1	ROB BONTA Attorney General of California				
2	Attorney General of California SATOSHI YANAI Sanion Assistant Attorney Canada				
3	Senior Assistant Attorney General MIRANDA LEKANDER				
4	Supervising Deputy Attorney General DOROTHY A. CHANG (SBN 293579)				
5	Kwi H. Choi (SBN 305697) Deputy Attorneys General				
6	300 South Spring Street, Suite 1702 Los Angeles, CA 90013-1230				
7	Telephone: (213) 269-6505 Fax: (916) 761-3641				
8	E-mail: Dorothy.Chang@doj.ca.gov				
9	Attorneys for the People of the State of California				
10	SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA  COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES				
11	COUNTY OF	LOS ANGELES			
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14	THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF	Case No.			
15	CALIFORNIA,	Unlimited Civil			
16	Plaintiff,	STIPULATION FOR ENTRY OF FINAL JUDGMENT AND PERMANENT			
17	v.	INJUNCTION			
18	CK FRANCHISING, INC., an Ohio corporation; and				
19	SDX HOME CARE OPERATIONS, LLC, a Delaware limited liability company,				
20	Delaware inflict hability company,				
21	Defendants.				
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Plaintiff, the People of the State of California ("People"), through its attorney, Rob Bonta, Attorney General of the State of California, and Defendants CK Franchising, Inc. and SDX Home Care Operations, LLC, (together, "Defendants"), hereby stipulate as follows:

- 1. The People have investigated Defendants' use of their standard client care agreement, which imposes \$12,500 in liquidated damages if Defendants' in-home care services clients utilize or hire Defendants' employee caregivers or induce such employees to leave their employment with Defendants during the term of the agreement and for a period of one year from the last day the client stops utilizing Defendants' services. The People allege that these provisions of Defendants' standard client care agreement effectively bar individual clients, as well as other home care agencies, from hiring Defendants' employee caregivers, as the client would be charged with liquidated damages once Defendants determined a violation occurred. Defendants dispute the People's allegations and deny that the above-described provisions in their client services agreement violate California law.
- 2. In exchange for the releases provided herein, Defendants are willing to enter into this Stipulation and Final Judgment ("Stipulation") to resolve, and thereby avoid significant expense, inconvenience, and uncertainty of litigation arising from the People's concerns and claims as to the matters addressed in this Judgment, as outlined above and in the attached Final Judgment and Permanent Injunction, and which have been investigated by the People.
- 3. The Final Judgment and Permanent Injunction ("Judgment"), a true and correct copy of which is attached hereto as **Exhibit A**, may be entered by any judge of the Los Angeles County Superior Court.
- 4. The People may submit the Judgment to any judge of the superior court for approval and signature, based on this Stipulation, during the court's ex parte calendar or on any other ex parte basis.
- 5. The People and Defendants (collectively, "the Parties") hereby waive their right to move for a new trial or otherwise seek to set aside the Judgment through any collateral attack, and further waive their right to appeal from the Judgment, except that the Parties each agree that this Court shall retain jurisdiction for the purposes specified in Paragraph 33 of the Judgment.

1	CK FRANCHISING, INC.	
2	Dated: August <u>22</u> , 2024	Last (IK)
3	Dated: August 22, 2024	Natalie Black Chief Executive Officer
4		CK Franchising, Inc.
5	SDX HOME CARE OPERATIONS, LLC	
6	SDA HOME CARE OF ERATIONS, ELC	
7	Dated: August <u>22</u> , 2024	Natalie Black
8		Chief Executive Officer  SDX Home Care Operations, LLC
9		SDA Home Care Operations, LLC
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1	ROB BONTA			
2	Attorney General of California SATOSHI YANAI			
3	Senior Assistant Attorney General MIRANDA LEKANDER			
4	Supervising Deputy Attorney General DOROTHY A. CHANG (SBN 293579)			
5	KWI H. CHOI (SBN 305697) Deputy Attorneys General			
6	300 South Spring Street, Suite 1702 Los Angeles, CA 90013-1230			
7	Telephone: (213) 269-6505 Fax: (916) 761-3641			
8	E-mail: Dorothy.Chang@doj.ca.gov			
9	Attorneys for the People of the State of California			
10	SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA			
11	COUNTY OF I	LOS ANGELES		
12				
13				
14	THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF	Case No.		
15	CALIFORNIA,	Unlimited Civil		
16	Plaintiff,	[PROPOSED] FINAL JUDGMENT AND		
17	v.	PERMANENT INJUNCTION		
18	CK FRANCHISING, INC., an Ohio			
19	corporation; and SDX HOME CARE OPERATIONS, LLC, a			
20	Delaware limited liability company,			
21	Defendants.			
22	Defendants.			
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Plaintiff, the People of the State of California ("People"), through its attorney, Rob Bonta, Attorney General of the State of California ("Attorney General"), and Defendants CK Franchising, Inc. ("CFKI") and SDX Home Care Operations, LLC ("SDX") (collectively, "Defendants" or "Comfort Keepers"), having stipulated and consented to the entry of this Final Judgment and Permanent Injunction ("Judgment") without the taking of proof, without trial or adjudication of any issue of fact or law, without this Judgment constituting evidence of or admission by Defendants regarding any issue of law or fact alleged by the People, and with the People and Defendants (collectively, "Parties") having waived their right to appeal, and the Court having considered the matter and good cause appearing:

#### IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, ADJUDGED, AND DECREED THAT:

1. This Court has jurisdiction over the allegations and subject matter of the Complaint filed in this action and the Parties to this action; venue is proper in the County of Los Angeles; and this Court has the jurisdiction to enter this Judgment. This Judgment is entered pursuant and subject to the California Unfair Competition Law ("UCL") (Bus. & Prof. Code, § 17200 et seq.).

#### PARTIES AND FINDINGS

- 2. The Attorney General is charged with enforcement of, among other things, the UCL, Business and Professions Code section 16600, and Civil Code section 1671.
- Defendant CKFI is an Ohio corporation headquartered in Irvine, California. CKFI
  offers franchises nationwide under the Comfort Keepers brand and is a leading provider of inhome care services.
- 4. Defendant SDX is a Delaware limited liability company. SDX owns and operates Comfort Keepers franchise businesses in California and nationwide.
- 5. SDX owns and operates 25 Comfort Keepers franchise businesses throughout California, serving an estimated 2,742 disabled or elderly clients and employing 300 caregivers. CFKI has franchised an additional 63 locations that are independently owned and operated within California.

- 6. Starting as early as August 2018, Defendants required each of their clients to execute a Client Care Agreement to obtain in-home care services. The current Client Care Agreement, revised in January 2019 ("Agreement"), prohibits clients from directly or indirectly utilizing, hiring, or inducing any of Defendants' former or current caregiver employees from leaving their employment with Defendants during the term of the Agreement and for a period of one year from the last day the client stops utilizing Defendants' services. Clients who utilize or hire any of Defendants' caregiver employees or induce such employees to leave their employment with Defendants during this period to provide care for them in any capacity—either individually or through any other agency or company—do so at risk of being charged \$12,500 in liquidated damages. The People allege that due in part to its broad language and unlawful monetary penalty, the Agreement has the effect of restraining employee mobility.
- 7. The People further allege that agreements that restrain employee mobility or impose liquidated damages on consumers are void under Business and Professions Code section 16600 and Civil Code section 1671, respectively.
- 8. Defendants dispute the People's allegations and deny that the above-described provisions in their Agreement violate California law.
- 9. This Judgment is entered to resolve the investigation of Defendants undertaken by the Attorney General in connection with Defendants' Agreement and their compliance with Business and Professions Code section 16600 and Civil Code section 1671.
- 10. This Judgment shall apply to all claims under the UCL, Business and Professions Code section 16600, and Civil Code section 1671, as alleged in the Complaint filed in this action.
- 11. The Parties have voluntarily entered into this Judgment to avoid the time, expense, and uncertainty of litigation.
- 12. The Attorney General, through his Deputy Attorneys General, has conferred in good faith with Defendants and their counsel, and the Parties have agreed to resolve the Attorney General's allegations through this Judgment.

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#### **APPLICABILITY**

- 13. All provisions of this Judgment shall be binding upon and apply to Defendants, including their agents acting within the scope of their agency, as well as their successors and assigns, with respect to the conduct described in the Complaint and this Judgment. In no event shall assignment of any right, power, or authority under this Judgment void a duty to comply with this Judgment.
- 14. Defendants have and will maintain the full power and authority to undertake the duties and obligations set forth in this Judgment.
- 15. Defendants shall use reasonable efforts to notify their officers, directors, employees, and agents responsible for carrying out and effecting the terms of this Judgment about the Judgment and the requirements herein.

#### **DEFINITIONS**

- 16. "California Franchisee" or "California Franchisees" means an individual or entity operating a Comfort Keepers' franchise in California, whether the franchise is corporately owned and operated by Defendant SDX or independently owned and operated.
- 17. "Corporate Franchisee" or "Corporate Franchisees" shall mean a Comfort Keepers franchise that is owned and operated by Defendant SDX in California.
- 18. "Independent Franchisee" or "Independent Franchisees" shall mean a Comfort Keepers franchise that is independently owned and operated in California by an individual or entity that is not Defendant SDX.
- 19. "Effective Date" means the date on which this Judgment is approved by and becomes a Final Judgment of this Court.
- 20. "Direct Hire Provision" means the following provision in Paragraph 9 of the Agreement: "The Client agrees that during the term of this Agreement and for a period of one (1) year from the last day that the Client stops utilizing Comfort Keepers' services, the Client will not, directly or indirectly through family, or through any other person, company or agency, utilize or hire any Comfort Keepers employee or former Comfort Keeper employee."

- 21. "Liquidated Damages Provision" means the following provision in Paragraph 10 of the Agreement: "The Client and Comfort Keepers acknowledge that it would be difficult to estimate Comfort Keepers' actual losses and damages if the Client breaches the obligations set forth in the preceding two (2) paragraphs. Therefore, if the Client breaches any of those obligations, THE CLIENT WILL PAY TO COMFORT KEEPERS \$12,500 AS LIQUIDATED DAMAGES FOR EACH EMPLOYEE OR FORMER EMPLOYEE THE CLIENT UTILIZES, HIRES, OR INDUCES TO LEAVE HIS/HER EMPLOYMENT, PLUS ALL REASONABLE COSTS THAT COMFORT KEEPERS INCURS IN COLLECTING SUCH AMOUNT, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO ITS COLLECTION FEES AND LEGAL FEES (INCLUDING ATTORNEY FEES). The Client and Comfort Keepers agree that this amount represents a reasonable amount and the parties' best estimate of Comfort Keepers' expected actual losses and damages, including, but not limited to, the cost that Comfort Keepers expended in recruiting, hiring, training and retaining the employee or the employee's replacement, as well as forgone business opportunities and other incidental and consequential damages. The Client acknowledges that this amount is not a penalty. THE CLIENT AUTHORIZES COMFORT KEEPERS TO CHARGE THE CLIENT'S CREDIT CARD FOR THESE LIQUIDATED DAMAGES, NOTWITHSTANDING ANY OTHER NOTICES OR OTHER DIRECTIONS THAT THE CLIENT MAY HAVE GIVEN COMFORT KEEPERS. This paragraph, the preceding two (2) paragraphs, and the credit card authorization on the other side of this Agreement (for purposes of this provision only), survive the termination of this Agreement."
- 22. "Non-Solicitation Provision" means the following provision in Paragraph 9 of the Agreement: "In addition, for the same period of time, the Client agrees not to, directly or indirectly through family or any other person, induce any Comfort Keepers employee to leave his/her employment with Comfort Keepers."
- 23. "Revised Agreement" means Comfort Keepers' newly revised Client Care
  Agreement that does not include the Direct Hire Provision, the Non-Solicitation Provision, or the
  Liquidated Damages Provision in Paragraphs 9 and 10 of the current Agreement and which will
  be for use in California by California Franchisees.

#### 1 **INJUNCTION** 2 24. Pursuant to Business and Professions Code section 17203, Defendants, their 3 officers, directors, agents, successors, and assigns, shall comply with the following requirements 4 within 90 calendar days from the Effective Date: 5 Defendants shall eliminate the Direct Hire Provision and Non-Solicitation a. 6 Provision in Paragraph 9 in future versions of the Agreement used by their 7 Corporate Franchisees; 8 b. Defendants shall eliminate the Liquidated Damages Provision in Paragraph 9 10 in future versions of the Agreement used by their Corporate Franchisees: 10 11 c. Defendants shall no longer provide the current version of the Agreement to 12 its California Franchisees. Henceforth, the Revised Agreement that does 13 not include the Direct Hire Provision, Non-Solicitation Provision, and 14 Liquidated Damages Provision, shall be used by Corporate Franchisees, 15 and Defendants shall provide the Revised Agreement to Independent Franchisees: 16 17 d. Defendants shall provide the Attorney General with a copy of the Revised 18 Agreement, subject to the caveat that Defendants may subsequently revise 19 the Agreement in any other way without the review or approval of the 20 Attorney General, provided that no future version of the Agreement for 2.1 Corporate Franchisees will include the Direct Hire Provision, Non-22 Solicitation Provision, or Liquidated Damages Provision, or any 23 substantially similar provisions; 24 Defendants shall give notice to (1) the current caregivers and clients of its e. 25 Corporate Franchisees, and (2) any client and caregiver of a Corporate 26 Franchisee whose relationship was terminated within six months prior to the Effective Date, that Paragraphs 9 and 10 of the Agreement, including 27 28 the Direct Hire Provision, Non-Solicitation Provision, and Liquidated

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Damages Provision, will not be enforced. Notice will be provided using current contact information maintained by the Corporate Franchisees and shall be sent by email and first-class mail. The Attorney General preapproved the form of the notices and the language contained therein. A true and correct copy of the notice for caregivers, either current or whose relationship was terminated within six months prior to the Effective Date, is attached as Attachment 1. A true and correct copy of the notice for clients, either current or whose relationship was terminated within six months prior to the Effective Date, is attached as Attachment 2;

- f. Defendants will request that Independent Franchisees inform their (1) current clients and caregivers, and (2) any client and caregiver whose relationship was terminated within six months prior to the Effective Date, that Paragraphs 9 and 10 of the Agreement, including the Direct Hire Provision, Non-Solicitation Provision, and Liquidated Damages Provision, will not be enforced. Notice will be provided using current contact information maintained by the Independent Franchisees and shall be sent by email and first-class mail. The Attorney General preapproved the form of the notices and the language contained therein. A true and correct copy of the notice for caregivers, either current or whose relationship was terminated within six months prior to the Effective Date, is attached as Attachment 1. A true and correct copy of the notice for clients, either current or whose relationship was terminated within six months prior to the Effective Date, is attached as Attachment 2:
- g. Defendants will revise their Franchise Standards Manual to reflect the Revised Agreement, notify all California Franchisees of the revised Franchise Standards Manual via email notification, request affirmative acknowledgment of receipt from all California Franchisees, and post the revised manual free-of-charge on Defendants' franchise forum;

Defendants shall accurately disclose the outcome of the Attorney General's

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construed to limit the authority or ability of the Attorney General to assert his right to protect the interests of the State of California or the people of the State of California. This Judgment shall not bar the Attorney General from investigating and enforcing laws, regulations, or rules against Defendants for conduct subsequent to this Judgment, or for conduct otherwise not covered by this Judgment. Further, nothing in this Judgment precludes or affects the Attorney General's right to determine and ensure compliance with this Judgment, or to seek enforcement or penalties under the UCL for any violation of this Judgment, as applicable.

28. Other than as set forth in Paragraph 266 above, nothing in this Judgment limits the powers vested in the Attorney General by the California Constitution and state law, including Government Code section 11180 et seq., to oversee or enforce any California laws or regulations, whether addressed in this Judgment or not. The Attorney General may utilize these powers, where applicable, to ensure Defendants' compliance with the terms of this Judgment, or to address distinct or unrelated investigations or the enforcement of the laws of the State of California. Nothing in this Judgment shall abrogate the confidentiality of any materials or information obtained by the Attorney General during his investigation of Defendants, except as provided by law.

#### MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

- 29. Nothing in this Judgment shall be construed as relieving Defendants of the obligation to comply with all local, state, and federal laws, regulations, or rules, or granting Defendants permission to engage in any acts or practices prohibited by such laws, regulations, or rules. Moreover, nothing in this Judgment shall excuse Defendants from meeting any more stringent requirements which may be imposed hereinafter by any changes in applicable law and/or legally binding legislation, regulations, ordinances, and/or permits. Defendants shall cooperate fully with the Attorney General as necessary to achieve the goals and carry out the requirements of this Judgment.
- 30. The Attorney General may, at his sole discretion, agree in writing to provide Defendants with additional time to perform any act required by this Judgment.
  - 31. The Judgment may be modified by a stipulation of the Parties as approved by the

1	Court, or by court proceedings resulting in a modified judgment of the Court.		
2	32. Any failure by any party to this Judgment to insist upon the strict performance by		
3	any other party of any of the provisions of this Judgment shall not be deemed a waiver of any of		
4	the provisions of this Judgment, and such party, notwithstanding such failure, shall have the right		
5	thereafter to insist upon the specific performance of any and all of the provisions of this		
6	Judgment.		
7	33. Jurisdiction is retained by the Court for the purpose of enabling any party to the		
8	Judgment to apply to the Court at any time for such further orders and directions as may be		
9	necessary or appropriate for the construction or carrying out of this Judgment, for enforcement of		
10	compliance herewith, and for the punishment of violations hereof, if any.		
11	34. All notices, documents, and communications shall be provided to the Attorney		
12	General via email to:		
13	Dorothy A. Chang Deputy Attorney General		
14	Dorothy.Chang@doj.ca.gov		
15	The Attorney General may update his designee or address by sending written notice to		
16	Defendants' counsel informing them of the change.		
17	35. The Clerk is ordered to enter this Judgment forthwith.		
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19	ORDERED AND ADJUDGED at, California.		
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21	DATED:  Judge of the Superior Court		
22	vadge of the Superior Court		
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## Attachment 1



#### NOTICE OF SETTLEMENT

In August 2024, the State of California, Office of the Attorney General ("Attorney General") and CK Franchising, Inc. and SDX Home Care Operations, LLC (together, "Comfort Keepers") resolved the Attorney General's investigation into a previous form Comfort Keepers' Client Care Agreement that was in use prior to approximately January 2, 2024 ("Old Form Agreement").

You are receiving this notice because you are a current or recent former caregiver of Comfort Keepers who is affected by the settlement.

Comfort Keepers has agreed it will not enforce portions of Paragraph 9 and the entirety of Paragraph 10 in the Old Form Agreement. This means that you may:

- Provide care for a current or recent former client of Comfort Keepers if offered a position directly by the recent or former client,
- Provide care for a current or recent former client of Comfort Keepers if offered a position indirectly through friends and family of the recent or former client, or
- Provide care for a current or recent former Comfort Keepers' client through a different caregiving service or agency.

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### Please note that this is not notice of a class action settlement. This is a settlement of a state investigation, and you will not receive a monetary award.

Questions about the settlement may be directed to the Attorney General's Office or Comfort Keepers at:

State of California Office of the Attorney General Phone: (800) 952-5225

Email: WorkerRights@doj.ca.gov

Mindy Nili Chief Legal Counsel Worker Rights and Fair Labor Section CK Franchising, Inc. | Comfort Keepers Phone: (949) 246-7998 Email:

MindyNili@corp.comfortkeepers.com

# Attachment 2



#### **NOTICE OF SETTLEMENT**

In August 2024, the State of California, Office of the Attorney General ("Attorney General") and CK Franchising, Inc. and SDX Home Care Operations, LLC (together, "Comfort Keepers") resolved the Attorney General's investigation into a previous form Comfort Keepers' Client Care Agreement that was in use prior to approximately January 2, 2024 ("Old Form Agreement").

You are receiving this notice because you are a current or recent former client of Comfort Keepers who is affected by the settlement.

Comfort Keepers has agreed it will not enforce portions of Paragraph 9 and the entirety of Paragraph 10 in the Old Form Agreement. This means that:

- You may hire or use a current or former Comfort Keepers' caregiver
  without risk of incurring liquidated damages. The caregiver may be hired
  directly by you, indirectly by your family or friends, or through some other
  means like another agency; and
- You, a family member, or any other person you know may ask a current Comfort Keepers' caregiver to leave their employment with Comfort Keepers without risk of incurring liquidated damages.

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### Please note that this is not notice of a class action settlement. This is a settlement of a state investigation, and you will not receive a monetary award.

Questions about the settlement may be directed to the Attorney General's Office or Comfort Keepers at:

State of California Office of the Attorney General Phone: (800) 952-5225 Email: WorkerRights@doj.ca.gov

Mindy Nili Chief Legal Counsel Worker Rights and Fair Labor Section CK Franchising, Inc. | Comfort Keepers Phone: (949) 246-7998 Email:

MindyNili@corp.comfortkeepers.com