1 2 3 4 5 6 7	C. D. Michel – SBN 144258 Joshua Robert Dale – SBN 209942 Konstadinos T. Moros – SBN 306610 Alexander A. Frank – SBN 311718 MICHEL & ASSOCIATES, P.C. 180 E. Ocean Blvd., Suite 200 Long Beach, CA 90802 Telephone: (562) 216-4444 Facsimile: (562) 216-4445 Email: jdale@michellawyers.com  Attorneys for Plaintiff Deputy District Attorney JANE DOE		
8	IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA		
9	FOR THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES		
10	STANLEY MOSK COURTHOUSE		
11	Deputy District Attorney JANE DOE, an individual,	CASE NO:	
12	Plaintiff,	COMPLAINT FOR DAMAGES AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF FOR:	
13 14 15 16 17 18 19	v. STATE OF CALIFORNIA; and DOES 1 through 25, inclusive,  Defendants.	<ol> <li>VIOLATION OF CALIFORNIA'S INFORMATION PRIVACY ACT;</li> <li>VIOLATION OF RIGHT TO PRIVACY UNDER ARTICLE 1, SECTION 1 OF THE CALIFORNIA CONSTITUTION;</li> <li>INTENTIONAL INFLICTION OF EMOTIONAL DISTRESS;</li> <li>NEGLIGENT INFLICTION OF EMOTIONAL DISTRESS; AND</li> <li>PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF PRIVATE FACTS</li> </ol>	
20		REQUEST FOR TRIAL BY JURY	
21	COMES NOW Plaintiff JANE DOE, who alleges as follows:		
22	<u>INTRODUCTION</u>		
23	1. Plaintiff Deputy District Attorney JANE DOE is a veteran Los Angeles County		
24	Deputy District Attorney. In her 23-year career as a crime fighter, she has prosecuted some of th		
25	worst criminals, including dozens of murderers, countless members of violent street gangs and		
26	other criminal syndicates, and other felons with no regard for human life or civil society.		
27	2. Because of the important role she plays in fighting crime in Los Angeles County,		
28	California public policy recognizes the danger she faces in her job. Thus, express public policy  1		

COMPLAINT

has made it illegal for government employees to release personally identifying information about her and other crime fighters, including judges, law enforcement officers, and other public officials.

- 3. This public policy underscores the fear that she and others who keep violent criminals off our streets have to contend with on a daily basis; if her address and other personal identifying information were released to members of the public, she would be subject to intimidation, retribution, and violence by the very people she prosecutes or by their criminal associates.
- 4. Because of the ever-present danger she faces, Plaintiff carries a firearm for protection under a concealed carry weapons ("CCW") permit, as do many judges, law enforcement officers, correctional officers, and other crime fighters.
- 5. As a result of a political stunt by California Attorney General Rob Bonta, Plaintiff's and thousands of other crime fighters' personally identifying information contained in CCW permit data was publicly released in June. And although the Attorney General has spent the subsequent months downplaying or flat-out ignoring the harmful effect his stunt had on the lives of all affected Californians who hold or applied for CCW permits, for crime fighters like Plaintiff, the danger is acute. She and others like her have had to constantly fear for their lives because some of the criminals they arrested, testified against, prosecuted, or sentenced now have their home addresses and other personally identifying information. And given that the Internet is forever, past and future criminal defendants will have ready access to such information for the foreseeable future.
- 6. The Attorney General's Office has gone completely silent on how it plans to handle this massive privacy breach, including how it is going to protect all of the public officials it endangered like Plaintiff. This has left local prosecutor's offices, law enforcement agencies, and courthouse officials scrambling to find ways to identify their vulnerable employees and figure out methods to protect them. Having been reasonably patient to see what the Attorney General's Office would do to help her and other affected crime fighters, and having watched it do nothing, Plaintiff is now forced to sue to both prevent another politically motivated leak like this from

happening again. She also seeks to compel some action by the state to protect her safety or otherwise compensate her for having to pay for her own increased security measures to mitigate the harm caused by the Attorney General's Office.

7. And to not compound the injury to her safety any further, Plaintiff seeks to sue pseudonymously in order to vindicate her privacy rights under California's public policy that should not have been so callously disregarded by California's top law enforcement agency.

## JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 8. This Court has jurisdiction over all causes of action asserted in this Complaint under Article VI, section 10 of the California Constitution because the causes of action below are not given by statute to other trial courts or administrative agencies. The amount in controversy exceeds \$25,000.00.
- 9. The injuries suffered by Plaintiff alleged herein were suffered in Los Angeles County, California.

#### **PARTIES**

- 10. Plaintiff Deputy District Attorney JANE DOE was and is a veteran prosecutor for the County of Los Angeles, as well as resides within the County. She has prosecuted hundreds of felony cases, including dozens of murder cases and cases where the death penalty was sought and imposed. She has imprisoned members of criminal syndicates and violent repeat offenders. At the time her injuries first began, she held a CCW permit.
- 11. Defendant the STATE OF CALIFORNIA (the "State") is the sovereign government of California. Among its executive offices is the Office of the Attorney General, over which Attorney General Rob Bonta presides as the chief law enforcement officer of the State. Included within the Office of the Attorney General is the California Department of Justice, which is responsible, *inter alia*, for maintaining data and information regarding CCW permit holders, including private, personally identifiable information, as well as enforcing laws relating to firearms generally and CCW permit holders specifically. Defendant State has offices within Los Angeles County, including offices of the Department of Justice.
  - 12. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and on that basis alleges, that at all times

mentioned herein, defendants named or fictitiously designated, and each of them, were the agents, servants, employees or joint venturers of the other defendants, and each of them, and were, at all mentioned times, acting within the course and scope of such agency, employment, or joint venture relationship.

13. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and upon such information and belief, alleges that each of the defendants named herein as DOES 1 through 25, were employees of Defendant State who were responsible for, either intentionally or negligently, in the public release of Plaintiff's and other CCW permit holders' private identifying information. Thus, on information and belief, DOES 1 through 25, and each of them, are in some manner negligent or otherwise tortiously or statutorily responsible for the injuries hereinafter alleged. Plaintiff does not presently know the true names and capacities of the defendants sued herein as DOES 1 through 25. Plaintiff will seek leave of the Court to amend the complaint to allege DOE defendants' true names and capacities once Plaintiff ascertains them.

# ALLEGATIONS APPLICABLE TO ALL CAUSES OF ACTION

- 14. In June 2022, the United States Supreme Court issued its landmark *New York State Rifle & Pistol Association, Inc. v. Bruen* decision, which reaffirmed an individual's right to carry a firearm in public for self-defense.
- 15. California's Executive and Legislative branches, including Attorney General Bonta, were incensed by the decision. They issued press releases decrying the decision and issued a flurry of legislation designed to water down or make the exercise of the right to carry a weapon for self-defense a nullity.
- 16. For his part, Attorney General Bonta issued a press release four days after the *Bruen* decision announcing that the Department of Justice would be hosting and publishing a web portal filled with CCW permit holders' data. The announced purpose of the web portal was to provide an interactive and easily searchable user experience that would promote public access to information about the holders of CCW permits, the issuance of gun violence restraining orders, and other information related to firearms laws in California. The stated goal of publishing this information was to increase "transparency" and "public trust." The real reason was that the

Attorney General wanted to be seen as "doing something" immediately following a Supreme Court decision that was anathema to the firearms views of Bonta and other politicians in Sacramento.

- 17. Thus, on the same day Bonta made his announcement—June 27, 2022—the Department of Justice took the firearms data web portal live. The information was published at <a href="https://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/">https://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/</a>.
- 18. From the moment the portal launched, any member of the public who accessed it was able to download the portal's underlying data in the form of Excel spreadsheets. This was not a flaw or a bug, but a feature. For example, if someone clicked on the download icon located at the top right-hand side of the portal, it would download onto the user's computer an electronic spreadsheet file of whatever data had been selected. Thus, when a member of the public chose to download CCW permit holder information, the portal allowed such data to be downloaded in an electronic spreadsheet containing information about CCW permit holders and applicants for a particular county or in an electronic spreadsheet containing such information about holders and applicants for the entire state.

Carry Concealed Weapon (CCW)

Home Page

Dealer Record of Sale (DROS)

Gun Violence Restraining Orders (...

Firearms Safety Certificates (FS...

Assault Weapons Registry (AWR)

- 19. The information about CCW permit holders and applicants that could be downloaded by the public from the portal on a county-by-county or a statewide basis included each CCW permit holder's or applicant's name, contained in a line item along with:
  - a. Their address;
  - b. Their date of birth;
  - c. Their gender;
  - d. Their CCW License Number;
  - e. The issue dates of their permit;
  - f. Their DOJ-assigned Criminal Identification and Information (CII) Number;
  - g. The type of CCW permit they were issued or applied for. This included the categories "judge," "custodial officer," "reserve officer," "place of employment," or "standard"; and
  - h. The status of their license.
- disseminating on Internet message boards and on social media about the private information that was being made available on the portal. People on social media began tagging the Attorney General's verified Twitter account asking for him to respond to the situation. During the evening of June 27<sup>th</sup>, the portal was taken offline, but it inexplicably went back online again. When it went online the second time on the evening of the 27<sup>th</sup>, the download icon was no longer present on the portal. Yet the issue of the availability of private information was still not resolved, as data could still be accessed for each individual county by hovering over it and clicking another icon to access the underlying spreadsheet.
- 21. The Department of Justice did not permanently take down the portal until the morning of June 28, 2022, after it had been publishing private CCW permit holders' personal information, including Plaintiff's, for well over twelve hours. As of the afternoon of June 28, 2022, the Portal's site read "Website temporarily unavailable Please try again in a few minutes."
- 22. On the afternoon of June 28<sup>th</sup>, the Attorney General's Office issued a press release stating "We are investigating an exposure of individuals' personal information connected to the

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27 28 DOJ Firearms Dashboard. Any unauthorized release of personal information is unacceptable. We are working swiftly to address this situation and will provide additional information as soon as possible."

23. As communicated by the Fresno County Sheriff's Office and in subsequent Department of Justice correspondence, the Department of Justice began immediately mischaracterizing the June 27-28 publication of the web portal as a "breach."



DOJ Data Breach Exposes Personal Information of California CCW Holders

On Tuesday, the California State Sheriff's Association (CSSA) informed our office that the California Department of Justice (DOJ) had suffered a data breach. This occurred as part of the DOJ's launch of its "2022 Firearms Dashboard Portal." This public site allows access to certain information, however, personal information of Concealed Carry Weapon (CCW) permit holders is not supposed to be visible. This includes, but is not limited to a person's name, age, address, Criminal Identification Index (CII) number and license type (Standard, Judicial, Reserve and Custodial). This pertains to all California CCW holders, including Fresno County residents.

After learning of the breach, the DOJ pulled down the dashboard site along with all related links. However, portions of private information may have been posted on social media websites. It is unknown exactly how much time the information was accessible.

The State Attorney General's Office has stated it is working with urgency to determine the scope of the breach. It plans to contact CCW holders directly to advise them of the breach and will institute a program to reduce any harm or damages to CCW holders that resulted from the breach.

The Fresno County Sheriff's Office is urging anyone who learns their identity was compromised as a result of this data breach to please make an online report by visiting https://www.fresnosheriff.org/report-a-crime-online.html



(Screenshot of the Fresno County Sheriff's Twitter feed of a tweet made on June 28, 2022)

24. Despite the Orwellian attempt to characterize the Department of Justice's

Justice *twice* intentionally took the web portal live and published the information. Thus, far from being a "hack" or "breach" of the Department of Justice's servers as they attempted to characterize it, the publication of the CCW permit holders' personal information—and the fuctionality allowing members of the public to download or access that information—was a deliberate act by the Department of Justice. Nobody stole a password and nobody found a backdoor into a server as Attorney General Bonta would like the public to believe. Rather, in a cynical attempt to publicly appear to be on the "right side" of a political debate following a controversial court decision, the Attorney General and DOES 1 through 25 made a deliberate decision to publish the data which included private or personal identifying information. The only fact that is unknown is whether the decision to include all CCW permit holders' and applicants' home address, date of birth, and CII information on the portal was itself deliberate or accidental. So too, it is unknown whether to include any information about prosecutors, judges, and law enforcement officers was also deliberate or accidental.

- 25. Plaintiff has faithfully served the people of the State for almost a quarter of a century. Like many crime fighters and other public servants, she willingly entered into such service relying upon the express and implied promises made in California public policy to protect from disclosure the private, personal identfying information collected by the State and its subdivisions from judges, prosecutors, and correctional and law enforcement officers. If she protected the State, the State promised to protect her and her family. Yet, here it absolutely failed, and, through Bonta's subsequent inaction, ran away from any effort to fulfill its promise.
- 26. Among the express public policies forbidding the disclosure of Plaintiff's and other public officials' information by the State to the public are Civil Code section 1798, et seq. (the "Information Practices Act") and Government Code section 6254.21. Among the implied policies preventing such disclosure are the right of privacy recognized under Article I, section 1 of the California Constitution, Government Code section 6254(u)'s exception from the Public Records Act of the release of prosecutors' and other public servants' CCW permit information in response to a Public Records Act request, and the Penal Code prohibition against public release of

31. Plaintiff incorporates and realleges Paragraphs 1 through 30 as if fully set forth herein.

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32. On June 27 and 28, 2022, Defendants, and each of them, disclosed or caused to be disclosed to the public the personal information of Plaintiff as described hereinabove, including

information protected under Section 1798.3.

- 33. On information and belief, thousands of individuals downloaded spreadsheets generated by the State's web portal containing Plaintiff's personal information.
- 34. As a result of the disclosure of the information, Plaintiff has been injured in her emotional health and her physical safety and has expended or will have to expend significant amounts to safeguard herself and her family.
- 35. As a result of the disclosures and the injuries resulting therefrom, Plaintiff is entitled to an injunction preventing further disclosure of her information by Defendants and each of them.
- 36. As a result of the disclosures and the injuries resulting therefrom, Plaintiff is entitled to monetary damages from Defendants, and each of them, for general and special damages, all in an amount according to proof, but no less than the jurisdictional minimum of this Court.

#### SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION

Violation of Article I, section 1 of the California Constitution Against Defendant State of California and DOES 1 through 25

- 37. Plaintiffs incorporate and reallege Paragraphs 1 through 30 as if fully set forth herein.
- 38. On June 27 and 28, 2022, Defendants, and each of them, disclosed or caused to be disclosed to the public the private information of Plaintiff as described hereinabove, including information protected under the implied right of privacy recognized in Article I, section 1 of the California Constitution.
- 39. At the time Defendants caused to be disseminated Plaintiff's private information, Plaintiff had a privacy interest in her home address, her date of birth, and her CII information, as evidenced by the public policies recognizing such interests set forth in Government Code section 6254(u), Penal Code sections 11076 and 13201, and Vehicle Code section 1808.21.
- 40. At the time Defendants disseminated or caused to be disseminated Plaintiff's private information, Plaintiff had a reasonable expectation, based on the aforementioned public

policies and her inclusion in the class of persons to be protected under those policies, that the information would be kept private and not disseminated by Defendants.

- 41. As the Attorney General himself has represented in writing, the dissemination of Plaintiff's and other CCW permit holders' information was a serious invasion of their privacy. It was so serious as to cause Plaintiff to fear for her life and for the life of her family members.
- 42. As a result of the disclosure of the information, Plaintiff has been injured in her emotional health and her physical safety and has expended or will have to expend significant amounts to safeguard herself and her family.
- 43. As a result of the disclosures and the injuries resulting therefrom, Plaintiff is entitled to monetary damages for general and special damages, all in an amount according to proof, but no less than the jurisdictional minimum of this Court.
- 44. Where any DOE Defendant is proven to have acted in a capacity other than his or her capacity as an employee or official of Defendant State or any of its departments or subdivisions, Plaintiff is entitled, in addition to other damages and remedies sought against Defendants, for an award of exemplary damages from such DOE or DOES under Civil Code section 1798.53.

## THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION

Intentional Infliction of Emotional Distress

Against Defendant State of California and DOES 1 through 25

- 45. Plaintiff incorporates and realleges Paragraphs 1 through 30 as if fully set forth herein.
- 45. Under California Government Code section 820(a), Defendants, and each of them, are liable for injuries caused by their acts or omissions to the same extent as a private person.
- 46. Under California Government Code sections 815.2 and 815.4, the State of California is liable for injuries proximately caused by acts or omission of its employees and independent contractors within the scope of their employment or contracted work. Upon information and belief, at all times material to this complaint, the Doe Defendants were employed by, or were independent contractors for, the State of California and were under the State's

direction and control when they engaged in the conduct described herein. Because the acts of these Doe Defendants were committed within the course of their employment and/or independent contractor relationship with the State of California, the State of California is therefore liable for their intentionally wrongful conduct described herein.

- 47. Defendants' release of the confidential name and home address information of CCW permit holders, such as Plaintiff, onto the open internet with no access restrictions whatsoever, is outrageous conduct.
- 48. Defendants' outrageous conduct was intended to cause the CCW permit holders whose information was exposed, such as Plaintiff, emotional distress, and/or acted with reckless disregard for whether emotional distress could result from the release of the information.
- 49. Plaintiff has experienced and continues to experience emotional distress, including but not limited to nervousness, anxiety, and worry, because of Defendants' release of her home address information to the open internet.
- 50. Defendants' conduct in releasing Plaintiff's home address information was a substantial factor in causing Plaintiff severe and ongoing emotional distress, including but not limited to nervousness, anxiety, and worry.

## FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION

Negligent Infliction of Emotional Distress

Against Defendant State of California and DOES 1 through 25

- 51. Plaintiff incorporates and realleges Paragraphs 1 through 30 as if fully set forth herein.
- 52. Under California Government Code section 820(a), Defendants, and each of them, are liable for injuries caused by their acts or omissions to the same extent as a private person.
- 53. Under California Government Code sections 815.2 and 815.4, the State of California is liable for injuries proximately caused by acts or omission of its employees and independent contractors within the scope of their employment or contracted work. Upon information and belief, at all times material to this complaint, DOE Defendants were employed by, or were independent contractors for, the State of California and were under the State's

28 herein.

direction and control when they engaged in the conduct described herein. Because the acts of these DOE Defendants were committed within the course of their employment and/or independent contractor relationship with the State of California, the State of California is therefore liable for their negligent conduct described herein.

- 54. The State of California and DOE Defendants were under a duty, given their access to the sensitive and confidential home address information pertaining to deputy District Attorney CCW permit holders including Plaintiff, to be careful with that information, to protect its confidentiality, and at minimum to ensure that it is not published to the entire world through the open internet with no access restrictions. The public policy establishing the sensitivity of such information and the need for those who have access to it to avoid its disclosure is well established and clear. The relationship between Defendants, as possessors of that information, and Plaintiff is therefore clearly established.
- 55. The State of California and DOE Defendants' posting of the home address information of CCW permit holders, including Plaintiff's, on the open internet with no access restrictions was a breach of that duty.
- 56. Due to the State of California and DOE Defendants' actions in publishing Plaintiff's home address information onto the open internet with no access restrictions, Plaintiff suffered and continues to suffer serious emotional distress, including but not limited to anxiety, nervousness, and worry.
- 57. The State of California and DOE Defendants' actions in publishing Plaintiff's home address information onto the open internet with no access restrictions was a substantial factor in causing Plaintiff to suffer serious and ongoing emotional distress including but not limited to nervousness, anxiety, and worry.

## SIXTH CAUSE OF ACTION

Public Disclosure of Private Facts

Against Defendant State of California and DOES 1 through 25

58. Plaintiffs incorporate and reallege Paragraphs 1 through 30 as if fully set forth

- 59. Under California Government Code section 820(a), Defendants, and each of them, are liable for injuries caused by their acts or omissions to the same extent as a private person.
- 60. Under California Government Code sections 815.2 and 815.4, the State of California is liable for injuries proximately caused by acts or omission of its employees and independent contractors within the scope of their employment or contracted work. Upon information and belief, at all times material to this complaint, the DOE Defendants were employed by, or were independent contractors for, the State of California and were under the State's direction and control when they engaged in the conduct described herein. Because the acts of these DOE Defendants were committed within the course of their employment and/or independent contractor relationship with the State of California, the State of California is therefore liable for their negligent and wrongful conduct described herein.
- 61. The State of California and DOE Defendants publicized Plaintiff's private information, including her home address information, onto the open internet with no access restrictions whatsoever.
- 62. Any reasonable person in Plaintiff's position would consider this publicity highly offensive, as Plaintiff does.
- 63. The State of California and DOE Defendants knew, or acted with reckless disregard of the fact, that a reasonable person in Plaintiff's position would consider the publicity highly offensive, as Plaintiff does.
- 64. The private information that Defendants publicized was not of legitimate public concern, nor did it have a substantial connection to a matter of legitimate public concern.
- 65. Plaintiff was harmed by the publicity of this private information, having suffered and continuing to suffer emotional distress and the financial costs of enhanced security measures.
- 66. Defendants' conduct was a substantial factor in causing Plaintiff harms, such as but not limited to emotional distress and the financial costs of enhanced security measures.

#### **PRAYER**

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays for the following relief:

1. For special and general damages in an amount no less than the jurisdictional

1	minimum of this Court;		
2	2	For exemplary damages where allow	ved under statute;
3	3.	For preliminary and permanent injur	nctive relief to prevent the further
4	dissemination or publication of Plaintiff's home address, date of birth, or CII Number by		
5	Defendants	or any of them, on the web portal or an	y other publicly accessible database
6	maintained b	by the State or any of its departments or	r subdivisions;
7	4.	For a declaration by the Court under	Code of Civil Procedure section 1060 as to
8	the rights, re	esponsibilities, and obligations of Plaint	tiff and Defendants to one another, and each of
9	them, including, specifically, as to the obligation of Defendants to safeguard and refrain from		
10	publicly disclosing information obtained or kept by Defendants as a result of Plaintiff's		
11	application for or holding of a CCW permit, including specifically, the home address, date of		
12	birth, and CII information contained therein, and for any other declarations and orders necessary		
13	to effect a remedy sought or available under the causes of action pled hereinabove;		
14	5.	For attorney's fees as allowed by sta	atute;
15	6.	For an award of interest, including p	prejudgment interest, at the legal rate as
16	permitted by law; and		
17	7.	For such other and further relief as t	he court may deem proper.
18	PLAINTIFF FURTHER REQUESTS A TRIAL BY JURY ON ALL ISSUES SO TRIABLE.		
19	Dated:	, 2022	MICHEL & ASSOCIATES, P.C.
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21			C. D. Michel
22			Joshua Robert Dale Konstadinos T. Moros
23			Attorneys for Plaintiff Deputy District Attorney JANE DOE
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