

CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT AND RELEASE

This SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT AND RELEASE (“Agreement”), made subject to approval by the Court, is entered into by and between Rebecca Batcheller (“Class Representative”) individually and as the representative of the Settlement Class, as defined herein, and Wakefield & Associates, LLC fka Wakefield & Associates, Inc. (“Wakefield”). The Class Representative, Wakefield, and the Settlement Class are also sometimes referred to as “Party” and collectively referred to as the “Parties.”

WHEREAS, Class Representative is the named plaintiff in the civil action pending before the Circuit Court of Jackson County, Missouri (the “Court”), styled *Rebecca Batcheller v. Wakefield & Associates, Inc.*, Case No. 2116-CV24281 (the “Litigation”); and

WHEREAS, Class Representative is asserting claims against Wakefield for alleged violations of Missouri’s Notary Statute, common law fraud, and the Missouri Merchandising Practices Act, and seeks monetary damages and other relief for herself and a class of persons similarly situated who were named as defendants in debt collection actions filed by Wakefield in which an affidavit of assignment from the original creditor was notarized by Deanne M. Pollock; and

WHEREAS, the Parties stipulate to a Settlement Class, pending preliminary and final approval by the Court, comprising and defined as:

All persons named as defendants in debt collection actions filed by Wakefield between November 5, 2016 and August 27, 2020, in which an affidavit of assignment from the original creditor was notarized by Deanne M. Pollock. Plaintiff alleged the above conduct violated the version of Missouri’s Notary Act in effect prior to August 28, 2020, including Mo. Rev. Stat. §§ 486.355 and 486.360, the Missouri Merchandising Practices Act, Mo. Rev. Stat. § 407.010, et seq., and constituted common law fraud.

Excluded from the Class are persons: (1) whose debts were previously remedied by Wakefield in which the underlying judgment was satisfied, the consumer paid no

money, and the account was returned to the original creditor; and/or () who filed for bankruptcy after the date their debt collection lawsuit was filed by Wakefield and whose bankruptcy ended in discharge rather than dismissal.

WHEREAS, Class Representative's counsel ("Class Counsel") and Wakefield's counsel have thoroughly investigated the facts relating to the claims alleged and the events underlying the Litigation, through formal and informal discovery, and have made a thorough study of the legal principles applicable to the claims being asserted against Wakefield; and

WHEREAS, the Parties have agreed, subject to Court approval, to resolve the Litigation as between Class Representative, the Settlement Class, and Wakefield under the terms of this Agreement; and

WHEREAS, the Parties and their respective counsel have engaged in arm's length negotiations concerning the settlement of the claims and causes of action being asserted against Wakefield in this Litigation; and

WHEREAS, the Class Representative and Class Counsel have concluded a settlement with Wakefield under the terms of this Agreement will be fair, just, equitable, reasonable, adequate, and in the best interests of Class Representative and the Settlement Class based upon their investigation, study, negotiations, and discovery taken, as well as considering the contested issues, the expense and time to prosecute the Litigation against Wakefield through trial, the delays and risks and costs of further prosecution against Wakefield, the uncertainties of complex litigation, and the benefits to be received under this Agreement; and

WHEREAS, Wakefield denies all liability and without admitting or conceding fault or liability or the validity of Plaintiff's claims, or that Plaintiff or any individual in the Settlement Class is entitled to any relief as a result of Wakefield's conduct but desires to settle the claims being asserted against Wakefield on the terms and conditions in this Agreement to avoid the

burden, expense, and uncertainty of continuing litigation, and to put to rest all controversies that have been or could be raised against Wakefield in the Litigation; and

WHEREAS, the Parties acknowledge and agree the Agreement constitutes a compromise in settlement of the claims and causes of action that have been or could be raised by the Class Representative and the Settlement Class (or members thereof) against Wakefield and/or the other Released Persons as to any debt collection lawsuits at issue in the Litigation which were filed by Wakefield.

NOW THEREFORE, the undersigned Parties, each intending to be legally bound and acknowledging the sufficiency of the consideration and undertakings in this Agreement, agree, subject to approval of the Agreement by the Court, that the Litigation and the Released Claims against the Released Persons are finally and fully compromised and settled:

1. **Definitions**

As used in the Agreement, these terms are defined:

1.1. **Cash Fund.** “Cash Fund” means the amounts to be paid by Wakefield as set forth in Paragraph 3 below.

1.2. **Cash Settlement Sub-Class.** The “Cash Settlement Sub-Class” is comprised of the Settlement Class Members who, as of the Effective Date of the Agreement, no longer possess outstanding balances on debt accounts at issue in this Litigation which have been or were assigned in interest to Wakefield prior to satisfaction.

1.3. **Cash Settlement Sub-Class Member.** “Cash Settlement Sub-Class Member” means any member of the Cash Settlement Sub-Class who does not timely opt out of the Settlement under Paragraph 8. If a Cash Settlement Sub-Class Member has died, then the person’s estate, heirs, representatives, successors, or assigns is deemed a Cash Settlement Sub-Class Member.

1.4. **Cash Settlement Sub-Class Member Payment.** “Cash Settlement Sub-Class Member Payment” means the portion of the Net Distributable Settlement Fund to be paid to the respective Cash Settlement Sub-Class Member under the Agreement. The Net Distributable Settlement Fund will be divided on a *pro rata* basis in the amount provided below to each Cash Settlement Sub-Class Member by the issuance of a check by the Settlement Administrator. The amount of the Settlement Check issued to the Cash Settlement Sub-Class Members will be determined by dividing the Net Distributable Settlement Fund by the number of Cash Settlement Sub-Class Members.

1.5. **Class Counsel.** “Class Counsel” means the Class Representative’s counsel: Timothy J. Wolf, Tyler J. Hamilton, Michael L. Belancio, and the law firm of Watters Wolf Bub & Hansmann, LLC, 600 Kellwood Parkway, Suite 120, St. Louis, MO 63017.

1.6. **Class Mail Notice.** “Class Mail Notice” (or “Short-Form Notice”) means a notice in a form substantially the same as that attached as **Exhibit A** to this Agreement.

1.7. **Court.** “Court” means the Circuit Court of Jackson County, Missouri.

1.8. **Debt Relief Settlement Sub-Class.** The “Debt Relief Settlement Sub-Class” is comprised of the Settlement Class Members who, as of the Effective Date of the Agreement, possess outstanding balances on debt accounts at issue in this Litigation which have been assigned in interest or are otherwise owed to Wakefield.

1.9. **Debt Relief Settlement Sub-Class Benefit.** “Debt Relief Settlement Sub-Class Member Benefit” means the value of the debt relief benefit owed to the respective Settlement Class Members in the Debt Relief Settlement Sub-Class under the Agreement. The value of the Debt Relief Settlement Sub-Class Benefit is calculated based upon the outstanding debt balance of each Debt Relief Settlement Sub-Class Member as of the Effective Date and shall be distributed as

described in Paragraph 3.11 below. Pursuant to the terms of this Agreement, all Debt Relief Settlement Sub-Class Members with debt balances equal to or less than \$700.00 (Seven Hundred Dollars and Zero Cents) will have the entirety of their debts waived as their Debt Relief Settlement Sub-Class Benefit. All remaining Debt Relief Settlement Sub-Class Members will have their total debt balances reduced by fifty percent (50%) as their Debt Relief Settlement Sub-Class Benefit.

1.10. **Debt Relief Settlement Sub-Class Member.** “Debt Relief Settlement Sub-Class Member” means any member of the Debt Relief Settlement Sub-Class who does not timely opt out of the Settlement under Paragraph 8. If a Debt Relief Settlement Sub-Class Member has died, then the person’s estate, heirs, representatives, successors, or assigns is deemed a Debt Relief Settlement Sub-Class Member.

1.11. **Effective Date.** The “Effective Date” of the Agreement means the date when all the conditions in Paragraph 11 have occurred.

1.12. **Final Approval Order.** “Final Approval Order” means an Order consistent with Paragraph 9, finally approving the Agreement and the “Settlement” under Missouri Supreme Court Rule 52.08.

1.13. **Final Hearing Date.** “Final Hearing Date” means the date set by the Court for the hearing on final approval of the “Settlement.”

1.14. **Final Judgment.** “Final Judgment” means a Judgment of the Court consistent with Paragraph 9.

1.15. **Long-Form Notice.** “Long-Form Notice” means a notice in a form substantially the same as that attached hereto as **Exhibit B**.

1.16. **Net Distributable Settlement Fund.** “Net Distributable Settlement Fund” means the “Cash Fund” *plus* any interest earned on the Cash Fund, while in escrow, *minus* the sum of (a)

any incentive award approved by the Court and paid to the Class Representative; (b) any litigation expenses and/or costs approved by the Court and awarded to Class Counsel for this litigation or for ancillary matters; any (c) any award of attorneys' fees awarded to Class Counsel.

1.17. **Person(s).** "Person(s)" has the broadest meaning possible and includes all legal entities such as corporations, companies and the like.

1.18. **Preliminary Approval Order.** "Preliminary Approval Order" means an Order consistent with Paragraph 7, preliminarily approving the Settlement, conditionally or preliminarily certifying a class for settlement, directing the issuance of class notice, and scheduling a settlement hearing under Missouri Supreme Court Rule 52.08.

1.19. **Released Persons.** "Released Persons" means Wakefield, including their current and former officers, directors, successors, predecessors, subsidiaries, parent companies, divisions, employees, attorneys, and agents.

1.20. **Released Claims.** "Released Claims" means all past and present known and unknown claims, demands, damages, causes of action, or suits seeking damages or other legal or equitable relief arising out of or in any way related to:

- (a) the inadequacy or insufficiency of any affidavit of assignment for debt owed by a Settlement Class Member which is at issue in this Litigation;
- (b) the invalidity or impropriety of any debt collection action filed by Wakefield against a Settlement Class Member which is at issue in this Litigation;
- (c) Wakefield's alleged violation of the Missouri Notary Statute with respect to affidavits of assignment and debt collection actions related to Settlement Class Members which are at issue in this Litigation;

- (d) Wakefield's alleged violation of the Missouri Merchandising Practices Act with respect to affidavits of assignment and debt collection actions related to Settlement Class Members which are at issue in this Litigation;
- (e) any allegation of common law fraud with respect to affidavits of assignment and debt collection actions related to Settlement Class Members which are at issue in this Litigation;
- (f) any judgment Wakefield obtained against any Settlement Class Member in a debt collection action at issue in this Litigation; and
- (g) any claim or cause of action asserted in this Litigation or which could have been asserted;

whether arising from federal, state, or local law or regulation which any of the Settlement Class Members have or may have had, or now have, from the beginning of time up through and including the Effective Date, against Wakefield. "Released Claims" shall not include any defense or affirmative defense a Settlement Class Member may assert against Wakefield in defense of any claim made by Wakefield against a Settlement Class Member.

1.21. **Releasers.** "Releasers" means the Class Representative and all Settlement Class Members, and each of their respective heirs, executors, administrators, assigns, predecessors, and successors, and any other person claiming jointly with or by or through any or all of them. Releasers does not include: (a) any members of the Settlement Class who opt out of the Settlement under Paragraph 8; or (b) any person(s) not defined herein as a member of the Settlement Class.

1.22. **Settlement.** "Settlement" means the compromise in settlement memorialized in this Agreement.

1.23. **Settlement Administrator.** “Settlement Administrator” means Atticus Administration, or any other independent class action settlement administrator company retained by Class Counsel and approved by the Court to administer the Settlement.

1.24. **Settlement Class.** “Settlement Class” has the meaning ascribed in Paragraph 2.

1.25. **Settlement Class Member.** “Settlement Class Member” means any member of the Settlement Class who does not timely opt out of the Settlement under Paragraph 8. If a Settlement Class Member has died, then the person’s estate, heirs, representatives, successors, or assigns is deemed a Settlement Class Member.

1.26. **Total Class Benefit.** “Total Class Benefit” means the total combined value of the Cash Fund of \$825,000.00 (Eight Hundred and Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars and Zero Cents) and the Debt Relief Settlement Sub-Class Benefit estimated to be valued at \$1,926,803.00 (One Million, Nine Hundred Twenty-Six Thousand, Eight Hundred and Three Dollars and Zero Cents).

1.27. **Wakefield’s Counsel.** “Wakefield’s Counsel” means James M. Brodzik of the law firm Hinshaw & Culbertson, LLP, 701 Market St., Suite 260, St. Louis, MO 63101.

2. Certification of the Settlement Class

Class Counsel and Wakefield’s Counsel will request the Court to approve a settlement for a Class of Persons (referred to and defined as the “Settlement Class”). The Settlement Class comprises:

All persons named as defendants in debt collection actions filed by Wakefield between November 5, 2016 and August 27, 2020, in which an affidavit of assignment from the original creditor was notarized by Deanne M. Pollock. Plaintiff alleged the above conduct violated the version of Missouri’s Notary Act in effect prior to August 28, 2020, including Mo. Rev. Stat. §§ 486.355 and 486.360, the Missouri Merchandising Practices Act, Mo. Rev. Stat. § 407.010, et seq., and constituted common law fraud.

Excluded from the Class are persons: (1) whose debts were previously remedied by Wakefield in which the underlying judgment was satisfied, the consumer paid no

money, and the account was returned to the original creditor; and/or () who filed for bankruptcy after the date their debt collection lawsuit was filed by Wakefield and whose bankruptcy ended in discharge rather than dismissal.

Class Counsel and Wakefield's Counsel will request Court approval of this Agreement and the Settlement set forth herein regardless of whether any person opposes or objects to the Settlement.

2.1. **Class List.** The Court will direct Wakefield, acting in good faith and using its best efforts, to provide a list to Class Counsel of all persons it has identified as in the Settlement Class within seven (7) days after the Court issues its Preliminary Approval Order. The list provided to Class Counsel, if ordered by the Court in the Preliminary Approval Order or otherwise, must contain for each member of the Settlement Class: (a) their name, Social Security Number (if available), and last known address; (b) the name, Social Security Number (if available), and last known address of any co-debtor(s) listed on the account, if applicable; (c) case number, filing date, judgment date, and/or dismissal date of the underlying debt collection action, including whether the action was settled, if applicable; (d) account number or other debt identifier; (e) the approximate deficiency balance remaining on the debt balance as of the Effective Date; and (f) any other reasonable information that Class Counsel and Wakefield's Counsel mutually agree is necessary for administration of the Settlement. To protect the privacy and the names, addresses, and other personal information of the members of the Settlement Class, the list of Settlement Class Members shall not be filed with the Court. If the Court requires the list containing all the information provided to Class Counsel to be filed, the Parties agree the list must be filed under seal with the Court to protect the privacy and the names and addresses of the members of the Settlement Class.

2.2. **Failure of Condition.** If the Agreement is not approved by the Court under the proposed Final Approval Order and Final Judgment, the Agreement, the conditional settlement

class certification provided, the Settlement (including any modifications made with the consent of the Parties), and any action(s) taken or to be taken in connection therewith, terminate and become null and void and have no further force or effect, the Preliminary Approval Order must be vacated, and the Parties will be restored to their respective positions existing prior to the execution of the Agreement. In addition, neither the Agreement, the stipulated Settlement Class, the Preliminary Approval Order, nor any other document relating to any of the foregoing, may be relied on, referred to or used for any purpose with any further proceedings in the Litigation or any related action, including but not limited to class certification. In such case, or if the Agreement terminates or the settlement embodied does not become effective for any reason, the Agreement and all negotiations, court orders and proceedings relating thereto will be without prejudice to the rights of the Parties, who must be restored to their respective positions prior to the execution of the Agreement, and evidence relating to the Agreement, and all negotiations, may not be discoverable or admissible.

2.3. **No Admission of Liability.** The Parties are entering into this Agreement to resolve vigorously disputed claims that have arisen between them and to avoid the burden, expense, and risk of further litigation. By entering into settlement negotiations and ultimately this Agreement, Wakefield is not making any agreement, admission or concession regarding any claims or defenses alleged or asserted. Neither the Agreement nor any of its terms or provisions nor any of the negotiations between Wakefield, the Parties, or their counsel may be construed as an admission or concession by Wakefield or any of the Parties of anything, including but not limited to the claims and defenses asserted in the Litigation. The Parties agree that if the Settlement is not approved or if anything prevents the Settlement from becoming final, nothing contained in the Agreement nor the negotiations will be admissible in any way and no Party will seek to admit any such matter.

3. Settlement Consideration and Distribution of the Qualified Settlement Fund to the Settlement Class Members

3.1. **Funding.** Within seven (7) days after entry of the Final Approval Order, but no later than December 31, 2023, and the receipt of an IRS Form W-9 from Class Representative and Class Counsel, Wakefield must deliver \$825,000.00 (Eight Hundred and Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars and Zero Cents) into a qualified settlement fund established by the Settlement Administrator, subject to Paragraph 14, by check or some other mutually agreeable form of payment. The account will be labeled “Batcheller Class Action Qualified Settlement Fund.” If Wakefield fails to deliver \$825,000.00 (Eight Hundred and Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars and Zero Cents) as set forth herein, this Agreement shall not become Effective and the Parties shall be placed into the positions they were in as if no Agreement had been reached, unless otherwise agreed by the Parties.

3.2. **Inviolable Cap.** The Cash Fund includes all costs, fees, or other payments, including but not limited to the costs of attorneys’ fees, litigation expenses and costs, and class representative compensation (the “Cash Fund”). The Cash Fund does not include the costs associated with the provision of class notice and similar services performed by the Settlement Administrator which are to be borne by Wakefield pursuant to Paragraph 3.14 of this Agreement.

3.3. **Conditions for Return.** The Cash Fund must be returned to the person(s) paying it if the Settlement is rescinded, terminated, vacated, voided, or the Effective Date does not arise for any other reason.

3.4. **Fund Administration.** The Settlement Administrator, subject to such supervision and direction of the Court as may be necessary, shall be responsible for and shall administer and oversee the distribution of the Total Class Benefit, Cash Fund, and Net Distributable Settlement Fund under the terms of the Agreement.

3.5. **Reallocation for Opt-Outs.** Subject to the provisions in Paragraph 8, if any Cash Settlement Sub-Class Members timely opt out and exclude themselves from the Settlement, the portion of the Net Distributable Settlement Fund attributable to said “opt outs” remain a part of the Net Distributable Settlement Fund and will be reallocated to the Cash Settlement Sub-Class Members *pro rata*. The Parties shall submit any required revisions to the Court prior to the Final Hearing Date.

3.6. **Cash Settlement Sub-Class Member Benefits.** The Settlement Administrator and/or Class Counsel shall calculate the Total Class Benefit, Cash Fund and Net Distributable Settlement Fund and the Settlement Administrator shall distribute the Net Distributable Settlement Fund to the Cash Settlement Sub-Class Members in the pro rata amounts set forth in Paragraph 1.4, or as the Court may otherwise determine and approve. Such distributions to the Settlement Class Members are referred to and defined as the “Cash Settlement Sub-Class Member Payments.” The Settlement Administrator shall distribute the Cash Settlement Sub-Class Member Payments within thirty (30) days after the Effective Date by checks mailed to the Cash Settlement Sub-Class Members. The Settlement Administrator will re-mail any returned check to any new address disclosed. If any new check is returned a second time, or if any unreturned check is deemed void, the Settlement Administrator shall undertake reasonable efforts to locate a current address for the Cash Settlement Sub-Class Member.

3.7. **Check Expiration.** Following the expiration of ninety (90) days after the Effective Date, all checks first issued to the Cash Settlement Sub-Class Members as a Cash Settlement Sub-Class Member Payment not cashed or negotiated will be deemed void, and the Settlement Administrator shall stop payment on such checks. Following the expiration of 180 days after the Effective Date, all checks reissued to the Cash Settlement Sub-Class Members as a Cash

Settlement Sub-Class Member Payment not cashed or negotiated will be deemed void, and the Settlement Administrator shall stop payment on such checks. All portions of the Net Distributable Settlement Fund remaining 180 days after the Effective Date, less any costs or expenses associated with stopping payment on such checks, shall revert and be paid to Wakefield.

3.8. **Allocation of Class Member Payments.** For purposes of issuing Settlement Checks, payment to joint or co-debtors shall be divided equally between co-debtors and a separate check shall be sent to each co-debtor. Any Settlement Checks for Cash Settlement Sub-Class Members who are joint or co-debtors shall be issued and shall be mailed to the last known address. Any Cash Settlement Sub-Class Member who receives a payment under the Settlement shall be solely responsible for distributing or allocating such payment between or among all co-debtors on his, her, or their debt account, regardless of whether a payment check has been made payable to all or only some of the Cash Settlement Sub-Class Member's co-debtors. All Cash Settlement Sub-Class Members represent and warrant he or she is entitled to receipt of the Cash Settlement Sub-Class Member Payment and has not assigned by operation of law or otherwise the right to receipt of the Cash Settlement Sub-Class Member Payment. The Cash Settlement Sub-Class Members shall, upon receipt of any Cash Settlement Sub-Class Member Payment, remit the payment to any persons having received by assignment or operation of law any right, title, or interest to or in the Cash Settlement Sub-Class Member Payment.

3.9. **No Responsibility.** The Released Persons shall have no responsibility for, interest in, or liability regarding the investment, allocation or distribution of the Net Distributable Settlement Fund, the determination, administration, calculation, or payment of claims, tax liability, the payment or withholding of taxes, or any losses in connection with the Net Distributable Settlement Fund or the implementation of this Settlement.

3.10. **Bankruptcy.** If a Settlement Class Member has filed for bankruptcy, the Settlement Class Member shall be solely responsible for providing any required notice to the bankruptcy trustee or Bankruptcy Court of the Settlement and any Cash Settlement Sub-Class Member Payment or Debt Relief Settlement Sub-Class Benefit received under the Agreement.

3.11. **Debt Relief Settlement Sub-Class Benefit.** Promptly upon the Effective Date of the Agreement, Wakefield will execute and distribute Debt Relief Settlement Sub-Class Benefits to all Debt Relief Sub-Class Members in the pro rata amounts set forth in Paragraph 1.9 above, or as the Court may otherwise determine and approve. The Debt Relief Settlement Sub-Class Benefits shall operate to reduce the remaining outstanding debt balances and obligations to make payments thereon as of the Effective Date in the amounts specified in Paragraph 1.9 above for all Debt Relief Settlement Sub-Class Members. Wakefield will cease all collections and attempts to collect monies which constitute Debt Relief Settlement Sub-Class Benefits. Upon Preliminary Approval being granted, Wakefield shall not accept payments for any amounts of Debt Relief Settlement Sub-Class Members' deficiency balances which constitute a Debt Relief Settlement Sub-Class Benefit and will return any payment received thereon by returning the payment instrument to the sender. If final approval is not granted, all collections and payment obligations on monies constituting Debt Relief Settlement Sub-Class Benefits shall be retained by Wakefield. The Debt Relief Settlement Sub-Class Members shall be specifically informed by way of the Class Mail Notice of the potential tax consequences of the proposed settlement. Wakefield estimates the total value of Debt Relief Settlement Sub-Class Benefits owed to the Debt Relief Settlement Sub-Class Members to be estimated at \$1,926,803.00, which shall be included as part of the Total Class Benefit.

3.12. **Credit Reporting by Wakefield.** Within thirty (30) days after the Effective Date of the Agreement, Wakefield will submit to the national credit reporting agencies (Experian,

Equifax, and TransUnion) (the "Credit Bureaus"), through an electronic file, a request to delete the tradeline for each debt and/or judgment that is the subject of this Settlement. The Parties acknowledge the Credit Bureaus are separate and distinct from Wakefield. The Parties acknowledge that Wakefield can request, but cannot guarantee, warrant, or take responsibility for the Credit Bureaus regarding changing, deleting, suppressing, or making entries regarding any credit information or other information regarding the Class Members' accounts concerning any debt owed to Wakefield. Provided Wakefield has undertaken its obligations in this Paragraph 3.12, Class Representative and the Class Members waive all claims, whether arising in contract or tort, common law or statute, and/or federal or state law (including, but not limited to, claims for any damages, attorneys' fees and/or costs) against Released Persons that may arise subsequent to the Agreement or which arise out of or relate to actions required to be taken by Wakefield under this provision. If an item fails to get deleted or the reporting reoccurs on any account involved in this Litigation after Wakefield's initial request, the only remedy of the Class Members as to Released Parties for the failure of any consumer or credit reporting agencies to amend the consumer or credit report is to request in writing that Wakefield again request that its tradeline be deleted as to the relevant debt account. It shall solely be the obligation of the individual Class Members to review their respective credit reports with the consumer or credit reporting agencies to ensure that the consumer or credit reporting agencies have complied with Wakefield's request to delete the tradeline.

3.13. **Taxes.** Rebecca Batcheller and her attorneys acknowledge and agree the Class Members are solely responsible for the payment of any and all federal, state, city or local taxes which might be due and owing as a result of any term contained in this agreement. The Parties acknowledge that no tax advice has been offered or given by either party, their attorneys, agents,

or any other representatives, in the course of these negotiations, and each party is relying upon the advice of its own tax consultant with regard to any tax consequences that may arise as a result of the execution of this agreement.

3.14. **Settlement Administrator.** Any costs, fees, and expenses, including but not limited to class administration, shall be paid by Wakefield as a condition of this Agreement.

4. Incentive Award, Attorneys' Fees and Costs and No Publicity

4.1. **Incentive Award.** Class Counsel and/or Class Representative may petition the Court for the payment of an incentive award in a total amount not to exceed \$25,000.00 (Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars and Zero Cents) for Rebecca Batcheller in recognition of services rendered for the benefit of the Settlement Class throughout the Litigation. Any such incentive award shall be in addition to the amount to be paid on her individual claims. Any incentive award approved by the Court shall be paid from the Cash Fund and not in addition to it. Any incentive award approved by the Court shall be deducted from the Cash Fund and distributed to the Class Representative within thirty (30) days of the Effective Date of the Agreement. Wakefield will not object to the Class Representative applying to the Court for and/or receiving an incentive award in the above-stated amount. The Class Representative shall provide a form W-9 to the Settlement Administrator prior to having the Settlement Administrator issue the award.

4.2. **Cost Award.** Class Counsel and/or Class Representative may petition the Court for an award of litigation costs and expenses. Any such litigation costs and expenses will be paid from the Cash fund and distributed to Class Counsel within seven (7) days of the Effective Date of the Agreement. Wakefield will not object to Class Counsel or Class Representative applying to the Court for and receiving an award of litigation costs and expenses from the Cash Fund.

4.3. **Fee Award.** Class Counsel and/or Class Representative may also petition the Court for an award of attorney's fees based on a percentage of the Total Class Benefit. Any such fee award approved by the Court will be paid from the Cash Fund and distributed to Class Counsel within seven (7) days of the Effective Date of the Agreement. Wakefield will not object to Class Counsel or Class Representative applying to the Court for, and receiving an award of, attorneys' fees not to exceed \$600,000.00 (Six Hundred Thousand Dollars and Zero Cents), approximately 22% of the Total Class Benefit.

4.4. **No Allocation Liability.** Wakefield shall have no liability or other responsibility for the allocation of the attorneys' fees and expenses among and between Class Counsel and any other counsel for Class Representative or Settlement Class Members, or with respect to the incentive award to the Class Representative. In the event that any dispute arises relating to the allocation of the attorneys' fees and expenses or the incentive award, Class Counsel and Class Representative agree that they are barred from suing or asserting any claim against Wakefield and the Released Persons related to or arising out of in any way the attorneys' fees and expenses or the incentive award.

4.5. **Satisfaction for Payment of Fees and Expenses.** The payment of the attorneys' fees and expenses as described in this Settlement Agreement shall constitute full satisfaction of Wakefield's and the Released Persons' alleged obligation to pay any person, attorney, or law firm, for attorneys' fees, costs and expenses incurred on behalf of the Class Representative and the Settlement Class Members, and shall relieve Wakefield and the Released Persons from any other claims or liability to pay any other attorney or law firm or person for attorney's fees, expenses and costs to which any person may claim to be entitled related to the Released Claims.

4.6. **No Publicity.** Class Counsel agrees, as part of the consideration for this Settlement, it will not in any way publicize this Settlement other than providing the class notices as specifically set forth herein or by Court Order. As such, Class Counsel shall not publicize the Settlement, nor will they issue any press releases or speak to the press about the litigation and/or Settlement other than to direct them to the Class Notice provided for herein.

5. Releases

5.1. **Final Release.** Upon Wakefield's compliance with its obligations under this Agreement, Releasers, by operation of the Agreement and the judgment in the Final Order and Judgment, shall be deemed without further action by any person or the Court, (i) to have fully, finally and forever released, settled, compromised, relinquished, and discharged all of the Released Persons of all Released Claims; (ii) and to be forever barred and enjoined from instituting or further prosecuting in any forum including, but not limited to, any state, federal, or foreign court, or regulatory agency, the Released Claims. The Parties agree that the Released Persons will suffer irreparable harm if any Settlement Class Member takes actions inconsistent with this release, and that the Released Persons may seek an injunction on such action without further showing of irreparable harm. This provision shall not apply to any defenses or affirmative defenses a Settlement Class Member may assert against Wakefield as a defense in any action or litigation with Wakefield.

5.2. **Known and Unknown Claims.** The Releasers acknowledge and agree that they know they may discover material or immaterial facts besides or different from those which they now know or believe to be true regarding the subject matter of the Release, but they intend to and do, upon the Effective Date of the Agreement, fully, finally and forever settle and release each and every of the Released Persons from every Released Claim, known or unknown, suspected or

unsuspected, accrued or not accrued, contingent or matured, which now exists, may exist, or may heretofore have existed, without regard to the subsequent discovery or existence of such different or additional facts.

5.3. **Claims of Wakefield and Defenses of Class Members Not Released.** This Agreement, the Settlement, and the Released Claims shall not affect any claim that Wakefield may have against any Settlement Class Member for any deficiency balance owed by any Settlement Class Member (a “Wakefield Claim”). Neither this Agreement nor the Settlement shall give rise to any claim or cause of action by any Settlement Class Member against Wakefield, its agents, or attorneys. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Agreement or the Settlement, Settlement Class Members, Class Representative, and Class Counsel acknowledge and agree that no Wakefield Claim against Class Representative or any Settlement Class Member will be barred by the compulsory counterclaim rule, res judicata, collateral estoppel, claim preclusion, or issue preclusion as a result of the Litigation or Settlement. The Preliminary Approval Order, Class Mail Notice, Long-Form Notice, and Final Approval Order will all contain notices and judicial findings disclosing the terms of this paragraph. The releases contained herein shall not prevent Class Members from asserting any defense or affirmative defense against Wakefield in defense of any claim made by Wakefield against a Class Member.

5.4. **Binding.** Subject to Court approval, each Settlement Class Member shall be bound by the Agreement and all of their claims shall be dismissed with prejudice and released even if they never received actual, prior notice of the Litigation or the Settlement in the Class Mail Notice or otherwise. The Release and agreements in this paragraph shall apply to and bind all Settlement Class Members, including those Settlement Class Members whose Class Mail Notices are returned as undeliverable, and those for whom no current address can be found.

5.5. **Generality of the Release.** Nothing in this section is intended to limit the generality of the release and covenant not to sue set forth above. If a Settlement Class Member seeks, in a separate action or proceeding, relief that would be inconsistent with the terms of this Settlement Agreement, Wakefield or any Released Party may by affidavit or otherwise in writing, advise the other Parties and the court or other forum in which such action or proceeding is brought, that such relief in that action or proceeding is unwarranted. If requested by Wakefield or any Released Party, the Class Representative or Class Counsel shall also advise the Court or other forum in which such action or proceeding is brought, in writing, that such relief in that action or proceeding is unwarranted. Provided that, since this Settlement Agreement provides for review by the Court, any of the Parties hereto may recommend that matters raised in such separate action or proceeding should be submitted to the Court for resolution under the terms of this Settlement Agreement.

6. Representations and Stipulations

6.1. **Wakefield's Representations.** Wakefield represents, warrants, and declares under oath that:

6.1.1. it has acted in good faith and has used its best efforts in identifying the members of the Settlement Class;

6.1.2. to the best of its actual knowledge, there are no members of the Settlement Class other than those identified; and

6.2. **Class Counsel's Representations.** Except for their clients in the Litigation, Class Counsel represents and warrants to Wakefield that Class Counsel has not been retained by any client to commence a new lawsuit or pursue any claims or right of relief against Wakefield regarding any of the Released Claims. In addition, Class Counsel agrees that they will not solicit the right to legally represent any member or members of the Settlement Class who opt(s) out of

the Settlement Class regarding the Released Claims unless the Agreement terminates or does not become effective. Class Counsel also warrant they do not presently have any intention of seeking to represent any clients who have, or claim to have, any claims against any of the Released Persons.

7. Preliminary Approval Order

The Parties shall promptly move the Court for a Preliminary Approval Order that:

7.1. Preliminarily approves the proposed Settlement Class under Missouri Supreme Court Rules 52.08 for settlement purposes only;

7.2. Preliminarily approves the Agreement as fair, reasonable and adequate under Missouri Supreme Court Rule 52.08 subject to a final determination by the Court;

7.3. Approves the appointment of a Class Representative as representative of the Settlement Class;

7.4. Approves the appointment of Class Counsel as counsel for the Settlement Class;

7.5. Stays all proceedings in the Litigation, enjoins the prosecution by Settlement Class Members who do not timely and validly exclude themselves from this Settlement of any non-filed or pending individual or class claims asserting any claim(s) encompassed by the claims released above;

7.6. Approves a form of mailed notice substantially like the Class Mail Notices attached hereto as **Exhibit A** to be sent to the members of the Settlement Class by first-class mail or email at the best updated address available to Wakefield or any better subsequent address determined by the Settlement Administrator;

7.7. Approves a Long-Form Notice substantially like the form attached hereto as **Exhibit B** that contains more extensive information than the Class Mail Notice and that will be provided to members of the Settlement Class by request and on a website;

7.8. Directs the Administrator to mail the Class Mail Notice promptly after entry by the Court of the Preliminary Approval Order to the Settlement Class by first-class mail or email to the last known address of such persons and to provide the Long-Form Notice to members of the Settlement Class on a website or otherwise if Settlement Class Members request it;

7.9. Schedules a hearing for final approval of the Agreement;

7.10. Establishes a procedure for members of the Settlement Class to opt out and setting a date, thirty (30) days after the date of the mailing of the Class Mail Notices or earlier as the Court directs, after which no member of the Settlement Class shall be allowed to opt out of the Settlement Class;

7.11. Establishing a procedure for members of the Settlement Class to appear and/or object to the Settlement and setting a date, thirty (30) days after the date of the mailing of the Class Mail Notices or earlier as the Court directs, after which no member of the Settlement Class shall be allowed to object; and

7.12. Containing such other provisions consistent with the terms and provisions of the Agreement as the Court may deem advisable.

8. Opt-Outs and Objections by Members of the Settlement Class

8.1. **Procedure for Opt-Out Requests.** The deadline for opt-out requests shall be set forth in the Preliminary Approval Order. Any request to opt out must be in writing and must include the name, address, telephone number, last four digits of the Social Security Number of the Settlement Class Member seeking to opt out, and a statement that the Settlement Class Member and all other co-debtors named on the Settlement Class Member's debt account and/or co-defendants named in the Settlement Class Member's underlying debt collection action with Wakefield are seeking exclusion. Any opt-out request must be signed by each person who was/is

a party to the applicable debt account and/or named co-defendant in the debt collection action that is the subject of this Litigation, unless such person is deceased. If a co-debtor or named co-defendant is deceased, a copy of the death certificate for such person shall be submitted with the opt-out request. Any opt-out request must include a reference to “Rebecca Batcheller v. Wakefield & Associates, Inc., Case No. 2116-CV24281” and be mailed to the Settlement Administrator. Class Counsel will cause the Settlement Administrator to send all opt-out requests to Class Counsel and Wakefield’s counsel via email within five (5) days after receiving said requests. To be timely and effective, any opt-out request must be postmarked by the date established by the Court in the Preliminary Approval Order. No member of the Settlement Class may opt out by having a request to opt out submitted and signed by an actual or purported agent or attorney acting on behalf of the Settlement Class Member. No opt-out request may be made on behalf of a group of Settlement Class Members. Each member of the Settlement Class not submitting an opt-out request that substantially complies with Paragraph 8 shall be included in the Settlement Class and deemed a Settlement Class Member. The Settlement Administrator shall provide to the Court, by the date of the Final Approval Hearing, a list of all persons, by reference to a unique identifier or the last four digits of their Social Security Number, who have timely and adequately filed a request to be excluded from the Settlement.

8.2. **Opt-Out Limit.** If ten percent (10%) or more of the class opts out of the Settlement, then the Parties will have twenty-one (21) days to determine whether to withdraw from the settlement. If the option to rescind is exercised, then the Settlement Agreement is void, and the Parties shall return to the status quo as if the Parties had not entered into the Settlement Agreement, and nothing contained in the Agreement or the settlement negotiations shall be discoverable or admissible in Court. If the option to rescind is exercised then Wakefield shall have the right to

contest the certification of a class, and this Agreement may not be used as evidence or otherwise be used in any court filing or proceeding. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this Agreement, if Wakefield elects to rescind this Agreement under Paragraph 8.2, Wakefield will reimburse Class Counsel for the documented expenses and costs actually incurred in connection with seeking approval of this Agreement before Wakefield exercised its unilateral rescission right.

8.3. Procedure for Objections to Settlement. Any member of the Settlement Class who wishes to object to the Settlement or to the incentive awards or the awards of expenses, costs and/or attorneys' fees must file a written notice of objection, including supporting papers as described further below (collectively referred to as the "Notice of Objection"), with the Court on or prior to the date established by the Court in the Preliminary Approval Order. To determine timeliness, a Notice of Objection shall be deemed to have been submitted when received and filed with the Clerk of Court. Copies of the Notice of Objection must also be postmarked by the date established by the Court in the Preliminary Approval Order, which shall be no later than ten (10) days before the Final Hearing Date:

Timothy J. Wolf, Esq.
Watters Wolf Bub & Hansmann, LLC
600 Kellwood Parkway, Suite 120
St. Louis, Missouri 63017

(on behalf of the Settlement Class)

and

James M. Brodzik, Esq.
Hinshaw & Culbertson, LLP
701 Market St., Suite 260
St. Louis, Missouri 63101

(on behalf of Wakefield)

The Notice of Objection must be in writing and shall specifically include:

- (i) The name, address, telephone number, facsimile number (if available), email address (if available) and last four digits of the Social Security Number of the Settlement Class Member filing the objection;
- (ii) A statement of each objection asserted;
- (iii) A detailed description of the facts underlying each objection;
- (iv) Any debt or court documents in the possession or control of the objector and relied upon by the objector as a basis for the objection;
- (v) If the objector is represented by counsel, the name, address, telephone number, facsimile number (if available) and email address (if available) of the counsel, and a detailed description of the legal authorities supporting each objection;
- (vi) If the objector plans to utilize expert opinion and/or testimony as part of the objection(s), a written expert report from all proposed experts that outlines each of the expert's opinions and the factual and substantive bases thereof;
- (vii) If the objector plans to call a witness or present other evidence at the hearing, the objector must state the identity of the witness and identify any documentary evidence by attaching the documents to the objection, and the objector must provide any other evidence that the objector intends to present;
- (viii) A statement of whether the objector intends to appear at the hearing;
- (ix) A copy of the exhibits which the objector may offer during the hearing;
- (x) A reference to "Rebecca Batcheller v. Wakefield & Associates, Inc., Case No. 2116-CV24281"; and
- (xi) **A certification under 28 U.S.C. § 1746 or similar state law in substantially the following form: "I declare (or certify, verify, or state) under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on (date). (Signature)".**

Attendance at the final hearing by an objector is optional. Any Settlement Class Member who does not make his or her objection in the manner provided shall be deemed to have waived such objection and shall forever be foreclosed from making any objection to the fairness, adequacy, or reasonableness of the proposed settlement or any other provision of the Agreement. The agreed-

upon procedures and requirements for filing objections should ensure the efficient administration of justice and the orderly presentation of any Settlement Class Members' objections to the Agreement, in accordance with such Settlement Class Members' due process rights. The Preliminary Approval Order and Long-Form Notice shall require all Settlement Class Members who have any objections to serve by mail or hand-delivery such objection upon Class Counsel and Wakefield's counsel at the addresses in the Long-Form Notice no later than the objection date set by the Court. If the objecting Settlement Class Member opts to serve the objection upon Class Counsel and Wakefield's Counsel by mail, the objection must be postmarked by no later than the objection date set by the Court. The Preliminary Approval Order shall further provide that objectors who fail to properly or timely file their objections with the Clerk of the Court with the required information and documentation, or fail to serve them, shall not be heard during any hearings, nor shall their objections be considered by the Court.

Under no circumstances shall Wakefield, Class Counsel, the Class Representative, or the Released Persons be responsible for paying any monies or other consideration to objectors and/or counsel for objectors under the terms of this Settlement Agreement or otherwise.

9. Final Approval Order and Final Judgment

9.1. **Final Approval Order.** Class Representative, Class Counsel, and Wakefield agree they will request the Court to enter, after the hearing on final approval of the Agreement, a Final Approval Order certifying the Settlement Class and finding that the Agreement is fair, reasonable, and adequate and in the best interest of the Settlement Class and ordering the Parties to carry out the Agreement.

9.2. **Final Judgment.** Class Representative and Class Counsel agree they will request the Court to enter a Final Judgment dismissing all claims and motions of Wakefield and the

Settlement Class on the merits and with prejudice, declare the Settlement Class Members are bound by the Releases in Paragraph 5, and note the Court's decision to reserve continuing jurisdiction over the enforcement of the Agreement and the Settle Administrator and distribution of the Settlement Funds.

9.3. **Final Accounting.** The Settlement Administrator, with the assistance of Class Counsel, shall file a final accounting with the Court within three hundred (300) days after the Effective Date. This final accounting shall contain a summary of all the distributions of the Cash Fund. Upon receipt of the final accounting, the Court, if satisfied with such report, shall file a Notice of Acceptance of Final Accounting indicating the Court's approval. If the Court requires clarification or additional information, the Parties shall furnish such information within ten (10) business days after such request or within the timeframe ordered by the Court.

10. Certifications to the Court

10.1. **Affidavit about Initial Notice Mailing.** By the Final Hearing Date, the Settlement Administrator shall file with the Court an affidavit verifying the Court-approved Class Mail Notices have been sent by first-class mail and the Long-Form Notice has been provided to members of the Settlement Class on a website or otherwise upon the request of Settlement Class members.

10.2. **Affidavit about Undeliverable Notices.** By the Final Hearing Date, the Settlement Administrator shall file with the Court an affidavit verifying it has complied with the procedures described in Paragraph 13 regarding all Class Mail Notices returned as undeliverable.

11. Effectiveness of Settlement Agreement

The "Effective Date" of the Agreement shall be the date when each and all of the following conditions have occurred:

11.1. A Final Approval Order has been entered by the Court.

11.2. A Final Judgment has been entered by the Court.

11.3. The Final Approval Order and the Final Judgment entered have become final for purposes of appeal because of (i) the expiration of the time for appeals therefrom with no appeal having been taken or, (ii) if review of the order, or any portion thereof, is sought by any person, the matter has been fully and finally resolved by the appellate court(s) and the time for seeking any higher level of appellate review has expired.

11.4. If any material portion of the Agreement, the Final Approval Order, or the final Judgment is vacated, modified, or otherwise materially altered on appeal, any Party, within seven (7) days after such appellate ruling, declare that the Agreement has failed to become effective and in such circumstances the Agreement shall cease to be of any force and effect as provided in Paragraph 12.

11.5. Once all obligations of Wakefield have been completed as required by the Agreement, Class Counsel shall file a Satisfaction of Judgment in this case within ten (10) days after Wakefield affirms in writing that all obligations of Wakefield have been completed as required by the Agreement.

12. Failure of Condition

If the Agreement fails to become effective, the orders, judgment, and dismissal to be entered under the Agreement shall be null and void or otherwise vacated, and the Parties will be returned to the status quo as if the Agreement had never been entered. In addition, the Agreement and all negotiations, court orders and proceedings relating to the Agreement shall be without prejudice to the rights of all Parties, and evidence relating to the Agreement and all negotiations shall not be admissible or discoverable.

13. Class Mail Notice Forms

13.1. **Address Update.** Before mailing the Class Mail Notices, the Settlement Administrator will update the addresses by the United States Postal Service's National Change of Address database or another address database service (e.g., Accurint, Intelius). The Settlement Administrator will re-mail any returned notices to any new address disclosed. If any notice is returned a second time, the Settlement Administrator shall undertake reasonable efforts to locate a current address for the Settlement Class Members. The portion of the Net Distributable Settlement Fund attributable to where the Settlement Administrator is unable to obtain a current address shall remain a part of the Net Distributable fund and will be reallocated to the Settlement Class Members with valid current addresses on a *pro rata* basis. The Class Mail Notices shall be mailed within the later of fourteen (14) days after entry of the Preliminary Approval Order or seven (7) days after Wakefield provides Class Counsel with the Class List as directed by the Court. Also, within fourteen (14) days after the Preliminary Approval Order, the Settlement Administrator will provide the Court-approved Long-Form Notice on a website the Settlement Class Members can access. If requested by any member of the Settlement Class, the Settlement Administrator shall also mail a copy of the Long-Form Notice to the requesting member by first-class mail.

13.2. **Release Regardless of Receipt of Notice.** Subject to Court approval, all Settlement Class Members shall be bound by the Agreement and the Released Claims shall be released even if a Settlement Class Member never received actual notice of the Litigation or the Settlement. Further, the Parties expressly acknowledge and agree that a Final Judgment shall be entered by the Court barring re-litigation of the Released Claims, regardless of whether the claims were asserted, to the fullest extent of the law, and that any judgment shall be entitled to Full Faith and Credit in any other court, tribunal, forum, including arbitration forum, or agency.

14. Qualified Settlement Fund

14.1. **Treasury Regulations.** The Cash Fund shall constitute a “qualified settlement fund” (“QSF”) within the meaning of Treasury Regulation Section 1.468B-1 promulgated under Section 468B of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 as amended. The Settlement Administrator shall be the “administrator” within the meaning of Treasury Regulation § 1.468B-2(k)(3).

14.2. **EIN.** Upon establishment of the QSF, the Settlement Administrator shall apply for an employer identification number for the QSF utilizing Internal Revenue Service Form SS-4 and in accordance with Treasury Regulation § 1.468-2(k)(4).

14.3. **Relation-Back Election.** If requested by Wakefield or the Settlement Administrator, the Settlement Administrator and Wakefield shall fully cooperate in filing a relation-back election under Treasury Regulation § 1.468B-1(j)(2) to treat the QSF as coming into existence as a settlement fund as of the earliest possible date.

14.4. **Tax Returns and Statements.** Class counsel shall cause the Settlement Administrator to file, on behalf of the QSF, all required federal, state, and local tax returns, information returns and tax withholdings statements under Treasury Regulation § 1.468B-2(k)(1) and Treasury Regulation § 1.468B-2(1)(2)(ii).

15. General Provisions

15.1. **Best Efforts to Effectuate Settlement.** The Parties’ counsel shall use their best efforts to cause the Court to give Preliminary Approval to this Agreement as promptly as practicable, to take all steps contemplated by this Agreement to effectuate the settlement on the stated terms and conditions and to obtain Final Approval of this Agreement.

15.2. **Entire Agreement.** This Agreement constitutes the full, complete, and entire understanding, agreement, and arrangement of and between the Class Representative and the

Settlement Class Members and Wakefield regarding the Settlement and the Released Claims against the Released Persons. The Agreement supersedes all prior oral or written understandings, agreements, and arrangements between the Parties regarding the Settlement and the Released Claims against the Released Persons. Except for those set forth expressly in the Agreement, there are no agreements, covenants, promises, representations, or arrangements between the Parties regarding the Settlement and/or the Released Claims against the Released Persons.

15.3. **Modification in Writing.** This Agreement may be altered, amended, modified, or waived, in whole or in part, only in a writing signed by all Parties, and approved by the Court, if necessary. The Agreement may not be amended, altered, modified, or waived, in whole or in part, orally.

15.4. **Ongoing Cooperation.** The Parties hereto shall execute all documents and perform all acts necessary and proper to effectuate the Agreement. The execution of documents must take place prior to the Final Hearing Date.

15.5. **Duplicate Originals/Execution in Counterparts.** All Parties, Class Counsel and Wakefield's Counsel shall sign two copies of the Agreement, and each such copy shall constitute an original. The Agreement may be signed in one or more counterparts. All executed copies of the Settlement Agreement and photocopies thereof (including facsimile copies of the signature pages) shall have the same force and effect and shall be as legally binding and enforceable as the original.

15.6. **No Reliance.** Each Party to the Agreement warrants he, she or it is acting upon his, her, or its independent judgment and upon the advice of his, her, or its own counsel and not in reliance upon any warranty or representation, express or implied, of any nature or kind by any other party, other than the warranties and representations made in the Agreement.

15.7. **Governing Law.** The Agreement shall be interpreted, construed, enforced, and administered under the laws of Missouri, without regard to conflict of laws rules. The Agreement shall be enforced in the Circuit Court of Jackson County, Missouri. Class Representative and the Settlement Class Members waive any objection that each such party has to the venue of such suit, action, or proceeding and irrevocably consent to the jurisdiction of the Circuit Court of Jackson County, Missouri in any such suit, action or proceeding, and agree to accept and acknowledge service of all process which may be served in any such suit, action or proceeding.

15.8. **Reservation of Jurisdiction.** The Parties agree that the Court should retain jurisdiction to enforce the terms of the Agreement.

15.9. **Binding on Successors.** Upon execution, the Agreement shall bind and shall inure to the benefit of the Parties and their respective successors, assigns, executors, administrators, heirs, and legal representatives.

15.10. **Mutual Preparation.** The Agreement shall not be construed more strictly against one party than another merely because it may have been prepared by counsel for one of the Parties, it being recognized that because of the arm's length negotiations between the Parties, all Parties have contributed to the preparation of the Agreement.

15.11. **Gender Neutrality.** All personal pronouns used in the Agreement, whether used in the masculine, feminine or neutral gender, shall include all other genders, and the singular shall include the plural and vice versa.

15.12. **Taxes.** All Settlement Class Members are responsible for any tax consequences, including federal, state, and local income taxes that may be due on any payments made to them or any credits to their accounts provided by this Agreement.

15.13. **Authority.** Each of the Parties to the Agreement represents, covenants and warrants that (a) they have the full power and authority to enter into and consummate all transactions contemplated by the Agreement and have duly authorized the execution, delivery and performance of the Agreement and (b) the person executing the Agreement has the full right, power and authority to enter into the Agreement on behalf of the party for whom he/she has executed the Agreement, and the full right, power and authority to execute all necessary instruments, and to fully bind such party to the terms and obligations of the Agreement.

15.14. **Exhibits.** The exhibits attached to the Agreement are incorporated as though fully set forth in the Agreement.

15.15. **Own Fees and Costs.** Except as otherwise provided in this Agreement, each Party shall bear her or its own attorneys' fees, costs, and expenses in the prosecution, defense, or settlement of this Litigation.

15.16. **Miscellaneous.** The terms of the Settlement shall not be disclosed or advertised by any Party or their attorneys to the general public, and any disclosure shall be limited to the Court only as necessary to obtain court approval or as otherwise required by the Court and to the Class Members only in the Class Notice as approved by all parties and the Court. Neither this Agreement nor this paragraph nor any court order entered pursuant to this Settlement, including but not limited to the Preliminary Approval Order and the Final Approval Order, may be cited as authority or precedent involving either Party and shall not stand as support of a motion for class certification in any other case against Wakefield where certification is contested.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned, being duly authorized, have caused the Agreement to be executed as of the ____ day of _____, 2023.

[SIGNATURE PAGE FOLLOWS]

Dated: October 31, 2023

Rebecca Batcheller

Rebecca Batcheller

Rebecca Batcheller, for herself and the
Settlement Class Members

**Wakefield + Associates, LLC fka
Wakefield & Associates, Inc.**

Dated: October 30, 2023

By: Karen M. Schreiber Eliason

Name: Karen M. Schreiber Eliason

Title: General Counsel / Chief Compliance
Officer

Class Counsel

Dated: October 31, 2023

By: [Signature]

Wakefield's Counsel

Dated: October 31, 2023

By: [Signature]

EXHIBITS AND SCHEDULES

Exhibit A – Class Mail Notice

Exhibit B – Long Form Mail Notice

Exhibit C – Class List