

1 HUESTON HENNIGAN LLP  
John C. Hueston, State Bar No. 164921  
2 jhueston@hueston.com  
Moez M. Kaba, State Bar No. 257456  
3 mkaba@hueston.com  
523 West 6th Street, Suite 400  
4 Los Angeles, CA 90014  
Telephone: (213) 788-4340  
5 Facsimile: (888) 775-0898

6 Attorneys for Plaintiff  
IMDb.com, Inc.

7  
8 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
9 NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

10  
11 IMDB.COM, INC., a Delaware  
12 corporation,

13 Plaintiff,

14 vs.

15  
16 KAMALA HARRIS, in her official  
17 capacity as Attorney General of the State  
of California,

18 Defendant.  
19

Case No.

**COMPLAINT FOR DECLARATORY  
AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF**

20 **INTRODUCTION**

21 1. This suit is a facial challenge to the constitutionality of California  
22 Assembly Bill No. 1687 (“AB 1687”), a misguided law that attempts to combat age  
23 discrimination in casting through content-based censorship. AB 1687 amends the  
24 California Civil Code to prohibit Plaintiff IMDb.com, Inc. (“IMDb”) from  
25 publishing the truthful ages or dates of birth of public figures in the entertainment  
26 industry. IMDb shares the worthy goal of preventing age discrimination. But  
27 AB 1687 is an unconstitutional law that does not advance, much less achieve, that  
28 goal. To the contrary, rather than passing laws designed to address the root problem

1 of age discrimination, the State of California has chosen to chill free speech and  
2 undermine public access to factual information. As such, AB 1687 is clearly  
3 unconstitutional and cannot be enforced.

4         2. IMDb operates IMDb.com, the most comprehensive and authoritative  
5 public source of information regarding the motion picture and television industries,  
6 which is used by hundreds of millions of people worldwide. IMDb is committed to  
7 providing complete factual information related to films, television, and people  
8 involved in the entertainment industry, including birth dates and other biographical  
9 data. The vast majority of that factual information is not provided by IMDb itself,  
10 but by IMDb.com users. IMDb routinely and gladly updates information on  
11 IMDb.com in order to correct verified inaccuracies. But it has always been IMDb's  
12 policy not to alter or delete any accurate factual information on the public website.  
13 Being compelled to do so not only violates basic free speech principles, but  
14 undermines the accuracy and reliability of the IMDb.com database on which  
15 millions of users rely. In fact, California courts have recognized that the  
16 information available on IMDb.com is of public interest. *See, e.g., Sobini Films,*  
17 *Inc. v. Clear Skies Nevada, LLC*, 2016 WL 5793694, \*6-7 (Cal. Ct. App. Oct. 4,  
18 2016) ("Credit for the production is surely a matter of public interest throughout the  
19 film industry ...").

20         3. IMDb also operates IMDbPro, a membership-based service that  
21 includes comprehensive information and tools designed to help entertainment  
22 industry professionals achieve success, including detailed contact and representation  
23 information, IMDb profile management tools, exclusive STARMeter rankings that  
24 are determined by user searches on IMDb, a casting service to post breakdowns and  
25 apply to roles, and a mobile optimized website. In response to feedback from  
26 IMDbPro subscribers, since 2010, IMDb.com has provided subscribers enhanced  
27 control over how their information, including ages and birthdates, are displayed.  
28 *To be clear, for years, IMDbPro subscribers have had the power to remove their*

1 *ages or birthdates from their paid profiles.* And, importantly, IMDb’s casting  
2 service is available exclusively to IMDbPro subscribers. As a result, casting  
3 directors utilize IMDbPro, rather than IMDb’s public website, to access IMDb’s  
4 casting tools. In other words, IMDb has empowered IMDbPro subscribers to remove  
5 their age information from IMDbPro if they are concerned that such information  
6 might affect casting decisions.

7         4. In September 2016, in response to aggressive lobbying by the Screen  
8 Actors Guild - American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (“SAG-  
9 AFTRA”), the largest entertainment union, the California Legislature passed, and  
10 Governor Brown signed, AB 1687. The law requires IMDb, upon request, to  
11 remove the birthdates and ages of actors, directors, producers, writers, set  
12 decorators, costume designers, makeup artists, sound editors, special effects  
13 technicians, location managers, and many other entertainment industry  
14 professionals. The law was artfully and deliberately crafted to require IMDb to  
15 remove that information not only from IMDbPro (which IMDbPro subscribers have  
16 had the ability to do on their own), but *also from the public IMDb.com site.* In fact,  
17 as a result of the way the law is drafted, in order to take advantage of the law, an  
18 individual must first subscribe to the IMDbPro paid service.

19         5. The declared purpose of AB 1687 is “to ensure that information  
20 obtained on an Internet Web site regarding an individual’s age will not be used in  
21 furtherance of employment or age discrimination.” But the law does not serve that  
22 laudable purpose, because it does nothing to regulate *how* information obtained on  
23 IMDb.com is used, whether in furtherance of age discrimination or otherwise. In  
24 other words, AB 1687 does not prohibit the discriminatory use of information, but  
25 instead forces the removal of factual information from the public domain. That  
26 “enforced silence” is unquestionably censorship in plain violation of the  
27 U.S. Constitution.

28



1 maintains offices in this district, including the Attorney General's office of Privacy  
2 Enforcement and Protection, and a substantial part of the events giving rise to the  
3 claim occurred in this district. 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b)(1)-(2).

4 **PARTIES**

5 12. Plaintiff IMDb.com, Inc. is a Delaware corporation with its principal  
6 place of business in Washington state.

7 13. Defendant Attorney General Harris is sued in this action in her official  
8 capacity as representative of the State of California charged with enforcement of  
9 AB 1687, including through California's Unfair Competition Law, CAL. BUS. &  
10 PROF. CODE § 17200 *et seq.*

11 **FACTS**

12 *IMDb's Background*

13 14. IMDb.com had humble beginnings. Colin Needham (who remains  
14 IMDb's CEO to this day), then a 23-year-old engineer, started IMDb in 1990 as a  
15 bulletin board database of movie credits. In IMDb's early years, Needham and an  
16 expanding group of volunteers entered information regarding thousands of films  
17 they had seen. IMDb migrated to the web in 1993 with help from the computer  
18 sciences department at Cardiff University. When web traffic soon overwhelmed  
19 Cardiff's server capacity, Needham called upon other universities across the world  
20 to host the database. By 1995, traffic to IMDb.com was doubling every few weeks,  
21 and Needham and his volunteer editors were unable to keep pace.

22 15. In January 1996, Needham launched IMDb.com as a consumer website.  
23 Within two years, IMDb.com was already becoming one of the most popular  
24 websites in the world, with more than 18 million visitors per month. By that time,  
25 IMDb.com had grown into far more than a personal collection of movie and  
26 television facts, offering a searchable database of nearly 400,000 movies and  
27 entertainment programs, and approximately 1.4 million industry cast and crew  
28 members.

1 16. IMDb.com continued its exponential growth over the next two decades,  
2 and its database today includes more than 185 million data items, including more  
3 than 3 million movies, televisions shows, and entertainment programs, and more  
4 than 6 million cast and crew members. IMDb has a combined web and mobile  
5 audience of more than 250 million unique monthly visitors. Courts have recognized  
6 that the information available on IMDb.com is of public interest. *See, e.g., Sobini*  
7 *Films, Inc. v. Clear Skies Nevada, LLC*, 2016 WL 5793694, \*6-7 (Cal. Ct. App. Oct.  
8 4, 2016) (“Credit for the production is surely a matter of public interest throughout  
9 the film industry ...”).

10 17. Similar to Wikipedia, IMDb users are able to edit pages for titles and  
11 individuals in order to keep information on IMDb.com accurate. For example,  
12 a user is able to add a credit for an actor, add iconic quotes from a title, or edit an  
13 actor’s personal information, including age or date of birth.

14 18. Community-sourced information is not infallible. For that reason,  
15 IMDb.com maintains a “Database Content Team” that manually monitors third  
16 party contributions for accuracy, and has also developed software to ensure that all  
17 of the information on IMDb is as accurate as possible.

18 19. In 2002, IMDb launched a separate subscription service, known as  
19 IMDbPro. Instead of being a public-facing site like IMDb.com, IMDbPro is  
20 designed for motion picture and television professionals. Subscribers to IMDbPro  
21 gain access to information that is not available on IMDb.com, including  
22 representation and employer contact details for industry professionals, as well as the  
23 ability to make their resumes, photographs, demo reels, and other information  
24 available to casting agents and other industry decision makers. That membership-  
25 based service has become an essential resource for entertainment industry  
26 professionals.

27 20. In 2010, in response to feedback from IMDbPro subscribers, IMDb  
28 launched a feature providing IMDbPro subscribers enhanced control over how their

1 information, including ages and birthdates, are displayed. *Thus, for many years,*  
2 *IMDbPro subscribers have had the power unilaterally to remove their ages or*  
3 *birthdates from their paid profiles.* IMDb's casting service is available exclusively  
4 to IMDbPro subscribers. Casting directors use IMDbPro, rather than IMDb's public  
5 website, to access IMDb's casting tools. In other words, IMDb has already taken  
6 steps to address the concerns that AB 1687 purports to address, by empowering  
7 actors to remove age information if they are concerned that such information might  
8 affect casting decisions.

9 *The Passage of AB 1687*

10 21. On September 24, 2016, citing the risk of age discrimination in the  
11 entertainment industry, Governor Brown approved AB 1687.<sup>1</sup> The law would  
12 prevent a "commercial online entertainment employment service provider that  
13 enters into a contractual agreement to provide employment services to an  
14 individual" from publishing the subscriber's date of birth or age on an online profile  
15 or share such information with any website, upon request of the subscriber. In  
16 addition, the law would require such an online entertainment employment service  
17 provider, upon request, to remove any age information, including information  
18 provided or posted by third-party users, from its website or "any companion Internet  
19 Web sites under its control." That is a thinly veiled reference to IMDbPro's  
20 "companion" website IMDb.com. Notably, AB 1687 contains no territorial  
21 limitations at all. It purports to impose financial penalties on IMDb, a Delaware  
22 corporation with its offices in Seattle, if it refuses to censor itself when, for example,  
23 a California actor requests the removal of his age from IMDb.com after it is added  
24 by an IMDb.com user in Germany.

25 22. SAG-AFTRA, the largest union in entertainment, sponsored AB 1687,  
26 conducting a determined campaign to secure its passage. As the law only applies to  
27

28 <sup>1</sup> AB 1687 will be codified as CAL. CIV. CODE § 1798.83.5.

1 “commercial online entertainment employment service provider[s],” there can be no  
2 doubt that California seeks to offer a special protection to SAG-AFTRA at the  
3 expense of the First Amendment.

4 23. Despite AB 1687’s seemingly generalized language (applying to  
5 “commercial online entertainment employment service provider[s]”), IMDb.com is  
6 the primary, if not singular, target of the bill. Beyond IMDb being the preeminent  
7 provider of such services, the Senate Rules Committee isolated and identified  
8 IMDb.com as the target of the bill.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the President of SAG-AFTRA  
9 specifically cited IMDb.com’s date-of-birth information when urging Governor  
10 Brown to approve the law.<sup>3</sup>

11 24. Thus, despite an avowed goal to address age discrimination in casting,  
12 AB 1687 applies to only one of the many public sources of an actor’s age. The law  
13 fictionally presumes that a casting director who hypothetically plans to discriminate  
14 on the basis of age will no longer do so if IMDb.com does not post birthdates,  
15 despite the fact that this information is readily available through many other sources  
16 (including Wikipedia, Google, Bing, and Siri).

17 25. AB 1687’s unconstitutionally over-inclusive language also sweeps  
18 within its ambit countless subscribers who do not face age discrimination. Despite  
19 the fact that SAG-AFTRA, representing on-screen talent, has cast this statute as a  
20 boon to actors, its censorship would apply equally to writers, producers, makeup  
21 artists, costume designers, or even the director of a video game. It would also apply  
22 to “A-list celebrities” whose ages are already well-known.

23  
24  
25  
26 <sup>2</sup> California Senate Judiciary Committee June 27, 2016 Hearing, *available at*  
27 [https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billAnalysisClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201520160AB1687](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billAnalysisClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160AB1687).

28 <sup>3</sup> The Hollywood Reporter, *Actors Need a Law to Keep Ages Off IMDb*, *available at*  
<http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/sag-aftas-gabrielle-carteris-actors-922253>.



*The Substantial Threat To IMDb.com*

26. AB 1687 was passed against a backdrop of the Attorney General's stated focus on privacy violations. In 2012, the Attorney General created the Privacy Enforcement and Protection Unit, whose stated goal was "protecting consumer and individual privacy through civil prosecution of state and federal privacy laws."<sup>4</sup> The Attorney General has stated that enforcing state privacy laws, such as AB 1687, is one of her office's "top priorities." IMDb reasonably believes the Attorney General will seek both monetary penalties and injunctive relief requiring IMDb to censor itself by filing an action for violations of California's Unfair Competition Law, CAL. BUS. & PROF. CODE § 17200 *et seq.*<sup>5</sup> IMDb will then be faced with the choice of removing accurate information of public interest from the marketplace of ideas or suffering financial and other penalties for refusing to censor itself.

**FIRST CLAIM FOR RELIEF**

**42 U.S.C. § 1983**

**(First Amendment - Content-Based Regulation of Speech)**

27. IMDb realleges and incorporates by reference all prior paragraphs of this Complaint as though each were set forth herein in full.

28. This action presents an actual case or controversy between IMDb and defendant concerning the validity and enforceability of AB 1687.

29. IMDb reasonably believes defendant will attempt to enforce AB 1687 against IMDb and seek injunctive relief and civil penalties.

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<sup>4</sup> State of California Department of Justice, Office of the Attorney General, *Attorney General Kamala D. Harris Announces Privacy Enforcement and Protection Unit*, available at <https://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/attorney-general-kamala-d-harris-announces-privacy-enforcement-and-protection>.

<sup>5</sup> California's Unfair Competition Law empowers the Attorney General to bring a suit for injunctive relief and civil penalties. CAL. BUS. & PROF. CODE §§ 17204; 17206. Violations of other laws, including AB 1687, are a per se violation of the Unfair Competition Law. *See Yanting Zhang v. Superior Court*, 304 P.3d 163, 167 (Cal. 2013).

1           30. AB 1687 is a content-based restriction on speech that is not narrowly  
2 drawn to serve a compelling government interest. Instead of targeting IMDb.com  
3 for hosting truthful information, California could instead seek to enforce (or bolster)  
4 already existing anti-discrimination laws against those in the entertainment industry  
5 who discriminate, or could take other steps to more effectively penalize those who  
6 are engaged in discrimination. California has not shown, and cannot show, that  
7 these less speech-restrictive alternatives would be an inadequate means of achieving  
8 its policy goals.

9           31. AB 1687 is over-inclusive because it broadly prohibits speech in a way  
10 that will have no effect on age discrimination. AB 1687 allows entertainment  
11 professionals of all kinds, not merely actors and actresses, to prevent IMDb.com  
12 from displaying their ages, even though they are not the types of on-screen actors  
13 who are facing the discrimination that purportedly prompted the law.

14           32. While over-inclusive in some respects, AB 1687 is also under-inclusive,  
15 because it prohibits only a narrow category of speech by an even narrower category  
16 of speakers, while ignoring the myriad other sources of the same information. For  
17 many of the actors who have already requested removal of their ages from IMDb,  
18 such information is also available on frequently visited sites like Wikipedia, other  
19 entertainment-related sites, through a simple Google search, or even on a plethora of  
20 sites specializing in celebrity birthdays such as [www.famousbirthdays.com](http://www.famousbirthdays.com). AB  
21 1687 applies to none of these other websites, or to other news sources like  
22 newspapers that also print such information.

23           33. The law's over-inclusiveness and under-inclusiveness demonstrate that  
24 it is not narrowly tailored to achieve California's stated interest in passing the law.

25           34. To the extent that it regulates commercial speech, AB 1687 does not  
26 directly advance a substantial government interest and is not drawn to achieve that  
27 interest. The speech AB 1687 regulates concerns lawful activity, is truthful, and is  
28 not misleading.

1 35. Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983 and the Court’s equitable powers, IMDb  
2 seeks injunctive relief against the State to prevent enforcement of AB 1687.

3 **SECOND CLAIM FOR RELIEF**

4 **42 U.S.C. § 1983**

5 **(First Amendment - Vagueness)**

6 36. IMDb realleges and incorporates by reference all prior paragraphs of  
7 this Complaint as though each were set forth herein in full.

8 37. This action presents an actual case or controversy between IMDb and  
9 defendant concerning the validity and enforceability of AB 1687.

10 38. IMDb reasonably believes defendant will attempt to enforce AB 1687  
11 against IMDb and seek injunctive relief and civil penalties.

12 39. AB 1687 is unconstitutionally vague because it penalizes the publishing  
13 of “age information” without defining that term. The statute thus impermissibly  
14 chills speech because it is unclear whether “age information” would include, for  
15 example, describing an IMDb subscriber as being in his or her “40s” or describing a  
16 different subscriber as a “Millennial” because it suggests the subscriber was born in  
17 the 1980s or 1990s.

18 40. Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983 and the Court’s equitable powers, IMDb  
19 seeks injunctive relief against the State to prevent enforcement of AB 1687.

20 **THIRD CLAIM FOR RELIEF**

21 **42 U.S.C. § 1983**

22 **(First Amendment – Strict Liability)**

23 41. IMDb realleges and incorporates by reference all prior paragraphs of  
24 this Complaint as though each were set forth herein in full.

25 42. This action presents an actual case or controversy between IMDb and  
26 defendant concerning the validity and enforceability of AB 1687.

27 43. IMDb reasonably believes defendant will attempt to enforce AB 1687  
28 against IMDb and seek injunctive relief and civil penalties.

1 44. The imposition of civil penalties under AB 1687 violates the First  
2 Amendment because it purports to impose strict liability on IMDb for hosting age-  
3 related information on IMDb.com after an IMDbPro subscriber has requested the  
4 removal of age-related information.

5 45. IMDb.com users are able to post on message boards visible on actors'  
6 profiles. Every day, users post thousands of messages on IMDb.com's message  
7 boards. Upon information and belief, users have posted, and will continue to post,  
8 messages relating to actors' ages or dates of birth. IMDb does not, and cannot,  
9 enforce a policy of prior restraint on its users' messages.

10 46. AB 1687 does not appear to require subsequent take-down requests  
11 before liability attaches. Nor does AB 1687 require that IMDb have any knowledge  
12 that age-related information was posted by an IMDb.com user before liability  
13 attaches. Thus, the law would impose strict civil liability on IMDb, even though  
14 IMDb has no knowledge of the content unless and until it is later informed.

15 47. Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983 and the Court's equitable powers, IMDb  
16 seeks injunctive relief against the State to prevent enforcement of AB 1687.

17 **FOURTH CLAIM FOR RELIEF**

18 **42 U.S.C. § 1983**  
19 **(Commerce Clause)**

20 48. IMDb realleges and incorporates by reference all prior paragraphs of  
21 this Complaint as though each were set forth herein in full.

22 49. This action presents an actual case or controversy between IMDb and  
23 defendant concerning the validity and enforceability of AB 1687.

24 50. IMDb reasonably believes defendant will attempt to enforce AB 1687  
25 against IMDb and seek injunctive relief and civil penalties.

26 51. The Commerce Clause prohibits states from passing laws that have the  
27 practical effect of regulating commerce occurring wholly outside that state's  
28 borders.

1 52. AB 1687 contains no territorial provisions that would limit its impact to  
2 conduct in and related to California. Instead, the law seeks to regulate the internet  
3 as a whole. AB 1687 would permit the imposition of penalties for conduct whose  
4 only nexus to California is that IMDb.com is accessible in that state. The  
5 Constitution does not permit such attacks on the free flow of commerce.

6 53. Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983 and the Court's equitable powers, IMDb  
7 seeks injunctive relief against the State to prevent enforcement of AB 1687.

8 **FIFTH CLAIM FOR RELIEF**

9 **42 U.S.C. § 1983**

10 **(Communications Decency Act (47 U.S.C. § 230))**

11 54. IMDb realleges and incorporates by reference all prior paragraphs of  
12 this Complaint as though each were set forth herein in full.

13 55. This action presents an actual case or controversy between IMDb and  
14 defendant concerning the validity and enforceability of AB 1687.

15 56. IMDb reasonably believes defendant will attempt to enforce AB 1687  
16 against IMDb and seek injunctive relief and civil penalties.

17 57. IMDb.com is an "interactive computer service" for purposes of the  
18 Communications Decency Act because it operates an interactive online platform  
19 which provides information to multiple users by giving them computer access to a  
20 computer server. 47 U.S.C. § 230(f)(2).

21 58. Third-party users are responsible for the submission of content on  
22 IMDb.com, including information related to age or date of birth.

23 59. AB 1687 violates IMDb's rights under the Communications Decency  
24 Act, 47 U.S.C. § 230(c)(1), which states that "no provider or user of an interactive  
25 computer service shall be treated as the publisher or speaker of any information  
26 provided by another information content provider," because enforcement of  
27 AB 1687 against IMDb will improperly penalize IMDb as the publisher or speaker  
28

1 of information that is provided by another information content provider (*i.e.*, an  
2 IMDb.com user).

3 60. AB 1687 is thus a “State ... law that is inconsistent with” § 230, in  
4 direct violation of 47 U.S.C. § 230(e)(3). AB 1687 thus also interferes with or  
5 impedes the accomplishment of the full purposes and objectives of federal law,  
6 violates the Supremacy Clause, U.S. Const. art. VI, cl. 2, and is invalid and  
7 preempted.

8 61. Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983 and the Court’s equitable powers, IMDb  
9 seeks injunctive relief against the State to prevent enforcement of AB 1687.

10 **SIXTH CLAIM FOR RELIEF**

11 62. IMDb realleges and incorporates by reference all prior paragraphs of  
12 this Complaint as though each were set forth herein in full.

13 63. This action presents an actual case or controversy between IMDb and  
14 defendant concerning the validity and enforceability of AB 1687.

15 64. Because AB 1687 violates the First Amendment, the Commerce Clause,  
16 and the CDA, 47 U.S.C § 230, IMDb seeks and is entitled to a declaration pursuant  
17 to 28 U.S.C. § 2201 that AB 1687 is invalid and unenforceable.

18 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

19 Wherefore IMDb prays this Court:

20 A. Enter declaratory judgment that AB 1687 is unconstitutional and  
21 unenforceable;

22 B. Enter a permanent injunction against its enforcement by the State and its  
23 respective officers, agents, servants, employees, and attorneys, and those persons in  
24 concert or participation with them, enjoining them from taking any actions to  
25 enforce AB 1687 against IMDb;

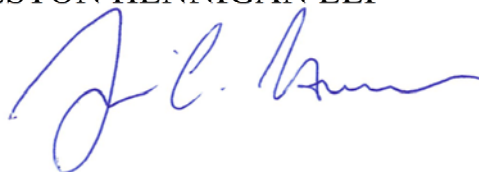
26 C. Award IMDb its reasonable costs and attorneys’ fees pursuant to  
27 42 U.S.C. § 1988; and  
28

1 D. Any such other and further relief as is just and proper under the  
2 circumstances.

3  
4 DATED: November 10, 2016

5 Respectfully submitted,

6 HUESTON HENNIGAN LLP

7 

8  
9 By:

10 John C. Hueston  
11 Moez M. Kaba  
12 Attorneys for Plaintiff IMDb.com, Inc.  
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CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS-CAND 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved in its original form by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the Clerk of Court to initiate the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS
(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff (EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)
(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, Address, and Telephone Number)

DEFENDANTS
County of Residence of First Listed Defendant (IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY)
NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED. Attorneys (If Known)

II. BASIS OF JURISDICTION (Place an "X" in One Box Only)
1 U.S. Government Plaintiff
2 U.S. Government Defendant
3 Federal Question (U.S. Government Not a Party)
4 Diversity (Indicate Citizenship of Parties in Item III)

III. CITIZENSHIP OF PRINCIPAL PARTIES (Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintiff and One Box for Defendant)
Table with columns: CITIZENSHIP, PTF, DEF

IV. NATURE OF SUIT (Place an "X" in One Box Only)
Table with columns: CONTRACT, REAL PROPERTY, TORTS, CIVIL RIGHTS, PRISONER PETITIONS, FORFEITURE/PENALTY, LABOR, IMMIGRATION, BANKRUPTCY, SOCIAL SECURITY, FEDERAL TAX SUITS, OTHER STATUTES

V. ORIGIN (Place an "X" in One Box Only)
1 Original Proceeding, 2 Removed from State Court, 3 Remanded from Appellate Court, 4 Reinstated or Reopened, 5 Transferred from Another District (specify), 6 Multidistrict Litigation-Transfer, 8 Multidistrict Litigation-Direct File

VI. CAUSE OF ACTION
Cite the U.S. Civil Statute under which you are filing (Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity):
Brief description of cause:

VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:
CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION UNDER RULE 23, Fed. R. Civ. P. DEMAND \$ CHECK YES only if demanded in complaint: JURY DEMAND: Yes No

VIII. RELATED CASE(S), IF ANY (See instructions): JUDGE DOCKET NUMBER

IX. DIVISIONAL ASSIGNMENT (Civil Local Rule 3-2)
(Place an "X" in One Box Only) SAN FRANCISCO/OAKLAND SAN JOSE EUREKA-MCKINLEYVILLE

DATE: SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY OF RECORD:



## INSTRUCTIONS FOR ATTORNEYS COMPLETING CIVIL COVER SHEET FORM JS-CAND 44

**Authority For Civil Cover Sheet.** The JS-CAND 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replaces nor supplements the filings and service of pleading or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved in its original form by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the Clerk of Court to initiate the civil docket sheet. Consequently, a civil cover sheet is submitted to the Clerk of Court for each civil complaint filed. The attorney filing a case should complete the form as follows:

- I. a) Plaintiffs-Defendants.** Enter names (last, first, middle initial) of plaintiff and defendant. If the plaintiff or defendant is a government agency, use only the full name or standard abbreviations. If the plaintiff or defendant is an official within a government agency, identify first the agency and then the official, giving both name and title.
- b) County of Residence.** For each civil case filed, except U.S. plaintiff cases, enter the name of the county where the first listed plaintiff resides at the time of filing. In U.S. plaintiff cases, enter the name of the county in which the first listed defendant resides at the time of filing. (NOTE: In land condemnation cases, the county of residence of the “defendant” is the location of the tract of land involved.)
- c) Attorneys.** Enter the firm name, address, telephone number, and attorney of record. If there are several attorneys, list them on an attachment, noting in this section “(see attachment).”
- II. Jurisdiction.** The basis of jurisdiction is set forth under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 8(a), which requires that jurisdictions be shown in pleadings. Place an “X” in one of the boxes. If there is more than one basis of jurisdiction, precedence is given in the order shown below.
- (1) United States plaintiff. Jurisdiction based on 28 USC §§ 1345 and 1348. Suits by agencies and officers of the United States are included here.
  - (2) United States defendant. When the plaintiff is suing the United States, its officers or agencies, place an “X” in this box.
  - (3) Federal question. This refers to suits under 28 USC § 1331, where jurisdiction arises under the Constitution of the United States, an amendment to the Constitution, an act of Congress or a treaty of the United States. In cases where the U.S. is a party, the U.S. plaintiff or defendant code takes precedence, and box 1 or 2 should be marked.
  - (4) Diversity of citizenship. This refers to suits under 28 USC § 1332, where parties are citizens of different states. When Box 4 is checked, the citizenship of the different parties must be checked. (See Section III below; **NOTE: federal question actions take precedence over diversity cases.**)
- III. Residence (citizenship) of Principal Parties.** This section of the JS-CAND 44 is to be completed if diversity of citizenship was indicated above. Mark this section for each principal party.
- IV. Nature of Suit.** Place an “X” in the appropriate box. If the nature of suit cannot be determined, be sure the cause of action, in Section VI below, is sufficient to enable the deputy clerk or the statistical clerk(s) in the Administrative Office to determine the nature of suit. If the cause fits more than one nature of suit, select the most definitive.
- V. Origin.** Place an “X” in one of the six boxes.
- (1) Original Proceedings. Cases originating in the United States district courts.
  - (2) Removed from State Court. Proceedings initiated in state courts may be removed to the district courts under Title 28 USC § 1441. When the petition for removal is granted, check this box.
  - (3) Remanded from Appellate Court. Check this box for cases remanded to the district court for further action. Use the date of remand as the filing date.
  - (4) Reinstated or Reopened. Check this box for cases reinstated or reopened in the district court. Use the reopening date as the filing date.
  - (5) Transferred from Another District. For cases transferred under Title 28 USC § 1404(a). Do not use this for within district transfers or multidistrict litigation transfers.
  - (6) Multidistrict Litigation Transfer. Check this box when a multidistrict case is transferred into the district under authority of Title 28 USC § 1407. When this box is checked, do not check (5) above.
  - (8) Multidistrict Litigation Direct File. Check this box when a multidistrict litigation case is filed in the same district as the Master MDL docket. Please note that there is no Origin Code 7. Origin Code 7 was used for historical records and is no longer relevant due to changes in statute.
- VI. Cause of Action.** Report the civil statute directly related to the cause of action and give a brief description of the cause. **Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity.** Example: U.S. Civil Statute: 47 USC § 553. Brief Description: Unauthorized reception of cable service.
- VII. Requested in Complaint.** Class Action. Place an “X” in this box if you are filing a class action under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 23. Demand. In this space enter the actual dollar amount being demanded or indicate other demand, such as a preliminary injunction. Jury Demand. Check the appropriate box to indicate whether or not a jury is being demanded.
- VIII. Related Cases.** This section of the JS-CAND 44 is used to identify related pending cases, if any. If there are related pending cases, insert the docket numbers and the corresponding judge names for such cases.
- IX. Divisional Assignment.** If the Nature of Suit is under Property Rights or Prisoner Petitions or the matter is a Securities Class Action, leave this section blank. For all other cases, identify the divisional venue according to Civil Local Rule 3-2: “the county in which a substantial part of the events or omissions which give rise to the claim occurred or in which a substantial part of the property that is the subject of the action is situated.”
- Date and Attorney Signature.** Date and sign the civil cover sheet.