks of 60 working hours each, and 20 weeks of 68.5 hours each.
- 33. Plaintiff worked more than 40 hours every week period, but he was not paid for overtime

hours. Plaintiff clocked in and out, and Defendant was able to check the hours worked by

Plaintiff and other similarly situated employees.

34. Therefore, Defendant willfully failed to pay Plaintiff overtime at the rate of time and a half

his regular rate, for every hour that he worked in excess of forty (40), in violation of Section

7 (a) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 207(a)(1).

35. Plaintiff was paid by direct deposits, and his paystubs did not reflect the number of hours

worked.

36. The records, if any, concerning the number of hours worked by Plaintiff and those similarly

situated, and the compensation actually paid to such employees should be in the possession

and custody of Defendant. However, upon information and belief, Defendant did not

maintain accurate time records of hours worked by Plaintiff and other employees.

37. Defendant violated the record keeping requirements of FLSA, 29 CFR Part 516.

38. Plaintiff is not in possession of time and payment records, but prior to the completion of

discovery and to the best of Plaintiff's knowledge, at the time of the filing of this complaint,

Plaintiff's good faith estimate of unpaid overtime wages is as follows:

* Please note that these amounts are based on a preliminary calculation and that these

figures are subjected to modifications as discovery could dictate. Plaintiff will adjust his

calculations as needed.

a. Total amount of alleged unpaid O/T wages:

Four Thousand Three Hundred Sixty-Eight Dollars and 60/100 (\$4,368.60)

b. Calculation of such wages:

Total relevant weeks of employment: 26 weeks

1.- Calculations overtime for 6 weeks with 5 days/60 working hours

Relevant weeks: 6 weeks

Total number of hours worked: 60 weekly average

Total O/T hours: 20 hours weekly

Total paid weekly: \$846.00: 60 hours= \$14.10 an hour Regular rate: \$14.10 an hour x 1.5= \$21.15 O/T rate

Overtime rate: \$21.15-\$14.10 O/T rate paid=\$7.05 half-time difference

Half-time O/T rate \$7.05 x 20 O/T hours=\$141.00 weekly x 6 weeks= \$846.00

2.- Calculations overtime for 20 weeks with 6 days/68.5 working hours

Relevant weeks: 20 weeks

Total number of hours worked: 68.5 weekly average

Total O/T hours: 28.5 hours weekly

Total paid weekly: \$846.00: 68.5 hours= \$12.35 an hour Regular rate: \$12.35 an hour x 1.5= \$18.53 O/T rate

Overtime rate: \$18.53-\$12.35 O/T rate paid=\$6.18 half-time difference

Half-time O/T rate \$6.18 x 28.5 O/T hours=\$176.13 weekly x 20 weeks= \$3,522.60

Total 1 and 2: \$4,368.60

Nature of wages (e.g. overtime or straight time):

This amount represents unpaid half-time overtime wages.

- 39. At all times material hereto, the Employer/Defendant failed to comply with Title 29 U.S.C. \$207 (a) (1), in that Plaintiff and those similarly-situated performed services and worked in excess of the maximum hours provided by the Act, but no provision was made by the Defendant to properly pay him at the rate of time and one half for all hours worked in excess of forty hours (40) per workweek, as provided in said Act.
- 40. Defendant THE CHILDREN'S PLACE knew and/or showed reckless disregard of the provisions of the Act concerning the payment of overtime wages as required by the Fair Labor Standards Act and remains owing Plaintiff and those similarly-situated these overtime wages since the commencement of Plaintiff's and those similarly-situated employee's employment with Defendant as set forth above, and Plaintiff and those similarly-situated are entitled to recover double damages.

41. Defendant THE CHILDREN'S PLACE, willfully and intentionally refused to pay Plaintiff overtime wages at the rate of time and one half his regular rate, as required by the law of the United States.

42. Plaintiff has retained the law offices of the undersigned attorney to represent him in this action and is obligated to pay a reasonable attorneys' fee.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff EDWINS R. MENDIETA and those similarly-situated respectfully requests that this Honorable Court:

A. Enter judgment for Plaintiff EDWINS R. MENDIETA and other similarly-situated individuals and against the Defendant THE CHILDREN'S PLACE, based on Defendant's willful violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act, 29 U.S.C. § 201 et seq.; and

- B. Award Plaintiff EDWINS R. MENDIETA actual damages in the amount shown to be due for unpaid overtime compensation for hours worked in excess of forty weekly, with interest; and
- C. Award Plaintiff an equal amount in double damages/liquidated damages; and
- D. Award Plaintiff reasonable attorneys' fees and costs of suit; and
- E. Grant such other and further relief as this Court deems equitable and just and/or available pursuant to Federal Law.

JURY DEMAND

Plaintiff EDWINS R. MENDIETA demands trial by jury of all issues triable as of right by jury.

Dated: April 25, 2019.

Respectfully submitted,

By: /s/ Zandro E. Palma ZANDRO E. PALMA, P.A. Florida Bar No.: 0024031 9100 S. Dadeland Blvd. Suite 1500 Miami, FL 33156

Telephone: (305) 446-1500 Facsimile: (305) 446-1502 zep@thepalmalawgroup.com

Attorney for Plaintiff

JS 44 (Rev. 0 (Rev. 0

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

(a) PLAINTIFFS	EDWINS R. MENDIETA
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DEFENDANTS THE CHILDREN'S PLACE, INC.

(b) County of Residence of (E)	e of First Listed Plaintiff (EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)		County of Residence	e of First Listed Defendant (IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES IN LAND CONDEMNATION OF THE PROPERTY OF T	CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF
(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, A	Address, and Telephone Number)	Attorneys (If Known)	THE TRACT OF LAND INVO	LVED.
Zandro E. Palma, P. Miami FL 33157; 3	.A , 9100 S. Dadeland 05-446-1500	Blvd. Suite 1500			
(d) Check County Where Action	on Arose: 🌠 MIAMI- DADE	☐ MONROE ☐ BROWARD [□ PALM BEACH □ MARTIN □ ST. I	LUCIE INDIAN RIVER OKEEC	HOBEE HIGHLANDS
II. BASIS OF JURISDI	CTION (Place an "X" i	n One Box Only)	I. CITIZENSHIP OF P	RINCIPAL PARTIES	(Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintiff)
☐ 1 U.S. Government	□3 Fede	eral Question	(For Diversity Cases Only) P	TF DEF	and One Box for Defendant) PTF DEF
Plaintiff	(U.S. Government	Not a Party)	Citizen of This State	1 Incorporated or P of Business In Th	
2 U.S. Government Defendant		ersity ip of Parties in Item III)	Citizen of Another State	2	
			Citizen or Subject of a Foreign Country	3 Greign Nation	□ 6 □ 6
IV. NATURE OF SUIT		nly) (ORTS	Click here for: Nature of Suit Code FORFEITURE/PENALTY	Descriptions BANKRUPTCY	OTHER STATUTES
□ 110 Insurance □ 120 Marine □ 130 Miller Act □ 140 Negotiable Instrument □ 150 Recovery of Overpayment	PERSONAL INJURY 310 Airplane 315 Airplane Product Liability 320 Assault, Libel & Slander 330 Federal Employers' Liability 340 Marine 345 Marine Product Liability 350 Motor Vehicle 355 Motor Vehicle Product Liability 360 Other Personal Injury 362 Personal Injury Med. Malpractice CIVIL RIGHTS 440 Other Civil Rights 441 Voting 442 Employment 443 Housing/ Accommodations 445 Amer. w/Disabilities - Employment 446 Amer. w/Disabilities - Other 448 Education	PERSONAL INJURY 365 Personal Injury - Product Liability 367 Health Care/ Pharmaceutical Personal Injury Product Liability 368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability 368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability PERSONAL PROPERTY 370 Other Fraud 371 Truth in Lending 380 Other Personal Property Damage Product Liability PRISONER PETITIONS Habeas Corpus: 463 Alien Detainee 510 Motions to Vacate Sentence Other: 530 General 535 Death Penalty 540 Mandamus & Other 550 Civil Rights 555 Prison Condition 560 Civil Detainee - Conditions of	□ 625 Drug Related Seizure of Property 21 USC 881 □ 690 Other □ 690 Other □ 690 Other □ 710 Fair Labor Standards Act □ 720 Labor/Mgmt. Relations □ 740 Railway Labor Act □ 751 Family and Medical Leave Act □ 790 Other Labor Litigation □ 791 Empl. Ret. Inc. Security Act □ 600 Security Act □ 740 Railway Labor Litigation □ 740 Other Labor Litigation □ 751 Empl. Ret. Inc. Security Act □ 740 Naturalization Application □ 740 Naturalization □ 74	□ 422 Appeal 28 USC 158 □ 423 Withdrawal 28 USC 157 PROPERTY RIGHTS □ 820 Copyrights □ 830 Patent □ 835 Patent - Abbreviated New Drug Application □ 840 Trademark SOCIAL SECURITY □ 861 HIA (1395ff) □ 862 Black Lung (923) □ 863 DIWC/DIWW (405(g)) □ 864 SSID Title XVI □ 865 RSI (405(g)) FEDERAL TAX SUITS □ 870 Taxes (U.S. Plaintiff or Defendant) □ 871 IRS—Third Party 2 USC 7609	□ 375 False Claims Act □ 376 Qui Tam (31 USC □ 3729 (a)) □ 400 State Reapportionment □ 410 Antitrust □ 430 Banks and Banking □ 450 Commerce □ 460 Deportation □ 470 Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations □ 480 Consumer Credit □ 490 Cable/Sat TV □ 850 Securities/Commodities/ Exchange □ 890 Other Statutory Actions □ 891 Agricultural Acts □ 893 Environmental Matters □ 895 Freedom of Information Act □ 896 Arbitration □ 899 Administrative Procedure
V. ORIGIN Original Proceeding (Place of Proceeding 2 Remons Court	an "X" in One Box Only) ved	Reinstated 5 Transfer another Reopened (specify)		7 Appeal to 8 District Judge from Magistrate Judgment	Multidistrict D9 Remanded from Appellate Court File
VI. RELATED/ RE-FILED CASE(S)	(See instructions): a) JUD		✓ NO b) Related 0	Cases □YES NO DOCKET NUMBE	R:
RE-FILED CASE(S)			iling and Write a Brief Stateme		
VII. CAUSE OF ACTION			for both sides to try entire case		
VIII. REQUESTED IN		IS A CLASS ACTION	<u> </u>	,	if domondod in complaint.
COMPLAINT:	☐ UNDER F.R.C.P. 23		DEMAND \$	JURY DEMAND:	if demanded in complaint: The second of the
ABOVE INFORMATION IS DATE April 25, 2019	TRUE & CORRECT TO	SIGNATURE OF A	wledge trorney of record o C. Palma		
FOR OFFICE USE ONLY RECEIPT #	AMOUNT IF	P JUDGE		MAG JUDGE	

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

Southern District of Florida

	Southern Distric	t of Florida			
EDWINS R. ME	NDIETA)				
v.) Civil Action No.			
THE CHILDREN'S PLACE, INC.					
)			
SUMMONS IN A CIVIL ACTION					
To: (Defendant's name and address) THE CHILDREN'S PLACE, INC. Through Its Registered Agent CORPORATION SERVICE COMPANY 1201 HAYS STREET TALLAHASSEE, FL 32301-2525					
A lawsuit has been file	d against you.				
are the United States or a Unite P. 12 (a)(2) or (3) — you must	d States agency, or an officer of serve on the plaintiff an answer				
If you fail to respond, judgment by default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint. You also must file your answer or motion with the court.					
		CLERK OF COURT			
Date:					
		Signature of Clerk or Deputy Clerk			

ClassAction.org

This complaint is part of ClassAction.org's searchable class action lawsuit database and can be found in this post: <u>The Children's Place Hit with Ex-Manager's Unpaid Overtime Lawsuit</u>