MAR 2 1 2019

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VEINBERG, ROGER & ROSENFELD

Plaintiffs, Service Employees International Union- United Healthcare Workers West, and Dave Regan hereby allege and complain as follows:

## I. PARTIES

- 1. Plaintiff SEIU, United Healthcare Workers West ("SEIU-UHW" or the "Union") is a labor organization that represents approximately 95,000 healthcare workers in hospitals and clinics throughout California, and at all relevant times herein maintained an office located in Los Angeles County, California. SEIU-UHW also maintains offices across California in Oakland, Fresno, Sacramento, San Francisco, San Jose, and Stockton.
- 2. Plaintiff Dave Regan ("Regan") is an employee and the elected President of SEIU-UHW; he resides in Contra Costa County, California. Regan brings this action as an individual.
- 3. Defendant Njoki Woods ("Woods") is a former employee of SEIU-UHW, and upon information and belief, currently resides in Riverside County, California.

## II. JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 4. Woods, upon information and belief, is domiciled within Riverside County,
  California. Therefore, Woods is subject to the personal jurisdiction of this Court, and this Court
  has the power to render an effective judgment against Woods.
- 5. Woods, upon information and belief, is an individual who is and has been, at all times mentioned herein, a resident of Riverside County, in the State of California.

## III. FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

- A. SEIU-UHW IS AS A VOICE FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS, CONSUMERS, AND PATIENTS THROUGHOUT CALIFORNIA.
- 6. SEIU-UHW is a labor organization representing approximately 95,000 healthcare workers in hospitals and clinics throughout California; the Union is funded solely by the voluntary, dues payments of its members.
- 7. SEIU-UHW is committed to improving the working lives of its members; supporting their families; ensuring and providing "the best quality care to our patients, consumers, and residents; and promoting quality, affordable health care for all." To this end, the mission of SEIU-UHW is to "build a workers' organization dedicated to being a powerful force to change workers' lives and fight for social and economic justice." In line with its mission, SEIU-

UHW's "objective [is] to build a strong and more effective labor movement by organizing unorganized workers, building an effective political voice for working people, and protecting all workers from unacceptable or unjust actions by employers."

- 8. The highest leadership body of SEIU-UHW is the Executive Board, which consists of elected rank and file members, a president, and vice-president.
- 9. Regan has served as president of SEIU-UHW since 2011. The membership reelected Regan in 2014 and, again, in 2017. In his role as president, Regan is responsible for
  "administer[ing] the affairs of the Union and implement[ing] the policies of the Union on a dayto-day basis." This includes, but is not limited to, "[r]epresenting the Union in the community, in
  the media and at meetings, conferences, or conventions of organizations that the Union is
  affiliated with; and generally acting as the chief spokesperson for the Union."
- 10. In furtherance of its mission, SEIU-UHW hires staff to assist in organizing and recruiting non-union healthcare workers to join SEIU-UHW; to assist in organizing and recruiting community members, who do not work at a hospital or clinic, to join the Union and support the mission and objectives of SEIU-UHW; to assist in the administration of its collective bargaining agreements with employer-hospitals and clinics; and to assist in the representation of its more than 95,000 members in their respective workplaces.
- 11. In May 2015, SEIU-UHW hired Woods as a Union organizer. As a Union organizer, Woods was responsible for, among other things, recruiting and organizing non-union healthcare workers and community members, administering collective bargaining agreements covering SEIU-UHW members, and assisting and representing healthcare workers employed at hospitals or clinics that have a collective bargaining relationship with SEIU-UHW.
  - B. WHILE EMPLOYED WITH SEIU-UHW WOODS MAKES FALSE STATEMENTS ABOUT SEIU-UHW AND ITS PRESIDENT TO MIKE ELK, AN INTERENT BLOGGER.
- 12. On March 1, 2019, at 12:23 a.m., Mike Elk ("Elk"), the Senior Labor Reporter with PaydayReport.com, emailed Steve Trossman, a SEIU-UHW employee, asking for a response from SEIU-UHW regarding various statements that Woods had made about SEIU-UHW and Regan. Email Attached as Exhibit A, which is incorporated by reference as though fully set

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forth herein.

- 13. In his March 1 email, Elk wrote that Woods made the following statements to him:
  - a. Regan engaged in a culture of "sexual favoritism";
  - b. At a December 2017 meeting, Regan addressed a Union membership meeting and flashed the telephone numbers of some attorneys, and told people to call those attorneys if something happened at the meeting, and then said that SEIU-UHW would go after folks if they made allegations;
  - c. Regan was drunk all the time during the day; and
  - d. SEIU-UHW employees were told that they had to give money and campaign on their personal time for Dave Regan's candidates.
- 14. SEIU-UHW did not respond to Elk regarding these false claims.
- C. ELK PUBLISHES WOODS' FALSE STATEMENTS ON HIS BLOG ON MARCH 1, 2019.

At some point shortly after Elk emailed Trossman for a comment, on March 1,

- 2019, PayReport.com published an article, written by Elk, with the following headline:

  "EXCLUSIVE: SEIU VP Dave Regan Accused of Sexual Misconduct & Retaliating Against

  Whistleblowers." (Emphasis in original). The article contained numerous false statements about

  SEIU-UHW and Regan.
- 16. Based on statements from Woods, Elk alleged that SEIU-UHW and its staff engaged in sexual favoritism, illegal Union electioneering, and "selling out members in backroom deals with management." Woods is directly quoted throughout the article, and appears to be the sole source for Elk's article.
- 17. In Elk's March 1 article, Woods implies that Regan had sexual relations with members and staff. Elk directly quotes Woods as saying, "It was widely discussed amongst members that he [Regan] had sexual relations with members and staff."
- 18. In the article, Woods also falsely accuses Regan of being drunk at work, and smelling alcohol on his breath many times during the work day. Woods is directly quoted in Elk's March 1 article as saying that Regan "drinks all the time, everybody knows it . . . . He was always drunk it was just the norm."

- 19. Woods describes the culture at SEIU-UHW as "toxic" and places the blame for this on Regan's "drinking and personal sexual misconduct." Specifically, in the March 1 article, Elk directly quotes Woods as stating that "the example set by Regan's frequent drinking and personal sexual misconduct created a toxic culture where many felt pressure to have sex in order to get ahead."
- 20. Woods also stated to Elk, in his March 1 article, that this "toxic culture" involved frequent sexual exchanges for promotional opportunities. Woods is directly quoted as stating, "It's a sexual culture it was all okay . . . The culture at that time was everybody was having sex with everybody. That's just the culture sexual favors that's how people got ahead there."
- 21. Woods also implies, through her statements to Elk, that SEIU-UHW is a racist organization, and that her supervisors are racist. Woods is directly quoted in the March 1 article as stating, "I faced racism at Riverside Community Hospital, but they addressed it at least," implying there were unaddressed issues with racism at SEIU-UHW. Woods is also directly quoted as stating that her supervisor was "overheard by Woods [sic] co-workers in the office saying 'We are going to get that black bitch fired."
- 22. Woods also claims that Plaintiffs engaged in illegal electioneering; she falsely stated to Elk that her supervisor forced her to donate and use personal time to assist Regan in his re-election campaign in 2017.
- 23. Elk's March 1 article also published falsehoods about SEIU-UHW's advocacy on behalf of healthcare workers, and its ability as a labor organization to assist healthcare workers find their collective power in the workplace. For example, Elk directly quotes Woods as saying that "if a member criticized SEIU Union leadership . . . her supervisor . . . was instructed to work with union members' employer to get that member fired." Elk also attributes the following statement to Woods: "Woods says that she felt pressure from SEIU not to fight management too much and that sometimes SEIU would even instruct her to get a member fired if they questioned SEIU's lack of militancy[.]"
- 24. On March 5, 2019, SEIU-UHW met with Woods regarding the statements that she made to Elk and that were posted on Elk's blog. At this meeting, the Union provided Woods with

an opportunity to deny that she made any false and defamatory statements to Elk. Woods did not deny that she made any of the statements attributed to her by Elk. Instead Woods refused to answer any questions regarding her statements to Elk.

25. All of the statements attributed to Woods in paragraphs 12 through 23 are false, and were made with a reckless disregard for the truth. Despite the inaccuracies of Woods' statements, now published on the internet, she has not retracted any of her false statements about SEIU-UHW and Regan.

## IV. FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION Defamation – Slander Per Se – Cal. Civil Code § 46 (By Plaintiffs SEIU-UHW and Regan against Defendant Woods)

- 26. Plaintiffs re-allege, and incorporate by reference paragraphs 1 through 25, above, as though fully set forth herein.
- 27. The statements made by Woods to Elk, in paragraphs 12 through 23 are false; and constitute an unscrupulous form of character assassination, consisting of nothing more than an attack on the integrity, ethical character, and competence of SEIU-UHW and Regan.
- 28. Woods' statements to Elk are factually untrue and made with the intention to mislead the public, through the PayDayreport.com article, about SEIU-UHW and Regan as well as to undermine and discredit them.
- 29. The statements disseminated by Woods concern the ability of Plaintiffs to competently execute the Union's mission to advocate on behalf of healthcare workers throughout California. Spreading blatant falsehoods about sexual favoritism, public drunkenness, illegal electioneering, and the failure to advocate on behalf of SEIU-UHW members is a shameless attempt to smear and damage Plaintiffs' reputations among healthcare workers, patients and healthcare consumers, and others within the labor community.
- 30. Woods' statements to Elk were designed to undercut the ability of Plaintiffs to fulfill their mission of organizing and representing healthcare workers as members; and constitute a blatant attempt, by Woods, to cast Plaintiffs in a most unfavorable light to the membership of SEIU-UHW.

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WEINBERG, ROGER & ROSENFELD

A Professional Corporation
1901 Marine Wileys Portugs, Sales 200
Alesteda, Califeria 94101

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ATIORNEY OR PARTY WITHOUT ATTORNEY (Nome, State Bet BRUCE A. HARLAND, Bar No. 230477 Weinberg, Roger & Rosenfeld, 1001 Marin MONICA T. GUIZAR, Bar No. 202480 (Weinberg, Roger & Rosenfeld, 800 Wilshi TELEPHONE NO.: (510) 337-1001	ia Village Pkwy Ste 200 Alameda. CA 94	FOR COURT USE ONLY 501 6
ATTORNEY FOR (Name): Plaintiffs SEIU, UHW SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF R	and Dave Regan	
STREET ADDRESS: 4050 Main Street MAILING ADDRESS: 4050 Main Street		
CITY AND ZIP CODE: Riverside, Ca. 92501 BRANCH NAME: Riverside Historic Co	ourthouse	
CASE NAME:	ıl. v. Njoki Woods	·
CIVIL CASE COVER SHEET	Complex Case Designation	CASE NUMBER:
Unlimited Limited (Amount (Amount	Counter Joinder	RIC 1902014
demanded demanded is exceeds \$25,000 \$25,000 or less)	Filed with first appearance by defenda (Cal. Rules of Court, rule 3.402)	ant JUDGE: DEPT;
	low must be completed (see instructions or	n page 2).
Check one box below for the case type that     Auto Tort		rovisionally Complex Civil Litigation
Auto (22)	Breach of contract/warranty (06)	Cal. Rules of Court, rules 3.400-3.403)
Uninsured motorist (46) Other PI/PD/WD (Personal Injury/Property	Rule 3.740 collections (09)  Other collections (09)	Antitrust/Trade regulation (03)  Construction defect (10)
Damage/Wrongful Death) Tort	Insurance coverage (18)	Mass tort (40)
Asbestos (04) Product liability (24)	Other contract (37)	Securities litigation (28)
Medical malpractice (45)	Roal Property  Eminent domain/Inverse	Environmental/Toxic tort (30)
Other PI/PD/WD (23)	condemnation (14)	Insurance coverage claims arising from the above listed provisionally complex case
Non-PI/PD/WD (Other) Tort	Wrongful eviction (33)	types (41)
Business tort/unfair business practice (07	,	nforcement of Judgment
Civil rights (08)	Unlawful Detainer L Commercial (31)	Enforcement of judgment (20)
Defamation (13) Fraud (16)	Residential (32)	liscellaneous Civil Complaint
Intellectual property (19)	Drugs (38)	RICO (27) Other complaint (not specified above) (42)
Professional negligence (25)	ludialal Daviana	liscellaneous Civil Petition
Other non-PI/PD/WD tort (35)	Asset forfeiture (05)	Partnership and corporate governance (21)
Employment	Petition re: arbitration award (11)	Other petition (not specified above) (43)
Wrongful termination (36)	Writ of mandate (02)	,
Other employment (15)	Other judicial review (39)	
factors requiring exceptional judicial mana	gement:	es of Court, If the case is complex, mark the
a. Large number of separately repre		
b. Extensive motion practice raising issues that will be time-consuming	difficult or novel e. L. Coordination w	ith related actions pending in one or more courts
c. Substantial amount of documenta		s, states, or countries, or in a federal court stjudgment judicial supervision
3. Remedies sought (check áll that apply): a.		claratory or injunctive relief c. punitive
4. Number of causes of action (specify): Or		
<ul><li>5. This case is is is not a class.</li><li>6. If there are any known related cases, file a</li></ul>	es action suit.	nii una form ČM D15 l
	ind serve a notice of related case. [ 700 m	ay use form Cin-015.)
Date: March 21, 2019 Bruce A. Harland, Attorney	D Bus	ie A. Harland
(TYPE OR PRINT NAME)	NOTICE	NATURE OF PARTY OR ATTORNEY FOR PARTY)
Plaintiff must file this cover sheet with the under the Probate Code, Family Code, or in sanctions.	first paper filed in the action or proceeding	(except small claims cases or cases filed s of Court, rule 3.220.) Failure to file may result
<ul> <li>File this cover sheet in addition to any cove</li> <li>If this case is complex under rule 3.400 et</li> </ul>	er sheet required by local court rule. seq. of the California Rules of Court, you r	nust serve a copy of this cover sheet on all
other parties to the action or proceeding.  Unless this is a collections case under rule	3.740 or a complex case, this cover shee	
Form Adopted for Mandatory Use	CIVIL CASE COVER SHEET	Page 1 of 2 Cal. Rules of Couri, rules 2.30, 3.220, 3.400-3.403, 3.740;

#### INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO COMPLETE THE COVER SHEET

To Plaintiffs and Others Filing First Papers. If you are filing a first paper (for example, a complaint) in a civil case, you must complete and file, along with your first paper, the Civil Case Cover Sheet contained on page 1. This information will be used to compile statistics about the types and numbers of cases filed. You must complete items 1 through 6 on the sheet. In item 1, you must check one box for the case type that best describes the case. If the case fits both a general and a more specific type of case listed in item 1, check the more specific one. If the case has multiple causes of action, check the box that best indicates the primary cause of action. To assist you in completing the sheet, examples of the cases that belong under each case type in item 1 are provided below. A cover sheet must be filed only with your initial paper. Failure to file a cover sheet with the first paper filed in a civil case may subject a party, its counsel, or both to sanctions under rules 2.30 and 3.220 of the California Rules of Court.

To Parties in Rule 3.740 Collections Cases. A "collections case" under rule 3.740 is defined as an action for recovery of money owed in a sum stated to be certain that is not more than \$25,000, exclusive of interest and attorney's fees, arising from a transaction in which property, services, or money was acquired on credit. A collections case does not include an action seeking the following: (1) tort damages, (2) punitive damages, (3) recovery of real property, (4) recovery of personal property, or (5) a prejudgment writ of attachment. The identification of a case as a rule 3.740 collections case on this form means that it will be exempt from the general time-for-service requirements and case management rules, unless a defendant files a responsive pleading. A rule 3.740 collections case will be subject to the requirements for service and obtaining a judgment in rule 3.740.

To Parties in Complex Cases. In complex cases only, parties must also use the *Civil Case Cover Sheet* to designate whether the case is complex. If a plaintiff believes the case is complex under rule 3.400 of the California Rules of Court, this must be indicated by completing the appropriate boxes in items 1 and 2. If a plaintiff designates a case as complex, the cover sheet must be served with the complaint on all parties to the action. A defendant may file and serve no later than the time of its first appearance a joinder in the plaintiff's designation, a counter-designation that the case is not complex, or, if the plaintiff has made no designation, a designation that the case is complex.

CASE TYPES AND EXAMPLES

Contract

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Auto Tort
     Auto (22)-Personal Injury/Property
          Damage/Wrongful Death
     Uninsured Motorist (46) (if the
         case involves an uninsured
         motorist claim subject to
         arbitration, check this item
         instead of Auto)
Other PI/PD/WD (Personal Injury/
Property Damage/Wrongful Death)
     Asbestos (04)
         Asbestos Property Damage
         Asbestos Personal Injury/
              Wrongful Death
    Product Liability (not asbestos or toxic/environmental) (24)
Medical Malpractice (45)
         Medical Malpractice-
              Physicians & Surgeons
         Other Professional Health Care
              Malpractice
     Other PI/PD/WD (23)
       Premises Liability (e.g., slip
              and fall)
         Intentional Bodily Injury/PD/WD
              (e.g., assault, vandalism)
         Intentional Infliction of
              Emotional Distress
         Negligent Infliction of
              Emotional Distress
         Other PI/PD/WD
Non-PI/PD/WD (Other) Tort
    Business Tort/Unfair Business
        Practice (07)
     Civil Rights (e.g., discrimination,
        false arrest) (not civil
harassment) (08)
    Defamation (e.g., slander, libel)
          (13)
    Fraud (16)
    Intellectual Property (19)
    Professional Negligence (25)
        Legal Malpractice
        Other Professional Malpractice
            (not medical or legal)
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Breach of Contract/Warranty (06)
         Breach of Rental/Lease
             Contract (not unlawful detainer
                or wrongful eviction)
         Contract/Warranty Breach-Seller
             Plaintiff (not fraud or negligence)
         Negligent Breach of Contract/
             Warranty
         Other Breach of Contract/Warranty
    Collections (e.g., money owed, open
         book accounts) (09)
         Collection Case-Seller Plaintiff
         Other Promissory Note/Collections
    Case
Insurance Coverage (not provisionally
         complex) (18)
         Auto Subrogation
         Other Coverage
    Other Contract (37)
         Contractual Fraud
         Other Contract Dispute
Real Property
    Eminent Domain/Inverse
        Condemnation (14)
    Wrongful Eviction (33)
    Other Real Property (e.g., quiet title) (26)
        Writ of Possession of Real Property
        Mortgage Foreclosure
        Quiet Title
        Other Real Property (not eminent
        domain, landlord/tenant, or
        foreclosure)
Unlawful Detainer
    Commercial (31)
    Residential (32)
    Drugs (38) (if the case involves illegal
        drugs, check this item; otherwise,
        report as Commercial or Residential)
Judicial Review
    Asset Forfeiture (05)
    Petition Re: Arbitration Award (11)
   Writ of Mandate (02)
Writ–Administrative Mandamus
        Writ-Mandamus on Limited Court
            Case Matter
        Writ-Other Limited Court Case
           Review
    Other Judicial Review (39)
        Review of Health Officer Order
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Provisionally Complex Civil Litigation (Cal.
Rules of Court Rules 3.400-3.403)
      Antitrust/Trade Regulation (03)
      Construction Defect (10)
      Claims Involving Mass Tort (40)
     Securities Litigation (28)
     Environmental/Toxic Tort (30)
     Insurance Coverage Claims
          (arising from provisionally complex
          case type listed above) (41)
 Enforcement of Judgment
     Enforcement of Judgment (20)
          Abstract of Judgment (Out of
              County)
          Confession of Judgment (non-
              domestic relations)
          Sister State Judgment
          Administrative Agency Award
             (not unpaid taxes)
          Petition/Certification of Entry of
             Judgment on Unpaid Taxes
         Other Enforcement of Judgment Case
 Miscellaneous Civil Complaint
     RICO (27)
     Other Complaint (not specified
         above) (42)
         Declaratory Relief Only
Injunctive Relief Only (non-
              harassment)
          Mechanics Lien
         Other Commercial Complaint
          Case (non-tort/non-complex)
Other Civil Complaint
             (non-tort/non-complex)
 Miscellaneous Civil Petition
     Partnership and Corporate
         Governance (21)
     Other Petition (not specified
         above) (43)
         Civil Harassment
         Workplace Violence
         Elder/Dependent Adult
              Abuse
         Election Contest
         Petition for Name Change
         Petition for Relief From Late
              Claim
         Other Civil Petition
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**Employment** 

Other Non-PI/PD/WD Tort (35)

Wrongful Termination (36)

Other Employment (15)

Notice of Appeal-Labor

# SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE 4050 Main Street Riverside, CA 92501 www.riverside.courts.ca.gov

## NOTICE OF DEPARTMENT ASSIGNMENT

SERVICE	EMPI	OVEES	INTERNATIONAL	LIMION
SERVICE		O I E E S		UNION

CASE NO. RIC1902014

This case is assigned to the HONORABLE Judge Sunshine S Sykes in Department 06 for Law and Motion purposes only.

The case is assigned to Honorable Judge Irma Asberry in Department 1 for case management hearings (Case Management Conferences, Order to Show Causes, Status Conferences and Trial Setting Conferences).

Any disqualification pursuant to CCP section 170.6 shall be filed in accordance with that section.

The court follows California Rules of Court, Rule 3.1308(a)(1) for tentative rulings (see Riverside Superior Court Local Rule 3316). Tentative Rulings for each law and motion matter are posted on the Internet by 3:00 pm on the court day immediately before the hearing at <a href="http://riverside.courts.ca.gove/tentativerulings.shtml">http://riverside.courts.ca.gove/tentativerulings.shtml</a>. If you do not have internet access, you may obtain the tentative ruling by telephone at (760) 904-5722.

To request oral argument, you must (1) notify the judicial secretary at (760) 904-5722 and (2) inform all other parties, no later than 4:30 pm the court day before the hearing. If no request for oral argument is made by 4:30 pm, the tentative ruling will become the final ruling on the matter effective the date of the hearing.

The filing party shall serve a copy of this notice on all parties.

Requests for accommodations can be made by submitting Judicial Council form MC-410 no fewer than five court days before the hearing. See California Rules of Court, rule 1.100.

#### **CERTIFICATE OF MAILING**

I certify that I am currently employed by the Superior Court of California, County of Riverside, and that I am not a party to this action or proceeding. In my capacity, I am familiar with the practices and procedures used in connection with the mailing of correspondence. Such correspondence is deposited in the outgoing mail of the Superior Court. Outgoing mail is delivered to and mailed by the United States Postal Service, postage prepaid, the same day in the ordinary course of business. I certify that I served a copy of the foregoing NOTICE on this date, by depositing said copy as stated above.

Date: 03/21/19	by:	Court Executive Officer/Clerk	
	,	ILZE SIRACUSA, Deputy Clerk	

# SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE 4050 Main Street Riverside, CA 92501 www.riverside.courts.ca.gov

## NOTICE OF CASE MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE

### SERVICE EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION VS WOODS

CASE NO: RIC1902014

The Case Management Conference is scheduled for 09/17/19 at 8:30 in Department 01.

No later than 15 calendar days before the date set for the case management conference or review, each party must file a case management statement and serve it on all other parties in the case. CRC, Rule 3.725.

The plaintiff/cross-complainant shall serve a copy of this notice on all defendants/cross-defendants who are named or added to the complaint and file proof of service.

Any disqualification pursuant to CCP Section 170.6 shall be filed in accordance with that section.

Requests for accommodations can be made by submitting Judicial Council form MC-410 no fewer than five court days before the hearing. See California Rules of Court, rule 1.100.

### CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I certify that I am currently employed by the Superior Court of California, County of Riverside, and that I am not a party to this action or proceeding. In my capacity, I am familiar with the practices and procedures used in connection with the mailing of correspondence. Such correspondence is deposited in the outgoing mail of the Superior Court. Outgoing mail is delivered to and mailed by the United States Postal Service, postage prepaid, the same day in the ordinary course of business. I certify that I served a copy of the foregoing NOTICE on this date, by depositing said copy as stated above.

	Court Executive Officer/Clerk	
Date: 03/21/19	by:	
	ILZE SIRACUSA , Deputy Clerk	