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8	UNITED STATES	DISTRICT COURT
9	CENTRAL DISTRI	CT OF CALIFORNIA
10		Case No. 2:22-cv-06499-FLA (MARx)
11	FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION, et al.,	Case No. 2.22-CV-00499-PLA (WARX)
12	Plaintiff,	ORDER GRANTING PLAINTIFFS' MOTION FOR SUMMARY
13	v.	JUDGMENT AGAINST
14		DEFENDANTS MICHAEL NABATI, ARMANDO SOLIS BARRON,
15	GREEN EQUITABLE SOLUTIONS, et	DOMINIC AHIGA, AND ROGER SCOTT DYER [DKT. 184]
16	al., Defendants.	SCOTT DIER [DRI. 104]
17	Defendants.	
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RULING

Before the court is Plaintiffs' the Federal Trade Commission ("FTC") and the California Department of Financial Protection and Innovation's ("DFPI") (collectively, "Plaintiffs") Motion for Summary Judgment (the "Motion") against Individual Defendants Michael Nabati ("Nabati"), Armando Solis Barron ("Barron"), Dominic Ahiga ("Ahiga"), and Roger Scott Dyer ("Dyer") (collectively, the "Individual Defendants"). Dkt. 184 ("Mot"). On August 14, 2023, the court found this matter appropriate for resolution without oral argument and vacated the hearing set for September 22, 2023. Dkt. 244; *see* Fed. R. Civ. P. 78(b); Local Rule 7-15.

For reasons discussed below, the court GRANTS the Motion and ENTERS summary judgment against the Individual Defendants.

# **BACKGROUND**

This matter arises from an alleged mortgage assistance relief services scam, through which Plaintiffs claim Defendants promised homeowners lower interest rates, reduced principal balances, and loan forgiveness in exchange for large sums of money, but ultimately failed to deliver any promised services. Mot. at 7.<sup>2</sup> The relevant, undisputed facts are as follows.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Plaintiffs also sued Corporate Defendants Green Equitable Solutions, South West Consulting, Apex Consulting, Infocom Entertainment, Equity Relief Funding, Advent Consulting (collectively, the "Corporate Defendants") and Relief Defendant MostCap ("Relief Defendant"). The clerk of the court entered default against the Corporate Defendants on January 4, 2023 (Dkt. 104), and Relief Defendant on July 17, 2023 (Dkt. 220). Plaintiffs' Motion for Default Judgement against the Corporate

Defendants and Relief Defendant is currently pending before the court. Dkt. 250.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The court cites documents by the page numbers added by the court's CM/ECF system, rather than any page numbers that appear within the documents natively.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Because Defendants Ahiga, Dyer, and Nabati failed to oppose the Motion or otherwise challenge facts asserted by Plaintiffs, the court largely accepts Plaintiffs' Statement of Uncontroverted Facts (Dkt. 185) as undisputed. To the extent Defendant Barron disputes certain facts presented by Plaintiffs (Dkt. 217), the court does not rely

## A. Mortgage Relief Services Scam

The Individual Defendants orchestrated a fraudulent scheme to extract large sums of upfront payments by promising to reduce homeowners' mortgage interest rates and principal balances. Dkt. 185 ("SUF") ¶ 37. The Individual Defendants marketed their "services" to homeowners primarily through telemarketing, including by calling numbers on the national Do Not Call registry, and falsely represented that the consumers' homes could not be foreclosed while they were paying for the fraudulent services, the homeowners need not and should not make their regular mortgage payments or communicate with their mortgage providers, and that the services were associated with a government program related to Covid-19 relief assistance. Id. at ¶¶ 36-42. Despite enticing thousands of homeowners to register, the Individual Defendants rarely, if ever, provided the agreed-upon services in return. *Id.* ¶ 43. When homeowners complained about the lack of results and demanded refunds, the Individual Defendants ignored their requests and marked the homeowner as "dead' in their internal records. Id. ¶ 46. Plaintiffs' review of financial records received from banks and check cashing facilities used by the Individual Defendants shows a total loss to consumers of approximately \$15.8 million. *Id.* ¶ 107.

on these facts, but nevertheless notes the sole evidence submitted in support of his cursory opposition brief—a self-serving declaration—is inadequate to present any dispute of fact and is not executed in compliance with federal law. *See Publ'g Clearing House, Inc.*, 104 F.3d at 1171 ("A conclusory, self-serving affidavit, lacking detailed facts and any supporting evidence, is insufficient to create a genuine issue of material fact."); 28 U.S.C. § 1746(b); Local Rule 1-4(b) (defining declarations as "any declaration under penalty of perjury executed in conformance with 28 U.S.C. § 1746"). The declaration also appears to be identical to one submitted in connection with his Opposition to Plaintiffs' Motion to Extend the Preliminary Injunction, *see* Dkt. 209, to which the court held that "Solis Barron's untimely, self-serving declaration is not sufficient to establish the existence of genuine disputes of material fact." Dkt. 210 at 5 n.1.

## **B.** Temporary Restraining Order

In September 2022, Plaintiffs filed the instant action and applied *ex parte* for a Temporary Restraining Order ("TRO"). Dkt. 9. In support of their TRO application, Plaintiff submitted over a dozen sworn declarations from consumers who had been harmed by both the Individual and Corporate Defendants' practices. *See* Dkts. 13-18. The court entered the TRO, and later a preliminary injunction, after Defendants failed to respond to the court's order to show cause why a preliminary injunction should not be entered. Dkts. 25, 40.

## C. Plaintiff's Discovery Requests

On December 27, 2022, Plaintiffs served requests for production of documents, interrogatories, and requests for admission on the Individual Defendants seeking information regarding their involvement in the scheme. SUF ¶ 51. As relevant here, Plaintiffs asked each Individual Defendant to admit that he served as an officer, director, shareholder, manager, employee, and agent of each of the Corporate Defendants. *Id.* ¶ 52. None of the Individual Defendants served responses to Plaintiffs' discovery requests by the deadline of January 26, 2023, and were deemed to have admitted the matters set forth in Plaintiffs' Requests for Admission. *Id.* at ¶¶ 53-58; Fed. R. Civ. P. 36(a)(3). Defendant Nabati later responded on March 3, 2023, and admitted he served as an officer and agent of each of the Corporate Defendants. SUF ¶ 59.

# D. Procedural History

Plaintiffs filed the instant Motion on June 9, 2023. Dkt. 184. No Individual Defendant timely filed an opposition, and Plaintiffs filed a Notice of Non-Opposition on June 30, 2023. Dkt. 204. On July 9, 2023, Defendant Barron filed an opposition. Dkt. 216 (Barron Opp'n). Plaintiffs filed a Reply. Dkt. 221.

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**DISCUSSION** 

# I. Legal Standard

Summary judgment is appropriate where "there is no genuine dispute as to any material fact and the movant is entitled to judgment as a matter of law." Fed. R. Civ. P. 56(a). "The substantive law determines which facts are material; only disputes over facts that might affect the outcome of the suit under the governing law properly preclude the entry of summary judgment." *Nat'l Ass'n of Optometrists & Opticians v. Harris*, 682 F.3d 1144, 1147 (9th Cir. 2012) (citing *Anderson v. Liberty Lobby, Inc.*, 477 U.S. 242, 248 (1986)). A dispute about a material fact is "genuine" if the evidence is such that a reasonable jury could return a verdict for the nonmoving party. *Anderson*, 477 U.S. at 248.

The moving party bears the initial burden of establishing the absence of a genuine issue of material fact. *Celotex Corp. v. Catrett*, 477 U.S. 317, 323 (1986). If the moving party meets its initial burden, the opposing party must then set forth specific facts showing there is a genuine issue for trial. *Anderson*, 477 U.S. at 248–49. "Where the record taken as a whole could not lead a rational trier of fact to find for the nonmoving party, there is no 'genuine issue for trial." *Matsushita Elec. Indus. Co. v. Zenith Radio Corp.*, 475 U.S. 574, 587 (1986). Summary judgment must be granted "against a party who fails to make a showing sufficient to establish the existence of an element essential to that party's case, and on which that party will bear the burden of proof at trial." *Celotex*, 477 U.S. at 322.

"If the nonmoving party produces direct evidence of a material fact, the court may not assess the credibility of this evidence nor weigh against it any conflicting evidence presented by the moving party." *T.W. Elec. Serv., Inc. v. Pac. Elec. Contractors Ass'n*, 809 F.2d 626, 631 (9th Cir. 1987). Inferences may be drawn from underlying facts that are either not in dispute or that may be resolved at trial in favor of the nonmoving party, but only if they are "rational" or "reasonable" and otherwise permissible under the governing substantive law. *Id.* The court must view all

evidence and justifiable inferences "in the light most favorable to the nonmoving party." *Id.* at 630–31. However, a party cannot defeat summary judgment based solely on the allegations or denials of the pleadings, conclusory statements, or unsupported conjecture. *Hernandez v. Spacelabs Med., Inc.*, 343 F.3d 1107, 1112 (9th Cir. 2003); *see also FTC v. Publ'g Clearing House, Inc.*, 104 F.3d 1168, 1171 (9th Cir. 1997) ("A conclusory, self-serving affidavit, lacking detailed facts and any supporting evidence, is insufficient to create a genuine issue of material fact.").

## II. Analysis

Plaintiffs seek summary judgment against the Individual Defendants on grounds that the Corporate Defendants violated various federal statutes, and the Individual Defendants, therefore, are liable as a matter of law by virtue of their admissions of agency of each of the Corporate Defendants. *See generally* Mot. The court agrees, and discusses first the Corporate Defendants' liability, and then addresses the liability of the Individual Defendants.

## A. Corporate Liability

Plaintiffs argue the Corporate Defendants are liable under the Federal Trade Commission Act ("FTC Act"), Mortgage Assistance Relief Services ("MARS") Rule, Telemarketing Sales Rule ("TSR"), Covid-19 Consumer Protection Act ("CCPA"), and California Consumer Financial Protection Law ("CCFPL"). Mot. at 13.

## 1. FTC Act

The FTC Act prohibits "unfair or deceptive acts of practices in or affecting commerce." *FTC v. Pantron I Corp.*, 33 F.3d 1088, 1095 (9th Cir. 1994). An act is deceptive if "first, there is a representation, omission, or practice that, second, is likely to mislead consumers acting reasonably under the circumstances, and third, the representation, omission, or practice is material." *FTC v. Gill*, 265 F.3d 944, 950 (9th Cir. 2001). "Express claims, or deliberately made implied claims, used to induce a purchase are presumed to be material" and "[c]onsumer reliance on express claims is presumed reasonable." *FTC v. Universal Premium Servs., Inc.*, Case No. 06-cv-0849-

SJO (OPx), 2007 WL 9728965, at \*2 (C.D. Cal. Feb. 21, 2007). Plaintiffs have provided ample evidence that the Corporate Defendants violated the FTC Act.

In support of their TRO application and the instant Motion, Plaintiffs submitted more than a dozen consumer declarations, attesting that the Corporate Defendants made certain representations regarding mortgage relief assistance services; that those representations were misleading because the homeowners were never provided with the promised services; and the representations were material. *See* Dkt. 9 at 11-14. Plaintiffs have also offered a sworn declaration from a former employee ("Cabral") of the Corporate Defendants, who stated "we would tell potential clients that we could get them interest rates as low as 2% or 3% [and] that up to 1/3rd off their principal balance would be forgiven," but that Cabral "became concerned that the company was not providing the mortgage loan modification that it promised clients[.]" SUF ¶¶ 82-83.

Various business records, received in response to a subpoena, provide further evidence of the Corporate Defendants' deceptive and unlawful practices. As one example, a client file received from CaptaLoans—a customer relations management database used to track client payments—noted "[client] IS EXTREMELY DISABLED" and "NEEDS CONTINUOUS REMINDER ON PAYMENT." When the client's sister contacted the Corporate Defendants to inform them she had power of attorney over her brother, the client, and "want[ed] to figure out if [they were] a scam or not," Defendant Ahiga instructed employees that "this file is dead please close out." SUF ¶ 89, 92.

Based on the evidence presented by Plaintiffs and the Individual Defendants' failure to offer any evidence to the contrary—much less to even dispute the relevant facts—the court finds the Corporate Defendants violated the FTC Act.

## 2. MARS Rule

The MARS Rule prohibits mortgage assistance relief providers, seeking to obtain relief on a consumer's behalf, from making false or misleading claims about

their services. 12 C.F.R. § 1015.5. The MARS Rule also requires providers to make certain disclosures to consumers prior to providing relief services. 12 C.F.R. § 1015.4(b)(1)-(3), (c). For the same reasons articulated above, and additionally because Plaintiffs have established the Corporate Defendants illegally instructed clients not to contact their lenders, misrepresented various aspects of their services, and failed to make any requisite disclosures, the court finds the Corporate Defendants violated the MARS Rule as a matter of law. Dkt. 9 at 14-17.

## 3. <u>TSR</u>

The TSR requires telemarketers to pay a fee to access the National Do Not Call Registry (the "Registry") and prohibits telemarketers from contacting consumers registered on the list. 16 C.F.R. §§ 310.8, 310.4(b)(1)(iii)(B). Plaintiffs have not located any records indicating the Corporate Defendants paid for access to the Registry, SUF ¶ 98, nor have the Individual Defendants claimed as such. Additionally, Cabral stated in her declaration that she was "not aware of anyone at the company checking to see if a client was on the Do Not Call list prior to calling them." *Id.* ¶ 81. Thus, the court finds the Corporate Defendants violated the TSR.

## 4. <u>CC</u>PA

The CCPA prohibits any "deceptive act or practice . . . that is associated with . . . a government benefit related to COVID-19." Pub. L. No. 116-260, 134 Stat. 1182, Title XIV, Section 1401(b)(2). As Plaintiffs claim, and Cabral confirms, the Corporate Defendants regularly told consumers they "were able to provide these services as part of a government-backed hardship program related to the COVID-19 pandemic." SUF ¶ 80. There is no evidence any such services were provided. Thus, the court finds the Corporate Defendants violated the CCPA.

#### 5. CCFPL

Finally, the CCFPL prohibits certain "covered persons" from engaging "in any unlawful, unfair, deceptive, or abusive act or practice with respect to consumer financial products or services." Cal. Fin. Code § 90003(a)(1). "Services to assist a

consumer with ... modifying the terms of any extension of credit[] or avoiding foreclosure," qualifies as a "financial product or service." Cal. Fin. Code § 90005(k)(8)(B). For the same reasons as above, the court finds the Corporate Defendants engaged in unlawful, unfair, and deceptive practices with respect to

## **B.** Common Enterprise

financial services in violation of the CCFPL.

Plaintiffs also allege it is undisputed the Corporate Defendants acted as a common enterprise. Mot. at 19. "Where one or more corporate entities operate in common enterprise, each may be held liable for the deceptive acts and practices of the others." *F.T.C. v. John Beck Amazing Profits, LLC*, 865 F. Supp. 2d 1052, 1082 (C.D. Cal. 2012). In making this determination, courts look to four factors: "(1) common control; (2) sharing office space and offices; (3) whether business is transacted through a 'maze of interrelated companies'; and (4) commingling of funds." *Id.* The court finds all four factors have been satisfied.

First, by failing to respond to Plaintiffs' Requests for Admission, each Individual Defendant admitted they were officers, directors, and managers of each of the Corporate Defendants. SUF ¶¶ 54-56, 58, 62. Indeed, Defendant Nabati affirmatively admitted so in his untimely response. *Id.* ¶ 59. Cabral too confirmed in her declaration that the "company was managed by four men: [Barron, Nabati, Ahiga, and Dyer]." SUF ¶ 74. Second, the Corporate Defendants all used the same office space to conduct operations. SUF ¶¶ 21, 73, 105. Third, each of the Corporate Defendants used essentially the same trade names to conduct business and employees regularly performed work for each of these trade names without regard for which Corporate Defendant the consumer had contracted with. SUF ¶¶ 4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 72. Fourth, consumer funds intended for one corporation were deposited into accounts belonging to another. SUF ¶¶ 45, 48, 49. Accordingly, the courts finds all four factors satisfied and thus finds, as a matter of law, that the Corporate Defendants worked as a common enterprise.

## C. Liability of the Individual Defendants

Individual liability for corporate wrongdoing exists where "(1) the corporation committed misrepresentations of a kind usually relied on by a reasonably prudent person and resulted in consumer injury, and (2) individuals participated directly in the violations or had authority to control the entities." *F.T.C. v. Grant Connect, LLC*, 763 F.3d 1094, 1101 (9th Cir. 2014). Though a plaintiff must show that each individual had "knowledge that the corporation or one of its agents engaged in dishonest or fraudulent conduct," it "need not show that a defendant intended to defraud consumers' and "the extent of an individual's involvement in a fraudulent scheme alone is sufficient to establish the requisite knowledge for personal restitutionary liability." *Id.* at 1101-02.

It is undisputed the Corporate Defendants made misrepresentations that resulted in losses and injury to consumers. SUF ¶ 107 (stating Corporate Defendants were paid \$15,891,536.97 in connection with their fraud). Thus, the court focuses on the extent of each Individual Defendant's involvement and finds each had authority to control the Corporate Defendants and participated directly in the violations.

First, Plaintiffs argue Defendant Nabati participated directly in the violative conduct as he "was closing the deals ... figuring out what could and what couldn't be done as far as executing a loan ... or financial assistance," coordinating with salespeople to "determine what loan modification to propose to a consumer," and personally training employees. SUF ¶¶ 75, 101, 109, 110. Additionally, he had authority to control the actions of the Corporate Defendants because he admitted, in response to Plaintiffs' requests for admission, that he was an officer, director, shareholder, and manager of each of the Corporate Defendants. *Id.* ¶¶ 56, 62; *see John Beck*, 865 F. Supp. 2d at 1080 ("Status as a corporate officer is sufficient to establish individual liability."). Though this admission alone is sufficient to establish liability, Defendant Ahiga further confirmed Defendant Nabati's control when he later testified "[n]othing is done without the direction of Michael Nabati." SUF ¶ 122.

Next, in addition to stating Defendant Barron was one of the four men who managed the Corporate Defendants, see id. ¶ 74, Cabral also attested Defendant Barron "was responsible for determining what kinds of offers the Sales representatives could present to the client. For example, [he] would tell the Sales representatives what interest rates they could offer to a particular client. He would instruct employees on the Submissions team as to whether or not offers made by mortgage companies and/or servicers were good enough to relay to consumers." *Id.* ¶ 76.<sup>4</sup> Defendant Barron also admitted he was an officer, director, shareholder, manager, employee, and agent of each of the Corporate Defendants by failing to respond timely to Plaintiffs' requests for admission.

Defendant Barron requests the court allow him to withdraw his admission, relying on Dillon v. United States, 357 F. Supp. 3d 49 (D. Mass. 2019). Barron Opp'n at 8. As an initial matter, *Dillon* is not binding on this court. More importantly, the court in Dillon granted the government's motion to withdraw admissions after it "inadvertently failed to respond." Dillon, 357 F Supp. 3d at 55. Here, Defendant Barron has made no showing of inadvertence or anything less than conscious disregard for Plaintiffs' discovery requests, and inexplicably waited until the filing of his opposition to request withdrawal of his admission. Though Defendant Barron did state in separate discovery responses that he "did not engage in any unlawful mortgage loan modification schemes, and was not ... an officer, director, controller in

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Defendant Barron disputes this fact, but does not meet his burden to produce any evidence to the contrary. Instead, he relies solely on boilerplate evidentiary objections based on lack of foundation. These objections are not cognizable at this stage of the proceedings. See Fraser v. Goodale, 342 F.3d 1032, 1036-37 (9th Cir. 2003) ("At the summary judgment stage, we do not focus on the admissibility of the evidence's form. We instead focus on the admissibility of its contents."); Block v. City of L.A., 253 F.3d 410, 418-19 (9th Cir. 2001) ("To survive summary judgment, a party does not necessarily have to produce evidence in a form that would be admissible at trial, as long as the party satisfies the requirements of Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 56.").

any of the Corporate Defendants' businesses, and ... did not involve himself in any sign up of clients," SUF ¶ 69, naked disavowal of liability is insufficient to avoid summary judgment where, as here, Defendant Barron has provided no evidence to the contrary.

Defendant Ahiga also directly participated in the unlawful conduct as he testified he was responsible for processing consumer loan modification applications and frequently spoke with loan servicers regarding potential mortgage assistance. SUF ¶ 125; see also id. ¶ 116 ("[Ahiga] was in charge of contacting clients, lenders, so forth" and responsible for "the processing office"). Cabral declared Defendant "Ahiga was responsible for handling clients who were unhappy with the services the company provided," id. ¶ 77, and Ahiga sent a message to Defendant Dyer stating he had to change his telephone number because a customer had reported Ahiga's number to "scampulse.com," a website used to report scams. *Id.* ¶ 132. As for his authority to control the Corporate Defendants, not only did Defendant Ahiga implicitly admit control by failing to respond to Plaintiffs' requests for admission, but also explicitly identified himself as the CEO, CFO, Secretary, Director, and Agent of Apex Consulting and Green Equitable Solutions. *Id.* ¶¶ 3, 9. He was also involved in the dissolution of those two entities. *Id.* ¶ 9 (dissolution paperwork for Apex Consulting signed by Defendant Ahiga); ¶ 133 ("I have to call [G]ypsy this morning to dissolve [Green Equitable Solutions]").

Lastly, Defendant Dyer also directly participated in the violations of law. At his deposition, he testified he served as an "opener" for contracting customers who expressed interest in the fraudulent services, and admitted to contacting mortgage loan servicers on behalf of customers. *Id.* ¶¶ 117-18. As with the other Individual Defendants, Dyer implicitly admitted to being an officer, director, manager, or agent of each of the Corporate Defendants, and is also affirmatively identified as the CEO, CFO, Secretary, Director, and Agent for each of Infocom Entertainment, South West Consulting, and Equity Relief Funding. SUF ¶¶ 6, 12, 15.

#### D. Relief Defendant

Plaintiffs also seek disgorgement from Relief Defendant for assets received from the common enterprise. Mot. at 27-28. To obtain disgorgement against a relief defendant, a plaintiff must show that the nominal defendant "(1) received ill-gotten funds and (2) do[es] not have a legitimate claim to those funds." *SEC v. World Capital Markets, Inc.*, 864 F.3d 996, 1004 (9th Cir. 2017). Relief Defendant has admitted it received funds from each of the Corporate Defendants. SUF ¶¶ 57, 65. As to the second element, Relief Defendant has failed to produce any documents or information explaining why it legitimately receive those funds. *Id.* ¶ 64. Accordingly, the court finds Plaintiffs are entitled to disgorgement from Relief Defendant.

#### E. Penalties

Plaintiffs seek restitution, civil penalties, and a permanent injunction as relief. Mot. at 28-29. Plaintiffs are entitled to seek restitution under the MARS Rule, TSR, CCPA, and CCFPL (see 15 U.S.C. § 57b(b); Cal. Fin. Code § 90012(b)) and seek restitution in the amount of \$15,891,536.97 against the Individual Defendants, and \$50,900.00 against Relief Defendant. Plaintiffs are also entitled to civil penalties under the CCFPL. Cal. Fin. Code § 90012(c). The DFPI's civil penalty calculation consists of a \$5,000 per day penalty from the day DFPI acquired civil penalty authority (January 1, 2021) to the filing of Plaintiffs' Complaint (September 12, 2022). Lastly, Plaintiffs seek to restrain permanently and enjoin the Individual Defendants from marketing, selling, advertising, or otherwise offering debt relief services; engaging in telemarketing; and otherwise making misrepresentations or other unsubstantiated claims to consumers.

The court finds the aforementioned forms of relief to be appropriate and ADOPTS Plaintiffs' Proposed Order for Permanent Injunction, Monetary Judgment, and Other Relief (Dkt. 184-1) in its entirety.

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## **CONCLUSION**

For the foregoing reasons, the court GRANTS summary judgment in Plaintiffs' favor and enters judgment against each of the Individual Defendants. The court further ORDERS as follows:

#### I. **DEFINITIONS**

For the purpose of this Order, the following definitions apply:

- A. "Assisting Others" includes:
  - performing customer service functions, including receiving or responding to consumer complaints;
  - 2. formulating or providing, or arranging for the formulation or provision of, any advertising or marketing material, including any telephone sales script, direct mail solicitation, or the design, text, or use of images of any Internet website, email, or other electronic communication;
  - formulating or providing, or arranging for the formulation or provision of, any marketing support material or service, including web or Internet Protocol addresses or domain name registration for any Internet websites, affiliate marketing services, or media placement services;
  - 4. providing names of, or assisting in the generation of, potential customers; or
  - 5. performing marketing, billing, or payment services of any kind.
- B. "Corporate Defendants" means Advent Consulting, Inc.; Apex Consulting & Associates Inc., also d/b/a Golden Home Services America and Home Matters USA Consulting; Equity Relief Funding, Inc., also d/b/a Academy Home Services America, Atlantic Pacific Service United, Golden Home Services United, and Home Matters USA Group; Green Equitable Solutions, also d/b/a Academy Home Services and Westwood Advocates; Infocom Entertainment Ltd, Inc., also d/b/a

Amstar Service Group, Atlantic Pacific Service, and Home Relief Service of America; and South West Consulting Enterprises, Inc., also d/b/a Academy Home Service, Atlantic Pacific Service Group, Golden Homes Services of America Enterprises, and Home Matters USA; and their successors and assigns.

## C. "Debt Relief Product or Service" means:

- 1. With respect to any mortgage, loan, debt, or obligation between a Person and one or more secured or unsecured creditors or debt collectors, any Product or Service represented, expressly or by implication, to:
  - a. stop, prevent, or postpone any mortgage or deed of foreclosure sale for a Person's dwelling, any other sale of collateral, any repossession of a Person's dwelling or other collateral, or otherwise save a Person's dwelling or other collateral from foreclosure or repossession;
  - b. negotiate, obtain, or arrange a modification, or renegotiate, settle, or in any way alter any terms of the mortgage, loan, debt, or obligation, including a reduction in the amount of interest, principal balance, monthly payments, or fees owed by a Person to a secured or unsecured creditor or debt collector;
  - c. obtain any forbearance or modification in the timing of payments from any secured or unsecured holder or servicer of any mortgage, loan, debt, or obligation;
  - d. negotiate, obtain, or arrange any extension of the period of time within which a Person may (i) cure his or her default on the mortgage, loan, debt, or obligation, (ii) reinstate his or her mortgage, loan, debt, or obligation, (iii) redeem a dwelling or other collateral, or (iv) exercise

- any right to reinstate the mortgage, loan, debt, or obligation or redeem a dwelling or other collateral;
- e. obtain any waiver of an acceleration clause or balloon payment contained in any promissory note or contract secured by any dwelling or other collateral; or
- f. negotiate, obtain, or arrange (i) a short sale of a dwelling or other collateral, (ii) a deed-in-lieu of foreclosure, or (iii) any other disposition of a mortgage, loan, debt, or obligation other than a sale to a third party that is not the secured or unsecured loan holder.

The foregoing shall include any manner of claimed assistance, including auditing or examining a Person's application for the mortgage, loan, debt, or obligation.

- 2. With respect to any loan, debt, or obligation between a Person and one or more unsecured creditors or debt collectors, any Product or Service represented, expressly or by implication, to:
  - a. repay one or more unsecured loans, debts, or obligations;
     or
  - b. combine unsecured loans, debts, or obligations into one or more new loans, debts, or obligations.
- D. "**Defendants**" means all of the Individual Defendants and the Corporate Defendants, individually, collectively, or in any combination.
- E. "Individual Defendants" means Dominic Ahiga, a/k/a Michael Dominic Grinnell; Roger Scott Dyer; Armando Solis Barron; and Michael Robin Nabati.
- F. "**Person**" means any individual, group, unincorporated association, limited or general partnership, corporation, or other business entity.
- G. **"Product or Service"** means any good or service, including any plan or program.

- I. "Relief Defendant" means MostCap Enterprises Corp, and its successors and assigns.
- J. "**Telemarketing**" means any plan, program, or campaign which is conducted to induce the purchase of goods or services by use of one or more telephones, and which involves a telephone call, whether or not covered by the Telemarketing Sales Rule.

## II. BAN ON DEBT RELIEF PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

IT IS ORDERED that the Individual Defendants are permanently restrained and enjoined, whether acting directly or through an intermediary, from advertising, marketing, promoting, offering for sale, or selling, or Assisting Others in the advertising, marketing, promoting, offering for sale, or selling, of any Debt Relief Product or Service.

#### III. BAN ON TELEMARKETING

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Individual Defendants are permanently restrained and enjoined from participating in Telemarketing, whether directly or through an intermediary.

#### IV. PROHIBITION AGAINST MISREPRESENTATIONS

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Individual Defendants, Individual Defendants' officers, agents, employees, and attorneys, and all other Persons in active concert or participation with any of them, who receive actual notice of this Order, whether acting directly or indirectly, in connection with the advertising, marketing, promoting, offering for sale, or selling of any Product or Service, are permanently restrained and enjoined from misrepresenting, or Assisting Others in misrepresenting, expressly or by implication:

A. any material aspect of the nature or terms of any refund, cancellation, exchange, or repurchase policy, including the likelihood of a consumer obtaining a full or partial refund, or the circumstances in which a full or

partial refund will be granted to the consumer;

- B. that any Person is affiliated with, endorsed or approved by, or otherwise connected to any other Person; government entity; public, non-profit, or other non-commercial program, including any government homeowner assistance plan or government mortgage relief program related to COVID-19; or any other program;
- C. the nature, expertise, position, or job title of any Person who provides any Product or Service; or
- D. any other fact material to consumers concerning any Product or Service, such as: the total costs; any material restrictions, limitations, or conditions; or any material aspect of its performance, efficacy, time frame in which consumers can expect certain results; nature, or central characteristics.

#### V. PROHIBITION AGAINST UNSUBSTANTIATED CLAIMS

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Individual Defendants, the Individual Defendants' officers, agents, employees, and attorneys, and all other Persons in active concert or participation with any of them, who receive actual notice of this Order, whether acting directly or indirectly, in connection with the promoting or offering for sale of any Product or Service, are permanently restrained and enjoined from making any representation or Assisting Others in making any representation, expressly or by implication, about the benefits, performance, or efficacy of any Product or Service, unless the representation is nonmisleading, including that, at the time such representation is made, they possess and rely upon competent and reliable evidence that is sufficient in quality and quantity based on standards generally accepted in the relevant fields, when considered in light of the entire body of relevant and reliable evidence, to substantiate that the representation is true.

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# VI. MONETARY JUDGMENT FOR RELIEF AGAINST INDIVIDUAL DEFENDANTS

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that judgment in the amount of Fifteen Million Eight Hundred Ninety-One Thousand and Five Hundred Thirty-Six Dollars and Ninety-Seven Cents (\$15,891,536.97) is entered in favor of Plaintiffs against the Individual Defendants, jointly and severally, as monetary relief.

# VII. MONETARY JUDGMENT FOR RELIEF AGAINST RELIEF DEFENDANT

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that judgment in the amount of Fifty Thousand Nine Hundred Dollars and Zero Cents (\$50,900.00) is entered in favor of Plaintiffs against Relief Defendant as monetary relief.

#### VIII. MONETARY JUDGMENT FOR CIVIL PENALTY

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that judgment in the amount of Three Million and Ninety Five Thousand Dollars and Zero Cents (\$3,095,000.00) is entered in favor of Plaintiff DFPI against the Individual Defendants, jointly and severally, as a civil penalty.

#### IX. ADDITIONAL MONETARY PROVISIONS

#### IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that:

- A. The monetary judgments set forth in Sections V to VII are enforceable against any asset, real or personal, whether located within the United States or outside the United States, owned jointly or singly by, on behalf of, for the benefit of, in trust by or for, or as a deposit for future goods or services to be provided to, any Individual Defendant or the Relief Defendant, whether held as tenants in common, joint tenants with or without the right of survivorship, tenants by the entirety, and/or community property.
- B. In partial satisfaction of the judgment against the Individual Defendants in Sections V and VII, any financial or brokerage institution, escrow

agent, title company, commodity trading company, business entity, or Person, whether located within the United States or outside the United States, that holds, controls, or maintains accounts or assets of, on behalf of, or for the benefit of, any Individual Defendant, whether real or personal, whether located within the United States or outside the United States, shall, within ten (10) business days from receipt of a copy of this Order, turn over such account or asset to Plaintiffs or their designated agent, including, but not limited to:

## **Accounts in the Name of Roger Dyer**

- i. Wells Fargo Bank shall, within ten (10) business days of receipt of a copy of this Order, transfer to the Receiver or his designated agent all funds, if any, in account number xxxx4768 in the name of Roger Dyer.
- ii. Fidelity Brokerage shall, within ten (10) business days of receipt of a copy of this Order, transfer to the Receiver or his designated agent all funds, if any, in:
  - a. Account number xxxx0167 in the name of Roger Dyer;
  - b. Account number xxxx5103 in the name of Roger Dyer; and
  - c. Account number xxxx4656 in the name of Roger Dyer.
  - iii. JPMorgan Chase shall, within ten (10) business days of receipt of a copy of this Order, transfer to the Receiver or his designated agent all funds, if any, in account number xxxx5861 in the name of Roger Dyer.

# **Accounts in the Name of Dominic Ahiga**

i. PNC Bank shall, within ten (10) business days of receipt of a copy of this Order, transfer to the Receiver or his designated

agent all funds, if any, in account number xxxx5848 in the 1 2 name of Dominic Ahiga. 3 Accounts in the Name of Dominic Ahiga Revocable Living Trust, **Dominic Ahiga Trustee** 4 5 Wells Fargo Bank shall, within ten (10) business days of i. receipt of a copy of this Order, transfer to the Receiver or his 6 7 designated agent all funds, if any, in account number 8 xxxx7453 in the name of Dominic Ahiga Revocable Living 9 Trust, Dominic Ahiga Trustee. **Accounts in the Name of Michael D. Grinnell** 10 Capital One Bank shall, within ten (10) business days of 11 i. 12 receipt of a copy of this Order, transfer to the Receiver or his 13 designated agent all funds, if any, in account number 14 xxxx2884 in the name of Michael D. Grinnell. 15 **Accounts in the Name of Armando Solis Barron** Wells Fargo Bank shall, within ten (10) business days of 16 i. 17 receipt of a copy of this Order, transfer to the Receiver or his 18 designated agent all funds, if any, in: 19 a. Account xxxx8611, in the name of Armando Solis 20 Barron; 21 b. Account number xxxx50177, in the name of Armando 22 Solis Barron; and 23 c. Account number xxxx8140 in the name of Armando 24 Solis Barron. 25 ii. Navy Federal Credit Union shall, within ten (10) business 26 days of receipt of a copy of this Order, transfer to the 27 Receiver or his designated agent all funds, if any, in: 28

1	a. Account number xxxx5309 in the name of Armando
2	Solis Barron; and
3	b. Account number xxxx7708 in the name of Armando
4	Solis Barron.
5	Accounts in the Name of Michael Nabati
6	i. Wells Fargo Bank shall, within ten (10) business days of receipt
7	of a copy of this Order, transfer to the Receiver or his designated
8	agent all funds, if any, in:
9	a. Account number xxxx2645 in the name of Michael R.
10	Nabati; and
11	b. Account number xxxx8180 in the name of Michael R.
12	Nabati.
13	ii. TD Bank shall, within ten (10) business days of receipt of a copy
14	of this Order, transfer to the Receiver or his designated agent all
15	funds, if any, in account number xxxx8740 in the name of
16	Michael R. Nabati.
17	iii. PayPal Holdings, Inc. shall, within ten (10) business days of
18	receipt of a copy of this Order, transfer to the Receiver or his
19	designated agent all funds, if any, in:
20	a. Account number xxxx1372 in the name of Michael R.
21	Nabati;
22	b. Account number xxxx30715 in the name of Michael R.
23	Nabati;
24	c. Account number xxxx3262 in the name of Michael R.
25	Nabati;
26	d. Account number xxxx2268 in the name of Michael R.
27	Nabati;
28	

#### 1 Account number xxxx7629 in the name of Michael R. 2 Nabati: 3 Account number xxxx3602 in the name of Michael R. 4 Nabati: 5 Account number xxxx3306 in the name of Michael R. 6 Nabati; Account number xxxx5971 in the name of Michael R. 7 8 Nabati; 9 Account number xxxx5292 in the name of Michael R. 10 Nabati: 11 Account number xxxx7931 in the name of Michael R. 12 Nabati; 13 Account number xxxx1227 in the name of Michael R. Nabati: 14 15 Account number xxxx7524 in the name of Michael R. 16 Nabati; 17 m. Account number xxxx1504 in the name of Michael R. 18 Nabati; 19 Account number xxxx7098 in the name of Michael R. 20 Nabati; 21 Account number xxxx8652 in the name of Michael R. 22 Nabati; 23 Account number xxxx9776 in the name of Michael R. 24 Nabati: 25 Account number xxxx3123 in the name of Michael R. 26 Nabati; Account number xxxx9685 in the name of Michael R. 27 r. 28 Nabati:

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1	s. Account number xxxx0914 in the name of Michael R.
2	Nabati;
3	t. Account number xxxx1891 in the name of Michael R.
4	Nabati;
5	u. Account number xxxx8742 in the name of Michael R.
6	Nabati;
7	v. Account number xxxx4259 in the name of Michael R.
8	Nabati; and
9	w. Account number xxxx7684 in the name of Michael R.
10	Nabati.
11	Accounts in the Name of Michael Robin Nabati Irrevocable Living
12	<u>Trust</u>
13	i. Wells Fargo Bank shall, within ten (10) business days of
14	receipt of a copy of this Order, transfer to the Receiver or his
15	designated agent all funds, if any, in account number
16	xxxx0013 in the name of Michael Robin Nabati Irrevocable
17	Living Trust.
18	Real Property in the Name of Michael Robin Nabati Irrevocable
19	<u>Living Trust</u>
20	i. 109 Harbor Woods Place, #109, Newport Beach, CA 92660;
21	and
22	ii. 203 Harbor Woods Place #203, Newport Beach, CA 92660
23	C. In partial satisfaction of the judgment against the Relief Defendant in
24	Section VI, any financial or brokerage institution, escrow agent, title
25	company, commodity trading company, business entity, or Person,
26	whether located within the United States or outside the United States, that
27	holds, controls, or maintains accounts or assets of, on behalf of, or for the
28	benefit of, the Relief Defendant, whether real or personal, whether

located within the United States or outside the United States, shall, within ten (10) business days from receipt of a copy of this Order, turn over such accounts or assets to the Receiver or his designated agent, including, but not limited to:

## Accounts in the name of MostCap Enterprises, Corp.

- Wells Fargo Bank shall, within ten (10) business days of receipt of a copy of this Order, transfer to the Receiver or his designated agent all funds, if any, in account number xxxx3506 in the name of Mostcap Enterprises, Corp.
- D. The Individual Defendants and the Relief Defendant shall disclose all assets, including personal property, not previously disclosed to Plaintiffs and the Receiver.
- E. The Individual Defendants and the Relief Defendant shall cooperate fully with Plaintiffs and the Receiver and shall takes steps as any of them may require to transfer possession of the assets covered by Sections V to VII and to assist in the final liquidation of the assets, including executing any documents, procuring the signatures of any person or entity under their control, providing access to the assets, providing any necessary information, and turning over the assets.
- F. The asset freeze is modified to permit the transfers identified in this Section. Upon satisfaction of the monetary judgments set forth in Sections V to VII, the asset freeze as to the Individual Defendants and Relief Defendant is dissolved.
- G. The Individual Defendants and Relief Defendant relinquish dominion and all legal and equitable right, title, and interest in all assets transferred pursuant to this Order and may not seek the return of any assets.

- H. Money received by Plaintiffs will be used to satisfy the payment of the monetary relief judgments in Sections V and VI before being used to satisfy the civil penalty awarded in Section VII.
  - I. All money received by Plaintiffs pursuant to Sections V and VI may be deposited into a fund administered by Plaintiffs or their designees to be used for consumer relief, such as redress and any attendant expenses for the administration of any redress fund. If representatives of Plaintiffs decide that direct redress to consumers is wholly or partially impracticable or money remains after such redress is completed, Plaintiffs may apply any remaining money for such related relief (including consumer information remedies) as they determine to be reasonably related to the Individual Defendants' and the Relief Defendant's practices alleged in the First Amended Complaint, or Plaintiffs may distribute funds to Plaintiff DFPI to satisfy the payment of any civil penalty awarded in Section VII. The Individual Defendants and Relief Defendant have no right to challenge any actions Plaintiffs or their representatives may take pursuant to this Section.
- J. Any money received by Plaintiffs pursuant to Section VII shall be provided to Plaintiff DFPI to satisfy the payment of any civil penalty awarded in Section VII, pursuant to Cal. Fin. Code § 90007. The Individual Defendants and Relief Defendants have no right to challenge any actions Plaintiff DFPI or its representatives may take pursuant to this Section.
- K. The Individual Defendants and Relief Defendant acknowledge that their Taxpayer Identification Numbers (Social Security Numbers or Employer Identification Numbers), which they must submit to Plaintiffs within seven days of entry of this Order, may be used for collecting and

reporting on any delinquent amount arising out of this Order, in accordance with 31 U.S.C. §7701.

#### X. CUSTOMER INFORMATION

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Individual Defendants, the Individual Defendants' officers, agents, employees, and attorneys, and all other Persons in active concert or participation with any of them, who receive actual notice of this Order, whether acting directly or indirectly, in connection with the promoting or offering for sale of any Product or Service, are permanently restrained and enjoined from directly or indirectly:

- A. failing to provide sufficient customer information to enable Plaintiffs to efficiently administer consumer redress. If representatives of the Plaintiffs request in writing any information related to redress, the Individual Defendants must provide it, in the form prescribed by the Commission, within fourteen (14) days;
- B. disclosing, using, or benefitting from customer information, including the name, address, telephone number, email address, social security number, other identifying information, or any data that enables access to a customer's account (including a credit card, bank account, or other financial account), that any Defendant obtained prior to entry of this Order in connection with any Debt Relief Product or Service; and
- C. failing to destroy such customer information in all forms in their possession, custody, or control within thirty (30) days after receipt of written direction to do so from representatives of Plaintiffs.

Provided, however, that customer information need not be disposed of, and may be disclosed, to the extent requested by a government agency or required by law, regulation, or court order.

#### XI. ORDER ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Individual Defendants and Relief Defendant obtain acknowledgments of receipt of this Order:

- A. Each Individual Defendant and Relief Defendant, within seven (7) days of entry of this Order, must submit to Plaintiffs an acknowledgment of receipt of this Order sworn under penalty of perjury.
  - B. For five (5) years after entry of this Order, each Individual Defendant for any business that such Defendant, individually or collectively with any other Defendant(s), is the majority owner or controls directly or indirectly must deliver a copy of this Order to: (1) all principals, officers, directors, and LLC managers and members; (2) all employees having managerial responsibilities for conduct related to the subject matter of the Order and all agents and representatives who participate in conduct related to the subject matter of the Order; and (3) any business entity resulting from any change in structure as set forth in the Section titled Compliance Reporting. Delivery must occur within seven (7) days of entry of this Order for current personnel. For all others, delivery must occur before they assume their responsibilities.
  - C. From each individual or entity to which an Individual Defendant delivered a copy of this Order, that Defendant must obtain, within thirty (30) days, a signed and dated acknowledgment of receipt of this Order.

### XII. COMPLIANCE REPORTING

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Individual Defendants make timely submissions to the Commission:

A. One (1) year after entry of this Order, each Individual Defendant must submit a compliance report, sworn under penalty of perjury, that must: (a) identify all telephone numbers and all physical, postal, email and Internet addresses, including all residences; (b) identify all business activities, including any business for which such Defendant performs

- services whether as an employee or otherwise and any entity in which such Defendant has any ownership interest; and (c) describe in detail such Defendant's involvement in each such business, including title, role, responsibilities, participation, authority, control, and any ownership.
- B. For twenty (20) years after entry of this Order, each Individual Defendant must submit a compliance notice, sworn under penalty of perjury, within fourteen (14) days of any change in the following:
  - 1. Each Individual Defendant must report any change in: (a) any designated point of contact; or (b) the structure of any Corporate Defendant or any entity that the Individual Defendant has any ownership interest in or controls directly or indirectly that may affect compliance obligations arising under this Order, including: creation, merger, sale, or dissolution of the entity or any subsidiary, parent, or affiliate that engages in any acts or practices subject to this Order.
  - 2. Additionally, each Individual Defendant must report any change in: (a) name, including aliases or fictitious name, or residence address; or (b) title or role in any business activity, including any business for which such Defendant performs services whether as an employee or otherwise and any entity in which such Defendant has any ownership interest, and identify the name, physical address, and any Internet address of the business or entity.
- C. Each Individual Defendant must submit to the Commission notice of the filing of any bankruptcy petition, insolvency proceeding, or similar proceeding by or against such Defendant within fourteen (14) days of its filing.
- D. Any submission to the Commission required by this Order to be sworn under penalty of perjury must be true and accurate and comply with 28

- U.S.C. § 1746, such as by concluding: "I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on: \_\_\_\_\_" and supplying the date, signatory's full name, title (if applicable), and signature.
- E. Unless otherwise directed by a Commission representative in writing, all submissions to the Commission pursuant to this Order must be emailed to DEbrief@ftc.gov or sent by overnight courier (not the U.S. Postal Service) to: Associate Director for Enforcement, Bureau of Consumer Protection, Federal Trade Commission, 600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20580. The subject line must begin: FTC, et al. v. Green Equitable Solutions, et al.

## XIII. RECORDKEEPING

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Individual Defendants must create certain records for twenty (20) years after entry of the Order, and retain each such record for five (5) years. Specifically, each Individual Defendant for any business that such Defendant, individually or collectively with any other Defendant(s), is a majority owner or controls directly or indirectly, must create and retain the following records:

- A. accounting records showing the revenues from all goods or services sold;
- B. personnel records showing, for each person providing services, whether as an employee or otherwise, that person's: name; addresses; telephone numbers; job title or position; dates of service; and (if applicable) the reason for termination;
- C. records of all consumer complaints and refund requests, whether received directly or indirectly, such as through a third party, and any response;
- D. all records necessary to demonstrate full compliance with each provision of this Order, including all submissions to Plaintiffs; and
  - E. a copy of each unique advertisement or other marketing material.

## XIV. COMPLIANCE MONITORING

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, for the purpose of monitoring the Individual Defendants' and the Relief Defendants' compliance with this Order, including any failure to transfer any assets as required by this Order:

- A. Within fourteen (14) days of receipt of a written request from a representative of Plaintiffs, each Individual Defendant and Relief Defendant must: submit additional compliance reports or other requested information, which must be sworn under penalty of perjury; appear for depositions; and produce documents for inspection and copying. Plaintiffs are also authorized to obtain discovery, without further leave of court, using any of the procedures prescribed by Federal Rules of Civil Procedure 29, 30 (including telephonic depositions), 31, 33, 34, 36, 45, and 69.
- B. For matters concerning this Order, Plaintiffs are authorized to communicate directly with each Individual Defendant and the Relief Defendant. The Individual Defendants and the Relief Defendant must permit representatives of Plaintiffs to interview any employee or other Person affiliated with any Defendant who has agreed to such an interview. The Person interviewed may have counsel present.
- C. Plaintiffs may use all other lawful means to monitor compliance with this Order, including by posing, through its representatives, as consumers, suppliers, or other individuals or entities to the Individual Defendants, Relief Defendant, or any individual or entity affiliated with these Defendants, without the necessity of identification or prior notice.

  Nothing in this Order limits the FTC's lawful use of compulsory process, pursuant to Sections 9 and 20 of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. §§ 49, 57b-1.
- D. Upon written request from a representative of Plaintiffs, any consumer reporting agency must furnish consumer reports concerning the

Individual Defendants, pursuant to Section 604(1) of the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1681b(a)(1).

## XV. RETENTION OF JURISDICTION

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that this Court retains jurisdiction of this matter for purposes of construction, modification, and enforcement of this Order.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Dated: February 2, 2024

FERNANDOL. AENLLE-ROCHA United States District Judge