

Attorney General Raoul Reaches Settlement With Meat Processing Company Over Unpaid Overtime Wages

December 20 2023 10:35 AM



CHICAGO - Attorney General Kwame Raoul today filed a consent decree resolving a lawsuit the office filed against a deli meat processing company based in Elk Grove Village, Illinois. The [settlement](#) requires Greenridge Farm Inc. (Greenridge) to pay \$3 million in back wages and damages to resolve allegations that Greenridge failed to pay overtime wages to over 282 now-current and former employees.

“Any company doing business in the state of Illinois must follow laws that require employees to be fairly paid for the time they work,” Raoul said. “This settlement sends a message that employers cannot get away with evading Illinois law. I appreciate the

United States Department of Labor’s collaboration, and I am committed to holding businesses – large and small – accountable for violating laws that safeguard workers and support law-abiding businesses in Illinois.”

A joint investigation conducted by the Attorney General’s office and the United States Department of Labor revealed that, between 2015 and 2022, Greenridge – known for its Greenridge Naturals meat products – carried out a scheme whereby employees received both paychecks and cash payments. Employees who worked more than 40 hours in a workweek received a paycheck reflecting only 40 hours of work, and they received cash, off the books and not at the required overtime rate, for any overtime hours worked.

“Working with the state of Illinois, our investigators discovered that Greenridge Farm intentionally denied 283 workers their full-earned wages for a seven-year period,” said U.S. Department of Labor Wage and Hour District Director Tom Gauza in Chicago. “The wages recovered for these workers will have a significant impact on these workers’ lives. Many of them may have not understood their rights to overtime.”

The Illinois Minimum Wage Law and the federal Fair Labor Standards Act both require an overtime premium of 150% of regular hourly wages for each hour over 40 worked in a single workweek. If a company violates this law, the Attorney General’s office can recover triple the amount of damages, as well as interest for any underpayment of wages to which employees are entitled. The U.S. Department of Labor has similar authority under the Fair Labor Standards Act to recover double the amount of damages.

“The Department of Labor is determined to use all available tools – including by working with our partners in the Office of the Illinois Attorney General – and will hold employers accountable for depriving employees of their rightful earnings,” said U.S. Department of Labor Regional Solicitor of Labor Christine Heri in Chicago.

Raoul’s settlement allows employees to recover nearly 2.5 times their owed wages. The awards cover the time period from January 2015 until the violations stopped in March 2022, meaning that some employees will recover over seven years’ worth of unpaid overtime. Employees eligible for awards will be contacted. Current and former Greenridge employees who have questions about the settlement can contact the Attorney General’s Workplace Rights Bureau by calling the Workplace Rights Hotline at 1-844-740-5076.

The consent decree also requires Greenridge to overhaul its payroll process by using a third-party timekeeping system to track employees’ hours, as well as provide employees with paychecks reflecting all hours worked, including overtime hours and their overtime rate. The consent decree also subjects Greenridge to three years of monitoring by the Attorney General’s office.

Bureau Chief Alvar Ayala and Assistant Attorneys General Henry Weaver and Samantha Kronk handled the case for Raoul's Workplace Rights Bureau.

Attorney General Raoul's Workplace Rights Bureau protects and advances the employment rights of all Illinois residents, particularly the state's most vulnerable residents and immigrant populations. The bureau investigates and litigates cases involving serious or persistent wage law violations or other significant employment practices, and monitors and proposes legislation concerning labor and employment issues.

Attorney General Raoul encourages workers who have concerns about wage and hour violations to call his Workplace Rights Hotline at 1-844-740-5076 or visit the office's website to [file a complaint online](#).