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Colorado Worker Files Class Action Lawsuit Alleging that Careless Background Checks Harm Tens of Thousands of Workers Nationwide

Tuesday April 25, 2017: Abusive and careless background check reporting hurts the job prospects of tens of thousands of workers--including members of The Gathering Place, a Denver non-profit organization that serves people experiencing poverty or homelessness. With Towards Justice as Counsel, The Gathering Place member Elsie Compo brought a class action lawsuit against one of the largest background check companies in the country, Sterling Infosystems, Inc. on April 12, 2017 in the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York. Ms. Compo claims that Sterling's careless reporting procedures violated the Federal Fair Credit Reporting Act and prevented Wal-Mart from offering her a job. Specifically, Sterling falsely reported to Wal-Mart that Ms. Compo had resided at a "High Risk Residential Facility" during the period when she used The Gathering Place address to receive mail.

"I've been trying so hard to make ends meet," Ms. Compo said. "All I wanted was a job that paid money, but I couldn't get one because this company I'd never heard of was telling lies about me to potential employers. I've never been at a residential facility, and certainly not a high risk one." She also explained: "What Sterling did is incredibly unfair, and I want to bring this case to protect the rights of all of the tens of thousands of people who've been harmed by Sterling, some of whom may not even know it yet."

The Gathering Place's Julia Stewart also expressed frustration. "We want to provide a safe space and stable address for women, children, and transgender people. That's particularly important for people experiencing homelessness or domestic violence. They need that address for everything from their children's school registration forms to their election ballots. We aren't a residential facility, and we certainly aren't 'high risk.'"

"Background reporting is a lucrative business," said Towards Justice Executive Director Nina DiSalvo. "Companies like Sterling are too rarely concerned with privacy or accuracy, and Ms. Campo's allegations show how such carelessness harms vulnerable workers. I am inspired by Ms. Campo's bravery in challenging Sterling's practices both for herself and for workers across the country."

The case is *Gambles v. Sterling Microsystems, Inc.*, Case No.: 1:15-cv-09746, United States District Court for the Southern District of New York

Towards Justice, a Colorado non-profit organization, is co-counsel to the Plaintiffs along with the law firms of Berger & Montague, P.C., Terrell Marshall Law Group PLLC, Jaeckel Law, LLC, O'Toole McLaughlin Dooley & Pecora, and Nichols Kaster, PLLP