

THE STURDEVANT LAW FIRM

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**CLASS ACTION SUIT FILED AGAINST JANI-KING
FOR ILLEGAL PRACTICES TOWARDS ITS CALIFORNIA “FRANCHISEES”**

A class action lawsuit has been filed in the Superior Court of California in Alameda County against Jani-King, a multinational commercial cleaning company based in Texas with regional offices throughout California. The suit, which was brought by four janitorial workers who were lured into spending thousands of dollars on purported cleaning “franchises” in order to do janitorial work for Jani-King’s customers, charges that the company has engaged in unlawful, fraudulent and unfair conduct in marketing, promoting, selling and operating these “franchises.”

The named plaintiffs, Maria and Alejandro Juarez, Luis Romero, and Maria Portillo, all have worked for Jani-King, providing janitorial services to its customers pursuant to the purported “franchise agreements” that they had no power to negotiate. The plaintiffs allege in their complaint that, contrary to Jani-King’s representations about the success of the franchises and the entrepreneurial opportunities they present, the franchise agreements are replete with unfair and oppressive terms of which they and many others like them have no understanding. For example, after spending thousands of dollars to purchase a “franchise,” instead of receiving the business each month they were promised, the plaintiffs found themselves subject to exorbitant fees and sometimes even owing Jani-King money to do work for its customers. Jani-King’s enforcement of the franchise agreements creates a cycle of debt from which the “franchisees” cannot free themselves.

“We believe this case represents an egregious example of employers taking advantage of vulnerable low-wage workers,” said Jennifer Reisch of Talamantes, Villegas, Carrera, LLP in San Francisco, co-lead

attorney for the plaintiffs and the proposed class of franchisees. “These kinds of labor violations make it nearly impossible for many workers like our clients to make ends meet and put food on the table.”

In addition, the lawsuit alleges that by using the franchise scheme to hire and pay the janitorial workers who service its customers, Jani-King is unlawfully seeking to evade responsibility for ensuring that these workers receive the minimum wages and other protections and rights to which they are entitled as employees.

“Individuals buy into the Jani-King scheme based on misrepresentations, false promises and high pressure sales tactics,” explained Monique Olivier of The Sturdevant Law Firm in San Francisco, one of the lead attorneys on the case. According to Olivier, Jani-King’s business practices are particularly egregious because they ignore the basic requirements of the law. “Because Jani-King does not provide potential franchise purchasers with the information that the law requires, these workers have no way of understanding what they are purchasing.”

“The workers who are lured by Jani-King’s deceptive scheme think they are buying the American dream, but really they are paying thousands of dollars for a low-wage job,” said Shannon Liss-Riordan, an attorney from the Boston law firm Lichten & Liss-Riordan, P.C., who is co- counsel for the plaintiffs and has filed similar lawsuits against Jani-King in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania.

According to its own website, Jani-King is “the world’s largest commercial cleaning franchise company with more than 12,000 franchisees.”¹ Over the last several years, hundreds of these franchises have been sold in the State of California. Currently, there are class action lawsuits pending against Jani-King in at least three other states – Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Minnesota. The California case is entitled *Juarez, et al. v. Jani-King of California, et al.*, Alameda County Superior Court Case No. RG 09459008.

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¹ See <http://www.janiking.com/about/index.asp>.