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HOUSECLEANING COMPANY AND CEO PLEAD GUILTY IN WAGE THEFT CASE

As Part of Plea Deal, Corporation Must Make Full Restitution to Workers

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz, joined by New York State Labor Commissioner Roberta Reardon, announced that the MPStar Pros housecleaning company and its chief executive officer pleaded guilty to charges stemming from stealing wages from employees. The company advertised for apartment cleaners, hired them, allowed them to clean and then did not pay for their work, withholding more than \$54,000 from the employees between 2020 and 2022. As part of the plea deal, the company will have to make full restitution to the 23 victims.

District Attorney Katz said: "At the height of the pandemic, these workers risked their lives to support their families only to fall victim to a gutless scam. I created a worker protection bureau to punish this very kind of shameless exploitation. An honest day's work deserves and honest day's pay and that is what we made sure will be the case for these workers."

NYS Department of Labor Commissioner Roberta Reardon said: "Any employer who steals from their workers will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law in New York State. I thank Queens County District Attorney Melinda Katz and her office for partnering with the Department of Labor in our continuing fight against wage theft and for ensuring justice for the victims."

MPStar Pros Chief Executive Officer Christian Perez, 37, of Queens Blvd. in Forest Hills, pleaded guilty to disorderly conduct before Queens Acting Supreme Court Justice Jerry Iannece and was sentenced to a conditional discharge. His housecleaning company, MPStar Pros, pleaded guilty to a felony, scheme to defraud, and as part of the plea must make full restitution to the workers, paying them the more than \$54,000 unpaid wages

Additionally, MPStar Pros is required to pay \$10,000 that will be held in escrow by the Queens District Attorney's office in the event additional victims of the scheme are identified.

According to the charges, MPStar Pros advertised via Facebook, Craigslist and other social media sites for persons to clean residential apartments for various clients, including short-term apartment rental operators. Many of the victims were asked to work during the height of the COVID pandemic, risking their lives to support their families. After the workers completed their jobs, MPStar Pros did not pay them their wages.

The District Attorney thanks the New York State Department of Labor, New York State Police, and the Queens County District Attorney's Detective Bureau for their work in this investigation.

Assistant District Attorney Christina Hanophy, Deputy Chief of the District Attorney’s Housing and Worker Protection Bureau, investigated and prosecuted the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney William Jorgenson, Bureau Chief, and with the assistance of Investigative Accountant Faye Johnson of the DA’s Financial Accounting Unit under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Gerard Brave.

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