

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

CASE NO. 0:18-cv-62108-CMA

DANIEL GERSTENHABER,  
individually and on behalf of all  
others similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

CLASS ACTION

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

v.

GALLERIA FITNESS CLUB, LLC  
d/b/a POWERHOUSE GYM FORT  
LAUDERDALE,

Defendant.

---

**PLAINTIFF'S UNOPPOSED MOTION FOR PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF  
CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT AND INCORPORATED MEMORANDUM OF LAW**

Plaintiff Daniel Gerstenhaber ("Plaintiff"), on behalf of himself and a class of similarly situated persons, and with the consent of Defendants Galleria Fitness Club, LLC d/b/a Powerhouse Gym Fort Lauderdale ("Galleria Fitness") and Clayton G. Flotz ("Mr. Flotz") (collectively referred to as "Defendants"), respectfully requests the entry of an order granting preliminary approval of the class action settlement set forth in the Parties' Settlement Agreement ("Settlement Agreement" or "Agreement"), certifying a class for settlement purposes, and providing for issuance of Notice to the Settlement Class.<sup>1</sup>

**I. INTRODUCTION**

The Settlement Agreement makes \$600,000.00 available to the Settlement Class, which will also be used to pay the costs of Settlement Administration and Notice Administration. If approved, the Settlement will bring an end to what has otherwise been, and likely would continue to be, contentious litigation centered on unsettled legal questions.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Agreement is attached as *Exhibit A*. All capitalized terms used herein have the same definitions as those defined in the Agreement.

This motion seeks the entry of an order providing for, among other things:

1. Preliminary Approval of the Settlement;
2. Provisional certification of a Settlement Class and appointment of the Plaintiff as Class Representative and Plaintiff's counsel as Class Counsel;
3. Approval of the Settlement Administrator;
4. Approval of the Notice program describing:
  - a. The Settlement and the Settlement Class members' rights with respect to the Settlement;
  - b. The proposed Release of claims;
  - c. Class Counsel's request for attorneys' fees and expenses, as well a Service Award for the Class Representative; and
  - d. The procedure for opting-out of or objecting to the Settlement;
5. Approval of the Claims process; and
6. The scheduling of a Final Approval Hearing to consider Final Approval of the Settlement.

The Parties' proposed Settlement is exceedingly fair and well within the range of Preliminary Approval for several reasons. *See* Declaration of Manuel Hiraldo ¶ 2, attached hereto as *Exhibit B*. First, it provides relief for Settlement Class Members where their recovery, if any, would otherwise be uncertain, especially given Defendants' ability and willingness to continue its vigorous defense of the case and the unsettled questions of law presented. Second, the Settlement was reached only after first engaging in extensive pre-litigation discovery, formal discovery, and extensive arm's-length negotiations. Third, the Settlement was not conditioned on any amount of attorneys' fees for Class Counsel or Service Award for Plaintiff, which speaks to the fundamental fairness of the process. Hiraldo Decl. ¶ 3.

For all of these reasons, and as further described below, Plaintiff respectfully requests that the Court preliminarily approve the Settlement.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

### **a. Facts**

The Telephone Consumer Protection Act, 47 U.S.C. § 227 ("TCPA"), and its implementing regulations were enacted by Congress and the Federal Communications Commission to "offer

consumers greater protection from intrusive telemarketing calls....”<sup>2</sup> Plaintiff alleges that Defendants delivered approximately 14,000 text messages to Plaintiff and other individuals. Plaintiff alleges that these texts violated the TCPA because the messages were sent to consumers using an automatic telephone dialing system without prior express consent. Defendants deny any wrong doing, deny that Mr. Flotz is a proper party, and have raised constitutional questions regarding the TCPA, especially in view of the content of the message.

**b. Procedural History**

On September 6, 2018, Plaintiff initiated this litigation against Galleria Fitness in the United States District Court for the Southern District of Florida, alleging violations of the TCPA, and seeking, *inter alia*, monetary damages. [DE #1]. On October 15, 2018, Galleria Fitness filed its Answer and Affirmative Defenses. [DE #15]. On December 7, 2018, Plaintiff filed a Motion for Leave to File his First Amended Complaint and add Mr. Flotz as a Defendant to this action. [DE #33]. On December 12, 2018, the Court granted Plaintiff’s Motion for Leave. [DE #37]. On December 26, 2018, Defendants filed a Motion to Dismiss with Prejudice. [DE #49]. On January 9, 2019, the parties conducted a deposition in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. After extensive settlement negotiations through experienced counsel following the deposition, the Parties reached a settlement in principle. [DE #55].

**III. SUMMARY OF THE SETTLEMENT TERMS**

The following is a summary of the material terms of the Settlement.

**a. The Settlement Class**

The proposed Settlement establishes a Settlement Class as follows:

All individuals within the United States (i) who were sent and received a text message call (ii) on his or her cellular telephone (iii) by or on behalf of Defendants (iv) from June 16, 2017, the date of formation of Galleria Fitness, through the date of certification.

Agreement Section GG.

Excluded from the Settlement Class are: (1) the trial judge presiding over this case; (2) Defendants, as well as any parent, subsidiary, affiliate, or control person of Defendants, and the officers, directors, agents, servants, or employees of Defendants; (3) any of the Released Parties; (4) the immediate family of any such person(s); any Settlement Class Member who has timely opted out of this proceeding; and (5) Plaintiff’s Counsel, their employees, and their immediate family.

---

<sup>2</sup> Federal Communications Commission, Small Entity Compliance Guide for the TCPA (dated May 13, 2013), [https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs\\_public/attachmatch/DA-13-1086A1.pdf](https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DA-13-1086A1.pdf).

**b. Settlement Consideration**

Pursuant to the Settlement, Defendants have agreed to make up to \$600,000.00 available for the benefit of Settlement Class Members (“Settlement Fund”).

**c. The Notice Program**

Pending this Court’s approval, Heffler Claims Group will serve as the Notice Administrator, and will be responsible for administering the Notice Program. The Notice Program consists of three different components: (1) Email Notice; (2) Mail Notice; and (3) Website Notice. Agreement at III.B. The forms of the proposed notices agreed upon by Class Counsel and Defendants, subject to this Court’s approval and/or modification, are attached to the Settlement Agreement as Exhibits.

The Notice program is designed to provide the Settlement Class with important information regarding the Settlement and their rights thereunder, including a description of the material terms of the Settlement; a date by which Settlement Class members may submit claims, or exclude themselves from or “opt-out” of the Settlement Class; a date by which Settlement Class Members may object to the Settlement, Class Counsel’s fee application and/or the request for a Service Award; the date of the Final Approval Hearing; information regarding the Settlement Website where Settlement Class members may access the Agreement and Long-Form Notice; and other important documents.

**i. Mail and E-Mail Notice**

The primary form of notice shall be short-form Email notice in view of Defendants’ access to the names, telephone numbers, and email addresses of the individuals in the Settlement Class. A copy of the Email Notice is attached to the Settlement Agreement as Exhibit 2. If email addresses are not available or if an email is returned as undeliverable, the Administrator will utilize the U.S. Mail. A copy of the post-card Mail Notice is attached to the Settlement Agreement as Exhibit 5. Individuals who receive Mail Notice will have the option of mailing in the Claim Form. Agreement at III.C.2. Long-Form notice will be available on the website, and consumers may also call in to the dedicated phone line to request a Long-Form Notice by mail.

In the event postcards are returned by the United States Postal Service for insufficient addresses, the Administrator will attempt to identify a better address for the Settlement Class member and will re-send the postcard to that address.

**ii. Long-Form Notice**

Mail Notice and Email Notice will all contain the address for the Settlement Website, www.XXXX.com. On the website, Settlement Class members will find important documents and court

filings, including the Long-Form Notice, which will contain more detail than the Mail Notice and Email Notice. A copy of the Long Form Notice is attached to the Settlement Agreement as Exhibit 3. Further, the Long Form Notice will be sent to all Settlement Class members who contact the Settlement Administrator by telephone or email and request a copy. Agreement at III.B.5.

**iii. Settlement Website & Toll-Free Telephone Number**

The Settlement Administrator will establish a Settlement Website as a means for Settlement Class members to obtain notice of, and information about, the Settlement. Agreement at III.B.6. The Settlement Website will be established by the Class Notice Date. *Id.* The Settlement Website will include an online portal to file Claim Forms, hyperlinks to the Settlement, the Long-Form Notice, the Preliminary Approval Order, and other such documents as Class Counsel and counsel for Defendants agree to post or that the Court orders be posted on the Settlement Website. These documents will remain on the Settlement Website at least until Final Approval. *Id.*

The Settlement Administrator will also establish and maintain an automated toll-free telephone line for Settlement Class members to call with Settlement-related inquiries. *Id.*

**d. Claims Process**

The Claims Process here is straightforward, easy to understand for Settlement Class members, and designed so that they can easily claim their portion of the Settlement Fund. Hiraldo Decl. ¶ 4. Settlement Class members will make a claim by submitting a valid Claim Form to the Claims Administrator, which will then be evaluated for timeliness and completeness. A copy of the Claim Form is attached to the Settlement Agreement as Exhibit 1. Claim Forms may be sent in by hard copy. The Claim Form requires basic information from Settlement Class members: (1) name; (2) current address; (3) cellular telephone number(s) at which she or he received a text message; and (4) a current contact telephone number. Once a Settlement Class member submits a valid Claim Form that is approved by the Settlement Administrator as against Defendants' records, the Settlement Class Member will then be eligible to automatically receive a cash payment following Final Approval. Untimely or otherwise deficient Claim Forms will be rejected and those Settlement Class Members will not receive a Settlement Fund Payment. If those same Settlement Class Members also fail to timely opt-out, they will remain in the Settlement Class and their claims will be released.

**e. Allocation of the Settlement Fund Payments**

Each Settlement Class member who timely files with the Settlement Administrator a valid Claim Form shall receive a cash distribution payable by check of up to \$30.00 per text message call that

he or she received. Settlement Class Claimants will be sent their Claim Settlement Payments to the address they submitted on their Claim Form within 60 days following the Effective Date. Agreement at III.F.3.

**f. Settlement Administrator**

Pending this Court's approval, Heffler Claims Group shall serve as the Settlement Administrator. The Settlement Administrator's responsibilities may include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- i. obtaining from Class Counsel and Defendants cellular telephone information, and to the extent it is available, name, email, and address information, for Settlement Class members;
- ii. performing reverse telephone number look-ups by cellular telephone number to determine available associated physical addresses that might exist for any Settlement Class members for whom the Parties do not have email addresses or mailing addresses, and verifying and updating the addresses received through the National Change of Address database, for the purpose of providing Mailed Notice;
- iii. providing Mailed and Emailed Notice;
- iv. providing Long Form Notice to Settlement Class members;
- v. establishing and maintaining the Settlement website;
- vi. establishing and maintaining a post office box, a dedicated email address, and a dedicated phone line for requests for exclusion from the Settlement Class;
- vii. receiving, evaluating, and processing Claim Forms;
- viii. advising Settlement Class members if their Claim Forms are deficient;
- ix. providing weekly reports about the Notice plan and number and identity of opt-outs (if any) to Class Counsel and Defendants' counsel;
- x. establishing and maintaining an automated and toll-free telephone line for Settlement Class members to call with Settlement-related inquiries;
- xi. answer the questions of Settlement Class members who call with or otherwise communicate such inquiries;
- xii. responding to any Settlement Class member inquiries;
- xiii. processing all requests for exclusion from the Settlement Class;

- xiv. At Class Counsel's request, and in advance of the Final Approval Hearing, preparing a declaration to submit to the Court that identifies each Settlement Class member who timely and properly requested exclusion from the Settlement Class; and
- xv. distributing Settlement Fund Payments.

Agreement at I.A.

**g. Opt-Out and Objection Procedures**

Settlement Class members who do not wish to participate in the Settlement and Release may opt-out of the Settlement by sending a written request to the Settlement Administrator at the address designated in the Notice identifying their names and telephone numbers. Settlement Class members who timely opt-out of the Settlement will preserve their rights to individually pursue any claims they may have against Defendants, subject to any defenses that Defendants may have against those claims. The Settlement Agreement details the requirements to properly opt-out of the Settlement Class. A Settlement Class member must opt-out of the Settlement Class by the Opt-Out Period. The Settlement Administrator will communicate any opt-out requests to Class Counsel and Defendants' Counsel as per the Settlement Agreement terms. Defendants will have the option to terminate the settlement if more than 40 valid opt-outs are received.

Settlement Class Members who wish to file an objection to the Settlement must do so before the Final Approval Hearing. Pending Court approval, for an objection to be considered by the Court, it must include the following:

- a. the name of the Action;
- b. the objector's full name, address and telephone number;
- c. an explanation of the basis upon which the objector claims to be a Settlement Class Member;
- d. all grounds for the objection, accompanied by any legal support for the objection known to the objector or his counsel;
- e. the number of times in which the objector has objected to a class action settlement within the five years preceding the date that the objector files the objection, the caption of each case in which the objector has made such an objection, and a copy of any orders related to or ruling upon the objector's prior such objections that were issued by the trial and appellate courts in each listed case;

- f. the identity of all counsel who represent the objector, including any former or current counsel who may seek to claim compensation for any reason related to the objection to the Settlement or the application for Fees and Expenses;
- g. a copy of any orders related to or ruling upon counsel's or the counsel's law firm's prior objections made by individuals or organizations represented by that counsel that were issued by the trial and appellate courts in each listed case in which the objector's counsel and/or counsel's law firm have objected to a class action settlement within the preceding 5 years;
- h. any and all agreements that relate to the objection or the process of objecting— whether written or oral—between objector or objector's counsel and any other person or entity;
- i. the identity of all counsel (if any) representing the objector who will appear at the Final Approval Hearing;
- j. a statement confirming whether the objector intends to personally appear and/or testify at the Final Approval Hearing;
- k. a list of all persons who will be called to testify at the Final Approval Hearing in support of the objection; and
- l. the objector's signature (an attorney's signature is not sufficient).

Agreement at III.E.2.

**h. Release of Claims**

In exchange for the Settlement consideration, Plaintiff and all Settlement Class Members, have agreed to the release as defined in Section V of the Agreement.

**i. Class Counsel Fees and Expenses and Plaintiff's Service Award**

Defendants agree not to oppose Class Counsel's request for attorneys' fees and expenses of up to \$140,000, or approximately 23.33% of the Settlement Fund. Defendants have also agreed not to oppose an application for a Service Award for the Plaintiff up to \$5,000.00. Agreement at II.D. The Court should consider whether to grant or deny these awards separate and apart from its consideration of the fairness and reasonableness of the Settlement.

**IV. THE PROPOSED SETTLEMENT WARRANTS PRELIMINARY APPROVAL**

**a. The Legal Standard for Preliminary Approval**

Rule 23(e) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure provides that before a class action may be dismissed or compromised, notice must be given in the manner directed by the court, and

judicial approval must be obtained. Fed. R. Civ. P. 23(e). As a matter of public policy, courts favor settlements of class actions for their earlier resolution of complex claims and issues, which promotes the efficient use of judicial and private resources. *Bennett v. Behring Corp.*, 737 F.2d 982, 986 (11th Cir. 1984). The policy favoring settlement is especially relevant in class actions and other complex matters, where the inherent costs, delays and risks of continued litigation might otherwise overwhelm any potential benefit the class could hope to obtain. *See, e.g., Ass'n for Disabled Americans, Inc. v. Amoco Oil Co.*, 211 F.R.D. 457, 466 (S.D. Fla. 2002) (“There is an overriding public interest in favor of settlement, particularly in class actions that have the well-deserved reputation as being most complex.”) (citing *Cotton v. Hinton*, 559 F.2d 1326, 1331 (5th Cir. 1977)); *see also 4 Newberg on Class Actions* § 11.41 (4th ed. 2002) (citing cases).

Approval of a class action settlement is a two-step process. *Fresco v. Auto Data Direct, Inc.*, 2007 WL 2330895, at \*4 (S.D. Fla. 2007). Preliminary approval is the first step, requiring the Court to “make a preliminary determination on the fairness, reasonableness, and adequacy of the settlement terms.” *Id.* (citations omitted). In the second step, after notice to settlement class members and time and opportunity for them to object or otherwise be heard, the court considers whether to grant final approval of the settlement as fair and reasonable under Rule 23. *Id.*

The standard for granting preliminary approval is low—a proposed settlement will be preliminarily approved if it falls “within the range of possible approval” or, otherwise stated, if there is “probable cause” to notify the class of the proposed settlement and “to hold a full-scale hearing on its fairness[.]” *In re Mid-Atl. Toyota Antitrust Litig.*, 564 F. Supp. 1379, 1384 (D. Md. 1983) (quoting MANUAL FOR COMPLEX LITIGATION § 1.46 at 62, 64-65 (1982)); *see also NEWBERG ON CLASS ACTIONS* § 13:13 (5th ed. 2016) (“Bearing in mind that the primary goal at the preliminary review stage is to ascertain whether notice of the proposed settlement should be sent to the class, courts sometimes define the preliminary approval standard as determining whether there is ‘probable cause’ to submit the [settlement] to class members and [to] hold a full-scale hearing as to its fairness.”). Thus, “[p]reliminary approval is appropriate where the proposed settlement is the result of the parties’ good faith negotiations, there are not obvious deficiencies, and the settlement falls within the range of reason.” *In re Checking Account Overdraft Litig.*, 275 F.R.D. 654, 661-62 (S.D. Fla. 2011).

The Court should take the first step in the process and grant Preliminary Approval of the Settlement. The Settlement is clearly within the range of reasonableness, and satisfies all standards for Preliminary Approval.

**b. The Settlement Satisfies the Criteria for Preliminary Approval**

Each of the relevant factors weighs heavily in favor of Preliminary Approval of this Settlement. First, the Settlement was reached in the absence of collusion, and is the product of good-faith, informed and arm's length negotiations by experienced counsel. Furthermore, a preliminary review of the factors related to the fairness, adequacy and reasonableness of the Settlement demonstrates that it fits well within the range of reasonableness, such that Preliminary Approval is appropriate. Hiraldo Decl. ¶ 5.

Any settlement requires the parties to balance the merits of the claims and defenses asserted against the attendant risks of continued litigation and delay. Plaintiff and Class Counsel believe that the claims asserted are meritorious and that Plaintiff would prevail if this matter proceeded to trial. Defendants believe that Plaintiff's claims are unfounded, deny any liability, and have shown a willingness to litigate vigorously, including before the FCC and through appellate practice. Hiraldo Decl. ¶ 6.

The Parties concluded that the benefits of the Settlement outweigh the risks and uncertainties attendant to continued litigation that include, but are not limited to, the risks, time and expenses associated with completing trial and any appellate review. Hiraldo Decl. ¶ 7.

**c. The Settlement Agreement is the Product of Good Faith, Informed and Arm's Length Negotiations**

A class action settlement should be approved so long as a district court finds that "the settlement is fair, adequate and reasonable and is not the product of collusion between the parties." *Cotton v. Hinton*, 559 F.2d 1326, 1330 (5th Cir. 1977);<sup>3</sup> see also *Lipuma v. American Express Co.*, 406 F. Supp. 2d 1298, 318-19 (S.D. Fla. 2005) (approving class settlement where the "benefits conferred upon the Class are substantial, and are the result of informed, arms-length negotiations by experienced Class Counsel").

The Settlement here is the result of extensive, arm's-length negotiations between experienced attorneys who are familiar with class action litigation and with the legal and factual issues of this Action. Hiraldo Decl. ¶ 8. Furthermore, Class Counsel believe that they are particularly experienced in the litigation, certification, trial, and settlement of nationwide class action cases. Hiraldo Decl. ¶ 9 and Exhibit 1. Class Counsel zealously represented their client

---

<sup>3</sup> In *Bonner v. City of Prichard*, 661 F.2d 1206, 1209 (11th Cir. 1981) (*en banc*), the Eleventh Circuit adopted as binding precedent all Fifth Circuit decisions prior to October 1, 1981.

throughout the litigation, and throughout the discovery process, which included review of numerous pages of documents and electronic data and researching and analyzing legal precedent pertaining to the Defendants' arguments. Hiraldo Decl. ¶ 10.

In negotiating this Settlement, Class Counsel had the benefit of experience in litigating and settling complex class actions and a familiarity with the facts of the Action. Hiraldo Decl. ¶ 9 and Exhibit 1. As detailed above, Class Counsel conducted an analysis of Plaintiff's claims and engaged in extensive formal discovery with Defendants and third parties. *Id.* ¶ 11. Class Counsel's review of that discovery enabled them to gain an understanding of the evidence related to central questions in the Action and prepared them for well-informed settlement negotiations. Class Counsel also had access to information regarding Defendants' financial resources early on in the Action. *See Francisco v. Numismatic Guaranty Corp. of America*, 2008 WL 649124, \*11 (S.D. Fla. Jan. 31, 2008) (stating that "Class Counsel had sufficient information to adequately evaluate the merits of the case and weigh the benefits against further litigation" where counsel conducted two 30(b)(6) depositions and obtained "thousands" of pages of documentary discovery).

**d. The Facts Support a Preliminary Determination that the Settlement is Fair, Adequate and Reasonable**

The Settlement falls within the "range of reason" such that notice and a final hearing as to the fairness, adequacy and reasonableness of the Settlement is warranted.

**i. Likelihood of Success at Trial**

Class Counsel are confident in the strength of Plaintiff's case, but are also pragmatic in their awareness of the various defenses available to Defendants, especially Mr. Flotz, and Galleria Fitness' financial resources, and the risks inherent in trial and post-judgment appeal. Hiraldo Decl. ¶ 12. The success of Plaintiff's claims, turn on questions that would arise at summary judgment, trial, and during an inevitable post-judgment appeal, as well as agency proceedings. Further, it still remains unclear whether Plaintiff would be able to certify a class for resolution of the asserted claims at trial. Under the circumstances, Class Counsel appropriately determined that the Settlement outweighs the risks of continued litigation. Hiraldo Decl. ¶ 13.

Even if Plaintiff and the Settlement Class prevailed at trial, any recovery could be delayed for years by an appeal. *Lipuma*, 406 F. Supp. 2d at 1322 (likelihood that appellate proceedings could delay class recovery "strongly favor[s]" approval of a settlement). This Settlement provides substantial relief to Settlement Class Members, without further delay.

**ii. Range of Possible Recovery and the Point on or Below the Range of Recovery at Which a Settlement is Fair**

When evaluating “the terms of the compromise in relation to the likely benefits of a successful trial . . . the trial court is entitled to rely upon the judgment of experienced counsel for the parties.” *Cotton*, 559 F.2d at 1330. “Indeed, the trial judge, absent fraud, collusion, or the like, should be hesitant to substitute its own judgment for that of counsel.” *Id.*

Courts have determined that settlements may be reasonable even where plaintiffs recover only part of their actual losses. *See Behrens v. Wometco Enterprises, Inc.*, 118 F.R.D. 534, 542 (S.D. Fla. 1988) (“[T]he fact that a proposed settlement amounts to only a fraction of the potential recovery does not mean the settlement is unfair or inadequate”). “The existence of strong defenses to the claims presented makes the possibility of a low recovery quite reasonable.” *Lipuma*, 406 F. Supp. 2d at 1323.

The \$600,000.00 made available to the class here is more than reasonable, given the complexity of the litigation and the significant risks and barriers that loomed in the absence of settlement including, but not limited to, a motion to dismiss, a motion for class certification, Defendants’ assertion of various legal challenges, a motion for summary judgment, *Daubert* motions, trial as well as appellate review following a final judgment, and the circumstances surrounding Defendants financial resources.

There can be no doubt that this Settlement is a fair and reasonable recovery for the in light of Defendants’ defenses, the uncertainty of class certification, and the challenging and unpredictable path of litigation Plaintiff and all Settlement Class members would face absent a settlement. Hiraldo Decl. ¶ 14.

**iii. Complexity, Expense and Duration of Litigation**

The traditional means for handling claims like those at issue here would tax the court system, require a massive expenditure of public and private resources, and, given the relatively small value of the claims of the individual class members, would be impracticable. Thus, the Settlement is the best vehicle for Settlement Class Members to receive the relief to which they are entitled in a prompt and efficient manner. Hiraldo Decl. ¶ 15.

**iv. Stage of Proceedings**

Courts consider the stage of proceedings at which settlement is achieved “to ensure that Plaintiffs had access to sufficient information to adequately evaluate the merits of the case and weigh the benefits of settlement against further litigation.” *Lipuma*, 406 F. Supp. 2d at 1324.

The Settlement was reached only after discovery, including the production and review of numerous pages of informal and formal documents and electronic data produced by Galleria Fitness. As a result, Class Counsel were extremely well-positioned to confidently evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of Plaintiff’s claims and prospects for success at trial and on appeal. Hiraldo Decl. ¶ 16.

**e. Certification of the Settlement Class is Appropriate**

For settlement purposes, Plaintiff and Class Counsel respectfully request that the Court certify the Settlement Class defined in paragraph II of the Agreement. “Confronted with a request for settlement-only class certification, a district court need not inquire whether the case, if tried, would present intractable management problems . . . for the proposal is that there be no trial.” *Amchem Products, Inc. v. Windsor*, 521 U.S. 591, 620 (1997).

Certification of the proposed Settlement Class will allow notice of the Settlement to issue to inform Settlement Class members of the existence and terms of the Settlement, of their right to object and be heard on its fairness, of their right to opt-out, and of the date, time and place of the Final Approval Hearing. *See Manual for Compl. Lit.*, at §§ 21.632, 21.633. For the reasons set forth below, certification is appropriate under Rule 23(a) and (b)(3).

Certification under Rule 23(a) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure requires that (1) the class is so numerous that joinder of all members is impracticable, (2) there are questions of law or fact common to the class, (3) the claims or defenses of the representative parties are typical of the claims or defenses of the class, and (4) the representative parties will fairly and adequately protect the interests of the class. Under Rule 23(b)(3), certification is appropriate if the questions of law or fact common to the members of the class predominate over individual issues of law or fact and if a class action is superior to other available methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of the controversy.

The numerosity requirement of Rule 23(a) is satisfied because the Settlement Class consists of individuals who were sent and received approximately 14,000 text messages, and joinder of all such persons is impracticable. *See Fed. R. Civ. P. 23(a)(1); Kilgo v. Bowman Trans.*, 789 F.2d 859, 878 (11th Cir. 1986) (numerosity satisfied where plaintiffs identified at least 31 class members “from a wide geographical area”).

“Commonality requires the plaintiff to demonstrate that the class members ‘have suffered the same injury,’” and the plaintiff’s common contention “must be of such a nature that it is capable of classwide resolution – which means that determination of its truth or falsity will resolve an issue that is central to the validity of each one of the claims in one stroke.” *Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. v. Dukes*, 564 U.S. 338, 131 S. Ct. 2541, 2551 (2011) (citation omitted). Here, the commonality requirement is preliminarily satisfied. There are questions of law and fact—centering on the third party texting platform—that are common to the Settlement Class, that are alleged to have injured all Settlement Class members in the same way, and that would generate common answers.

For similar reasons, Plaintiff’s claims are reasonably coextensive with those of the absent class members, such that the Rule 23(a)(3) typicality requirement is satisfied. *See Kornberg v. Carnival Cruise Lines, Inc.*, 741 F.2d 1332, 1337 (11th Cir. 1984) (typicality satisfied where claims “arise from the same event or pattern or practice and are based on the same legal theory”); *Murray v. Auslander*, 244 F.3d 807, 811 (11th Cir. 2001) (named plaintiffs are typical of the class where they “possess the same interest and suffer the same injury as the class members”). Plaintiff is typical of absent Settlement Class members because he received a subject text message from Galleria Fitness, and claims to have suffered the same injuries (*i.e.*, invasion of privacy), and because they will all benefit from the relief provided by the Settlement.

Plaintiff and Class Counsel also satisfy the adequacy of representation requirement. Adequacy under Rule 23(a)(4) relates to (1) whether the proposed class representative has interests antagonistic to the class; and (2) whether the proposed class counsel has the competence to undertake this litigation. *Fabricant*, 202 F.R.D. at 314. Hiraldo Decl. ¶ 9, Exhibit 1. The determinative factor “is the forthrightness and vigor with which the representative party can be expected to assert and defend the interests of the members of the class.” *Lyons v. Georgia-Pacific Corp. Salaried Employees Ret. Plan*, 221 F.3d 1235, 1253 (11th Cir. 2000) (internal quotation marks omitted). Plaintiff’s interests are coextensive with, not antagonistic to, the interests of the Settlement Class, because Plaintiff and the absent Settlement Class members have the same interest in the statutory relief afforded by the TCPA, and incorporated into the Settlement, and the absent Settlement Class members have no diverging interests. Further, Plaintiff and the Settlement Class are represented by qualified and competent Class Counsel who have experience and expertise prosecuting TCPA class actions. Class Counsel devoted substantial time and resources to vigorous litigation of the Action.

Rule 23(b)(3) requires that “[c]ommon issues of fact and law . . . ha[ve] a direct impact on every class member’s effort to establish liability that is more substantial than the impact of individualized issues in resolving the claim or claims of each class member.” *Sacred Heart Health Sys., Inc. v. Humana Military Healthcare Servs., Inc.*, 601 F.3d 1159, 1170 (11th Cir. 2010) (internal quotation marks omitted). Plaintiff readily satisfies the Rule 23(b)(3) predominance requirement because liability questions common to the Settlement Class members substantially outweigh any possible issues that are individual to each Settlement Class member. Further, resolution of thousands of claims in one action is far superior to individual lawsuits, because it promotes consistency and efficiency of adjudication. *See* Fed. R. Civ. P. 23(b)(3). For these reasons, the Court should certify the Settlement Class.

**f. The Court Should Approve the Proposed Notice Program**

“Rule 23(e)(1)(B) requires the court to direct notice in a reasonable manner to all class members who would be bound by a proposed settlement, voluntary dismissal, or compromise regardless of whether the class was certified under Rule 23(b)(1), (b)(2), or (b)(3).” *Manual for Compl. Lit.* § 21.312 (internal quotation marks omitted). The best practicable notice is that which is “reasonably calculated, under all the circumstances, to apprise interested parties of the pendency of the action and afford them an opportunity to present their objections.” *Mullane v. Cent. Hanover Bank & Trust Co.*, 339 U.S. 306, 314 (1950). To satisfy this standard, “[n]ot only must the substantive claims be adequately described but the notice must also contain information reasonably necessary to make a decision to remain a class member and be bound by the final judgment or opt-out of the action.” *Twigg v. Sears, Roebuck & Co.*, 153 F.3d 1222, 1227 (11th Cir. 1998) (internal quotation marks omitted); *see also* *Manual for Compl. Lit.*, § 21.312 (listing relevant information).

The Notice program satisfies all of these criteria. As recited in the Settlement and above, the Notice Program will inform Settlement Class members of the substantive terms of the Settlement. It will advise Settlement Class members of their options for remaining part of the Settlement Class, for objecting to the Settlement, Class Counsel’s Attorneys’ fee application and/or request for Service Award, or for opting-out of the Settlement, and how to obtain additional information about the Settlement. The Notice Program is designed to reach a high percentage of Settlement Class members, and exceeds the requirements of Constitutional Due Process. Therefore, the Court should approve the Notice Program and the form and content of the Notices.

**V. Proposed Schedule of Events**

In connection with Preliminary Approval of the Settlement, the Court should also set a date and time for the Final Approval Hearing. Other deadlines in the Settlement approval process, including the deadlines for requesting exclusion from the Settlement Class or objecting to the Settlement, will be determined based on the date of the Final Approval Hearing or the date on which the Preliminary Approval Order is entered. Class Counsel propose the following schedule:

<b><u>Event</u></b>	<b><u>Timeline</u></b>
Deadline for Defendants to notify appropriate federal and state officials under the Class Action Fairness Act, 28 U.S.C. § 1715	10 days after filing of the instant motion
Deadline for Completion of Notice	45 days after entry of the Preliminary Approval Order
Deadline for filing Motion for Final Approval of the Settlement and Class Counsel's Fee Application and expenses, and for a Service Award	28 days before the Final Approval Hearing
Deadline for opting-out of the Settlement and for submission of Objections	30 days before the Final Approval Hearing
Deadline for Responses to Objections	15 days before the Final Approval Hearing
Last day Class Claimants may submit a Claim Form	7 days before Final Approval
Final Approval Hearing	Approximately 120 days from date of Preliminary Approval

## **VI. Conclusion**

Based on the foregoing, Plaintiff and Class Counsel respectfully request that the Court: (1) grant Preliminary Approval to the Settlement; (2) certify for settlement purposes the proposed Settlement Class, pursuant to Rule 23(b)(3) and (e) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure; (3) approve the Notice program set forth in the Agreement and approve the form and content of the Notices and Claim Form, attached to the Settlement Agreement; (4) approve and order the opt-out and objection procedures set forth in the Agreement; (5) appoint Plaintiff as Class Representative; (6) appoint as Class Counsel the law firms and attorneys listed in paragraph I of the Agreement; and (7) schedule a Final Approval Hearing. A Proposed Preliminary Approval Order is attached hereto as *Exhibit C*.

**Local Rule 7.1(a)(3) Conferral Certification**

Undersigned counsel for Plaintiff certifies that they have conferred with Defendants' counsel about the relief sought in this motion in a good faith effort to resolve and reach agreement upon the issues raised herein. Defendants indicated that they will not oppose the motion.

Dated: March 11, 2019

Respectfully submitted,

**HIRALDO P.A.**

/s/ Manuel Hiraldo  
Manuel S. Hiraldo, Esq.  
Florida Bar No. 030380  
401 E. Las Olas Boulevard  
Suite 1400  
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33301  
mhiraldo@hirdolaw.com  
(t) 954.400.4713

**EISENBAND LAW, P.A.**

515 E. Las Olas Boulevard, Suite 120  
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33301  
Michael Eisenband  
Florida Bar No. 94235  
Email: MEisenband@Eisenbandlaw.com  
Telephone: 954.533.4092

**IJH Law**

Ignacio J. Hiraldo, Esq.  
Florida Bar No. 0056031  
1200 Brickell Ave  
Suite 1950  
Miami, FL 33131  
Email: ijhiraldo@ijhlaw.com  
Telephone: 786.496.4469  
*Counsel for Plaintiff and the Class*

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I HEREBY CERTIFY that on March 11, 2019, I electronically filed the foregoing document with the Clerk of the Court using CM/ECF. I also certify that the foregoing document is being served this day on all counsel of record via transmission of Notice of Electronic Filing generated by CM/ECF.

*/s/ Manuel Hiraldo*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Florida Bar No. 030380  
Email: mhiraldo@hirdolaw.com  
Telephone: 954.400.4713  
*Counsel for Plaintiff and the Class*