

**COURT APPROVED NOTICE OF CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT AND HEARING DATE
FOR FINAL COURT APPROVAL**

Y. Thomas v. Platinum Empire Group, Inc., Case No. 21-CIV-00277

***The Superior Court for the State of California authorized this Notice. Read it carefully!
It's not junk mail, spam, an advertisement, or solicitation by a lawyer. You are not being sued.***

You may be eligible to receive money from an employee class action lawsuit (“Action”) against Platinum Empire Group, Inc. (abbreviated name “PLATINUM” is used herein as a placeholder) for alleged wage and hour violations. The Action was filed by a former PLATINUM employee Y. Thomas (“Plaintiff”) and seeks payment of (1) back wages and other relief for all of PLATINUM’s non-exempt, hourly employees who were assigned to work at a facility inside California during the Class Period (January 14, 2017 to September 14, 2023) (“Class Members”); and (2) penalties under the California Private Attorney General Act (“PAGA”) for all of PLATINUM’s non-exempt, hourly employees who were assigned to work at a facility inside California during the PAGA Period (April 12, 2021 to September 14, 2023) (“PAGA Members”).

The proposed Settlement has two main parts: (1) a Class Settlement requiring PLATINUM to fund Individual Class Payments, and (2) a PAGA Settlement requiring PLATINUM to fund Individual PAGA Payments and pay penalties to the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency (“LWDA”).

Based on PLATINUM’s records, and the Parties’ current assumptions, **your Individual Class Payment is estimated to be \$<<ESA>> (less withholding) and your Individual PAGA Payment is estimated to be \$ <<PAGAESA>>.** The actual amount you may receive likely will be different and will depend on a number of factors. (If no amount is stated for your Individual PAGA Payment, then according to PLATINUM’s records you are not eligible for an Individual PAGA Payment under the Settlement because you didn’t work during the PAGA Period.)

The above estimates are based on PLATINUM’s records showing that **you worked <<Weeks>> workweeks** during the Class Period and **you worked <<Weeks>> workweeks** during the PAGA Period. If you believe that you worked more workweeks during either period, you can submit a challenge by the deadline date. See Section 4 of this Notice.

The Court has already preliminarily approved the proposed Settlement and approved this Notice. The Court has not yet decided whether to grant final approval. Your legal rights are affected whether you act or not act. Read this Notice carefully. You will be deemed to have carefully read and understood it. At the Final Approval Hearing, the Court will decide whether to finally approve the Settlement and how much of the Settlement will be paid to Plaintiff and Plaintiff’s attorneys (“Class Counsel”). The Court will also decide whether to enter a judgment that requires PLATINUM to make payments under the Settlement and requires Participating Class Members and PAGA Members to give up their rights to assert certain claims against PLATINUM.

If you worked for PLATINUM during the Class Period and/or the PAGA Period, you have three basic options under the Settlement:

- (1) **Do Nothing.** You don’t have to do anything to participate in the proposed Settlement and be eligible for an Individual Class Payment and/or an Individual PAGA Payment. As a Participating Class Member, though, you will give up your right to assert Class Period wage claims and PAGA Period penalty claims against PLATINUM.
- (2) **Opt-Out of the Class Settlement.** You can exclude yourself from the Class Settlement (opt-out) by submitting the written Request for Exclusion or otherwise notifying the Administrator in writing. If you opt-out of the Settlement, you will not receive an Individual Class Payment. You will, however, preserve your right to personally pursue Class Period wage claims against PLATINUM, and, if you are a PAGA Member, remain eligible for an Individual PAGA Payment. You cannot opt-out of the PAGA portion of the proposed Settlement.
- (3) **Object to the Class Settlement.** You may object to any aspect of the proposed Settlement as further explained below. You may not object to the Settlement if you have opted-out.

PLATINUM will not retaliate against you for any actions you take with respect to the proposed Settlement.

SUMMARY OF YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS AND OPTIONS IN THIS SETTLEMENT

You Don’t Have to Do Anything to Participate in the Settlement	If you do nothing, you will be a Participating Class Member, eligible for an Individual Class Payment and an Individual PAGA Payment (if any). In exchange, you will give up your right to assert the wage claims against PLATINUM that are covered by this Settlement (Released Claims).
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<p>You Can Opt-out of the Class Settlement but not the PAGA Settlement</p> <p>The Opt-out Deadline is <u>February 10, 2024</u></p>	<p>If you don't want to fully participate in the proposed Settlement, you can opt-out of the Class Settlement by sending the Administrator a written Request for Exclusion. Once excluded, you will be a Non-Participating Class Member and no longer eligible for an Individual Class Payment. Non-Participating Class Members cannot object to any portion of the proposed Settlement. See Section 6 of this Notice.</p> <p>You cannot opt-out of the PAGA portion of the proposed Settlement. PLATINUM must pay Individual PAGA Payments to all PAGA Members and the PAGA Members must give up their rights to pursue Released Claims (defined below).</p>
<p>Participating Class Members Can Object to the Class Settlement but not the PAGA Settlement</p> <p>Written Objections Must be Submitted by <u>February 10, 2024</u></p>	<p>All Class Members who do not opt-out ("Participating Class Members") can object to any aspect of the proposed Settlement. The Court's decision whether to finally approve the Settlement will include a determination of how much will be paid to Class Counsel and Plaintiff who pursued the Action on behalf of the Class. You are not personally responsible for any payments to Class Counsel or Plaintiff, but every dollar paid to Class Counsel and Plaintiff reduces the overall amount paid to Participating Class Members. You can object to the amounts requested by Class Counsel or Plaintiff if you think they are unreasonable. See Section 7 of this Notice.</p>
<p>You Can Participate in the <u>March 5, 2024</u>, Final Approval Hearing</p>	<p>The Court's Final Approval Hearing is scheduled to take place on <u>March 5, 2024</u>. You don't have to attend but you do have the right to appear (or hire an attorney to appear on your behalf at your own cost), in person, by telephone or by using the Court's virtual appearance platform. Participating Class Members can verbally object to the Settlement at the Final Approval Hearing. See Section 8 of this Notice.</p>
<p>You Can Challenge the Calculation of Your Workweeks/Pay Periods.</p> <p>Written Challenges Must be Submitted by: <u>February 10, 2024</u></p>	<p>The amount of your Individual Class Payment and PAGA Payment (if any) depend on how many workweeks you worked at least one day during the Class Period and how many Pay Periods you worked at least one day during the PAGA Period, respectively. The number Class Period Workweeks and number of PAGA Period Pay Periods you worked according to PLATINUM's records is stated on the first page of this Notice. If you disagree with either of these numbers, you must challenge it by the procedures specified in Section 4 of this Notice.</p>

1. WHAT IS THE ACTION ABOUT?

Plaintiff is a former PLATINUM employee. The Action accuses PLATINUM of violating California labor laws by failing to pay overtime wages, minimum wages, and wages due upon termination, as well as failing to provide meal periods, rest breaks and accurate itemized wage statements. Based on the same claims, Plaintiff has also asserted a claim for civil penalties under the California Private Attorneys General Act (Labor Code §§ 2698, et seq.) ("PAGA"). Plaintiff is represented by attorneys in the Action: Nazo Koulloukian of Koul Law Firm and Ashkan Shakouri of Shakouri Law Firm ("Class Counsel.")

PLATINUM strongly denies violating any laws or failing to pay any wages and contends it complied with all applicable laws.

2. WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT THE ACTION HAS SETTLED?

So far, the Court has made no determination whether PLATINUM or Plaintiff is correct on the merits. In the meantime, Plaintiff and PLATINUM hired an experienced, neutral mediator in an effort to resolve the Action by negotiating an to end the case by agreement (settle the case) rather than continuing the expensive and time-consuming process of litigation. The negotiations were successful. By signing a lengthy written settlement agreement ("Agreement") and agreeing to jointly ask the Court to enter a judgment ending the Action and enforcing the Agreement, Plaintiff and PLATINUM have negotiated a proposed Settlement that is subject to the Court's Final Approval. Both sides agree the proposed Settlement is a compromise of disputed claims. By agreeing to settle, PLATINUM does not admit any violations or concede the merit of any claims.

Plaintiff and Class Counsel strongly believe the Settlement is a good deal for you because they believe that: (1) PLATINUM has agreed to pay a fair, reasonable and adequate amount considering the strength of the claims and the risks and uncertainties of continued litigation; and (2) Settlement is in the best interests of the Class Members and PAGA Members. The Court preliminarily approved the proposed Settlement as fair, reasonable, and adequate, authorized this

Notice, and scheduled a hearing to determine Final Approval.

3. WHAT ARE THE IMPORTANT TERMS OF THE PROPOSED SETTLEMENT?

1. PLATINUM Will Pay \$1,362,577.84 as the Gross Settlement Amount (Gross Settlement). PLATINUM has agreed to deposit the Gross Settlement into an account controlled by the Administrator of the Settlement. The Administrator will use the Gross Settlement to pay the Individual Class Payments, Individual PAGA Payments, Class Representative Enhancement Award, Class Counsel's attorney's fees and expenses, the Administrator's expenses, and penalties to be paid to the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency ("LWDA"). Assuming the Court grants Final Approval, PLATINUM will fund the Gross Settlement within 60 days of the effective date, which is the earliest of: (a) if no one files an objection to the settlement, the date of the court granting final approval; or (b) 3 calendar days after the deadline to file an appeal of the final approval order, if no appeals are filed; or (c) if one or more appeals are filed, 3 calendar days after any appeal is dismissed or the final approval of the settlement is affirmed after appeal, and the final approval order is not subject to further appeal.
2. Court Approved Deductions from Gross Settlement. At the Final Approval Hearing, Plaintiff and/or Class Counsel will ask the Court to approve the following deductions from the Gross Settlement, the amounts of which will be decided by the Court at the Final Approval Hearing:
 - A. Up to \$476,902.24 (35% of the Gross Settlement) to Class Counsel for attorneys' fees and up to \$20,000 for their litigation expenses. To date, Class Counsel have worked and incurred expenses on the Action without payment.
 - B. Up to \$10,000 as a Class Representative Enhancement Award for filing the Action, working with Class Counsel, and representing the Class. A Class Representative Enhancement Award will be the only monies Plaintiff will receive other than Plaintiff's Individual Class Payment and any Individual PAGA Payment.
 - C. Up to \$17,000 to the Administrator for services administering the Settlement.
 - D. \$20,000 for PAGA Payment, allocated 75% to the LWDA Payment and 25% in Net PAGA Amount to the PAGA Members based on their PAGA Period Pay Periods.

Participating Class Members have the right to object to any of these deductions. The Court will consider all objections.

3. Net Settlement Fund Distributed to Class Members. After making the above deductions in amounts approved by the Court, the Administrator will distribute the rest of the Gross Settlement (the "Net Settlement Fund") by making Individual Class Payments to Participating Class Members based on their Class Period Workweeks.
4. Taxes Owed on Payments to Class Members. Plaintiff and PLATINUM are asking the Court to approve an allocation of 20% of each Individual Class Payment to taxable wages ("Wage Portion") and 80% to penalties ("Non-Wage Portion"). The Wage Portion is subject to withholding and will be reported on IRS W-2 Forms. PLATINUM will separately pay employer payroll taxes it owes on the Wage Portion. The Individual PAGA Payments are counted as penalties rather than wages for tax purposes. The Administrator will report the Individual PAGA Payments and the Non-Wage Portions of the Individual Class Payments on IRS 1099 Forms.

Although Plaintiff and PLATINUM have agreed to these allocations, neither side is giving you any advice on whether your Payments are taxable or how much you might owe in taxes. You are responsible for paying all taxes (including penalties and interest on back taxes) on any Payments received from the proposed Settlement. You should consult a tax advisor if you have any questions about the tax consequences of the proposed Settlement.

5. Need to Promptly Cash Payment Checks. The front of every check issued for Individual Class Payments and Individual PAGA Payments will show the date when the check expires (the void date). If you don't cash it by the void date, your check will be automatically cancelled, and the monies will be deposited with the California Controller's Unclaimed Property Fund in your name.

If the monies represented by your check are sent to the Controller's Unclaimed Property, you should consult the rules of the Fund for instructions on how to retrieve your money.

6. Requests for Exclusion from the Class Settlement (Opt-Outs). You will be treated as a Participating Class Member, participating fully in the Class Settlement, unless you notify the Administrator by fully filling out the enclosed opt-out form and sending it to the Administrator not later than **February 10, 2024**. Excluded Class Members (i.e., Non-Participating Class Members) will not receive Individual Class Payments but will preserve their rights to personally pursue wage and hour claims against PLATINUM.

You cannot opt-out of the PAGA portion of the Settlement. Class Members who exclude themselves from the Class Settlement (Non-Participating Class Members) remain eligible for Individual PAGA Payments and are required to give up their right to assert PAGA claims against PLATINUM based on the PAGA Period facts alleged in the Action.

7. The Proposed Settlement Will be Void if the Court Denies Final Approval. It is possible the Court will decline to grant Final Approval of the Settlement or decline enter a Judgment. It is also possible the Court will enter a Judgment that is reversed on appeal. Plaintiffs and PLATINUM have agreed that, in either case, the Settlement will be void: PLATINUM will not pay any money and Class Members will not release any claims against PLATINUM.
8. Administrator. The Court has appointed a neutral company, ILYM Group, Inc. (the “Administrator”) to send this Notice, calculate and make payments, and process Class Members’ opt-out forms. The Administrator will also decide Class Member Challenges over Workweeks, mail and re- mail settlement checks and tax forms, and perform other tasks necessary to administer the Settlement. The Administrator’s contact information is contained in Section 9 of this Notice.
9. Participating Class Members’ Release. After the Judgment is final and PLATINUM has fully funded the Gross Settlement and separately paid all employer payroll taxes, Participating Class Members will be legally barred from asserting any of the claims released under the Settlement. This means that unless you opted out by validly excluding yourself from the Class Settlement, you cannot sue, continue to sue, or be part of any other lawsuit against PLATINUM or related entities for wages based on the Class Period facts and PAGA penalties based on PAGA Period facts, as alleged in the Action, and resolved by this Settlement.

The Participating Class Members will release wage and hour claims, rights, demands, liabilities and causes of action, whether known or unknown, arising during the Class Period, that were asserted, or could have been asserted, in Plaintiff’s complaint against Defendant based on the facts alleged or ascertained during the pendency of the Action, including statutory, or common law claims for wages, penalties, interest, attorneys’ fees, litigation costs, restitution, equitable relief or other relief under Business & Professions Code section 17200, et seq. based on the alleged Labor Code violations, including, without limitations, the following categories: (a) any and all claims involving any alleged failure to pay minimum wage; (b) any and all claims involving any alleged failure to pay employees for all hours worked, including but not limited to any claim for minimum, straight time, or overtime wages; (c) any and all claims involving any alleged failure to pay overtime wages; (d) any and all claims involving any alleged failure to properly provide meal periods and/or authorize and permit rest periods, to pay premiums for missed, late, short or interrupted meal and/or rest periods, or to pay such premiums; (e) any and all regular rate claims; (f) any and all claims involving any alleged failure to pay for all hours worked; (g) any and all claims involving any alleged failure to keep accurate records or to issue proper wage statements to employees; (h) any claim for waiting time penalties under Labor Code section 203; (i) any and all claims for unfair business practices in violation of Business and Professions Code sections 17200, et seq; and (j) any and all claims under California Labor Code section 2699 (Private Attorneys General Act) for civil penalties premised on the facts alleged in Plaintiff’s operative complaint. This release excludes the release of claims not permitted by law (“Class Released Claims”).

10. PAGA Members’ PAGA Release. After the Court’s judgment is final, and PLATINUM has paid the Gross Settlement (and separately paid the employer-side payroll taxes), all PAGA Members will be barred from asserting PAGA claims against PLATINUM, whether or not they exclude themselves from the Settlement. This means that all PAGA Members, including those who are Participating Class Members and those who opt-out of the Class Settlement, cannot sue, continue to sue, or participate in any other PAGA claim against PLATINUM or its related entities based on the PAGA Period facts alleged in the Action and resolved by this Settlement.

The PAGA Members’ Releases for Participating and Non-Participating Class Members are as follows:

All Participating and Non-Participating Class Members who are PAGA Members are deemed to release, on behalf of themselves and their respective former and present representatives, agents, attorneys, heirs, administrators, successors, and assigns, the Released Parties, from all claims for PAGA penalties that were alleged, or reasonably could have been alleged, based on the PAGA Period facts stated in the Operative Complaint, and the PAGA Notice, including claims for (1) failure to pay for all hours worked,

(2) unpaid overtime wages and penalties, (3) failure to pay minimum wage, (4) unpaid meal period premiums and penalties, (5) unpaid rest period premiums and penalties, (6) non-compliant wage statements, and (7) waiting time penalties (“PAGA Release”).

4. HOW WILL THE ADMINISTRATOR CALCULATE MY PAYMENT?

1. Individual Class Payments. The Administrator will calculate Individual Class Payments by (a) dividing the Net Settlement Amount by the total number of Workweeks worked by all Participating Class Members during the Class Period, and (b) multiplying the result by the number of Workweeks worked by each individual Participating Class Member.
2. Individual PAGA Payments. The Administrator will calculate Individual PAGA Payments by (a) dividing the PAGA Payment by the total number of PAGA Pay Periods worked by all PAGA Members during the PAGA Period, and (b) multiplying the result by the number of PAGA Period Pay Periods worked by each individual PAGA Member.
3. Workweek/Pay Period Challenges. The number of Class Workweeks you worked during the Class Period and the number of PAGA Pay Periods you worked during the PAGA Period, as recorded in PLATINUM’s records, are stated in the first page of this Notice. You have until **February 10, 2024**, to challenge the number of Workweeks and/or Pay Periods credited to you. You can submit your challenge by signing and sending a letter to the Administrator via mail, email, or fax. Section 9 of this Notice has the Administrator’s contact information.

You need to support your challenge by sending copies of pay stubs or other records. The Administrator will accept PLATINUM’s calculation of Workweeks and/or Pay Periods based on PLATINUM’s records as accurate unless you send copies of records containing contrary information. You should send copies rather than originals because the documents will not be returned to you. The Administrator will resolve Workweek and/or Pay Period challenges based on your submission and on input from Class Counsel (who will advocate on behalf of Participating Class Members) and PLATINUM’s Counsel. The Administrator’s decision is final. You can’t appeal or otherwise challenge its final decision.

5. HOW WILL I GET PAID?

1. Participating Class Members. The Administrator will send, by U.S. mail, a single check to every Participating Class Member (i.e., every Class Member who doesn’t opt-out) including those who also qualify as PAGA Members. The single check will combine the Individual Class Payment and the Individual PAGA Payment.
2. Non-Participating Class Members. The Administrator will send, by U.S. mail, a single Individual PAGA Payment check to every PAGA Member who opts out of the Class Settlement (i.e., every Non-Participating Class Member).

Your check will be sent to the same address as in this Notice. If you change your address, be sure to notify the Administrator as soon as possible. Section 9 of this Notice has the Administrator’s contact information.

6. HOW DO I OPT-OUT OF THE CLASS SETTLEMENT?

Fully fill out the enclosed opt-out form and send it to the Administrator. You must make the request yourself. If someone else makes the request for you, it will not be valid. **The Administrator must receive your opt-out form by February 10, 2024, or it will be invalid.** Section 9 of the Notice has the Administrator’s contact information.

7. HOW DO I OBJECT TO THE SETTLEMENT?

Only Participating Class Members have the right to object to the Settlement. Before deciding whether to object, you may wish to see what Plaintiff and PLATINUM are asking the Court to approve. At least 16 days before the March 5, 2024, Final Approval Hearing, Class Counsel and/or Plaintiff will file in Court (1) a Motion for Final Approval that includes, among other things, the reasons why the proposed Settlement is fair, and (2) a Motion for Fees, Litigation Expenses and Enhancement Award stating (i) the amount Class Counsel is requesting for attorneys’ fees and litigation expenses; and (ii) the amount Plaintiff is requesting as a Class Representative Enhancement Award. Upon reasonable request, Class Counsel (whose contact information is in Section 9 of this Notice) will send you copies of these documents at no cost to you. You can also view them on the Administrator’s Website www.ILYMgroup.com or the Court’s website <https://www.sanmateo.courts.ca.gov/>.

A Participating Class Member who disagrees with any aspect of the Agreement, the Motion for Final Approval and/or Motion for Fees, Litigation Expenses and Enhancement Award may wish to object, for example, that the proposed Settlement is unfair, or that the amounts requested by Class Counsel or Plaintiff are too high or too low.

You can object by fully filling out the enclosed objection form and sending it to the Administrator by **February 10, 2024**.

Alternatively, a Participating Class Member can object (or personally retain a lawyer to object at your own cost) by attending the Final Approval Hearing. You (or your attorney) should be ready to tell the Court what you object to, why you object, and any facts that support your objection. See Section 8 of this Notice (immediately below) for specifics regarding the Final Approval Hearing.

8. CAN I ATTEND THE FINAL APPROVAL HEARING?

You can, but don't have to, attend the Final Approval Hearing on March 5, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. in Department 4 of the San Mateo Superior Court, located at 800 N. Humboldt St., San Mateo, CA 94401. At the Hearing, the judge will decide whether to grant Final Approval of the Settlement and how much of the Gross Settlement will be paid to Class Counsel, Plaintiff, and the Administrator. The Court will invite comments from objectors, Class Counsel and Defense Counsel before making a decision. You can attend (or hire a lawyer to attend) either personally or virtually via <https://www.sanmateo.courts.ca.gov/general-information/zoom-credentials-appear-remotely-court-hearings>.

It's possible the Court will reschedule the Final Approval Hearing. You should check the Administrator's website www.ILYMgroup.com beforehand or contact Class Counsel to verify the date and time of the Final Approval Hearing.

9. HOW CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

The Agreement sets forth everything PLATINUM and Plaintiff have promised to do under the proposed Settlement. The easiest way to read the Agreement, the Judgment or any other Settlement documents is to go to ILYM Group, Inc.'s website at www.ILYMgroup.com. You can also telephone or send an email to Class Counsel or the Administrator using the contact information listed below or consult the Superior Court website by going to (https://www.sanmateocourt.org/online_services/online_case_access.php) and entering the Case Number for the Action, Case No. 21-CIV-00277.

DO NOT TELEPHONE THE SUPERIOR COURT TO OBTAIN INFORMATION ABOUT THE SETTLEMENT.

Class Counsel:

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Settlement Administrator:

Name of Company: ILYM Group, Inc.
Email Address: claims@ilymgroup.com
Mailing Address: ILYM Group, Inc., P.O. Box 2031, Tustin, CA 92781
Telephone: (888) 250-6810
Fax Number: (888) 845-6185

10. WHAT IF I LOSE MY SETTLEMENT CHECK?

If you lose or misplace your settlement check before cashing it, the Administrator will replace it as long as you request a replacement before the void date on the face of the original check. If your check is already void you should consult the Unclaimed Property Fund for instructions on how to retrieve the funds.

11. WHAT IF I CHANGE MY ADDRESS?

To receive your check, you should immediately notify the Administrator if you move or otherwise change your mailing address.