1 2 3 4 5 6	B J Fadem Esq. SBN: 118819* *Certified Family Law Specialist - State Board of Specialize Scott A. Reno, Esq. SBN: 315247 Erika A. Lee, Esq. SBN: 332907 Jack O'Hollearn, Esq. SBN: 352091 LAW OFFICES OF B J FADEM & ASSOCIATES, APC 111 West Saint John Street, Suite 700 San Jose, CA 95113 Telephone: 408-280-1220 Fax: 408-971-9940 bjfadem@fademlaw.com		ELECTRONICALLY FILED 8/15/2024 5:16 PM Superior Court of California County of Mendocino By: Shanae Thibeau Deputy Clerk
7	Attorneys for Petitioner, MYLEA LOGIN		
8	WILEA EOON		
9	IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF MENDOCINO		
10		Case No.	: 23FL00613
11	MYLEA LOGIN, Petitioner,		ONER'S TRIAL BRIEF
12	vs.	Date: Au	gust 22, 2024
13	CARLOS ALBERTO ESPARZA DE LA	Time: 10	l:30am n. Patrick Pekin
14	TORRE, Respondent.	Dept: A	ii. Fautor Feriii
15	respondent.		
16	I. FACTUAL AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY		
17	The Petitioner, MYLEA LOGIN (hereinafter "Mylea") and Respondent, CARLOS		
18	ALBERTO ESPARZA DE LA TORRE (hereinafter "Carlos")1 . The parties were in a romantic		
19	relationship but never married. They have one child of their relationship, ILEANA ESPARZA		
20	LOGIN (hereinafter "Ileana") (age 5). Mylea fled Mexico with Ileana on or about August 15,		
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22	1 The parties first names are being used throughout this brief for the purpose of providing personal, gender neutral		
23	references, and not out of disrespect.		
24	Login v. Esparza Case No.: 23FL00613		Petitioner's Trial Brief Page 1

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Login v. Esparza Case No.: 23FL00613

2023 2024 to seek refuge and protection in California from Carlos and his family. On August 15, 2023, Mylea filed a Request for a Domestic Violence Restraining Order against Carlos while she was self-represented and with the assistance of the self-help clerk. The court issued a Temporary Restraining Order, protecting both Mylea and Ileana from Carlos, with no contact or visitation to Carlos pending a hearing.

At the time Mylea obtained her Temporary Restraining Order (hereinafter "TRO"), Carlos lived in Bucerias, Mexico. Therefore, Mylea was required to facilitate service via the Central Authority in Mexico under the Service Aspects of the Hague Convention. Due to the nature of the delay in serving through the Central Authority, Mylea had difficulty serving Carlos. Carlos became aware of the Request for a DVRO and TRO in early 2024. He subsequently retained counsel to represent him at the hearing on April 2, 2024.

After obtaining counsel, Carlos filed a Motion to Quash Service (prior to being served) and for lack of jurisdiction.

In order to resolve some of the procedural issues, counsel for both parties agreed to accept email service of the unserved pleadings. Carlos accepted email service of Mylea's Request for a DVRO and Mylea accepted email service of the Motion to Quash. Service of the Request for a DVRO was effectuated on April 25, 2024. This matter trailed for several hearings to determine the order in which the Court would hear the issues before it and for the Court to appoint Minor's Counsel, Daniel Beck, to conduct an investigation and represent the minor child in the proceedings.

Mr. Beck conducted an extensive investigation and provided his initial report to the court for the hearing on June 25, 2024. On July 18, 2024, counsel stipulated to Mr. Beck's report to be

admissible as evidence for the DVRO trial. In his initial report, Mr. Beck outlines his concerns, collateral contacts, and recommends that the parties attempt to reach a settlement for the best interest of the minor child. 2 All counsel met and conferred regarding settlement, however, Carlos' counsel represented she had been unable to reach her client and his family to discuss settlement and therefore requested a continuance. At the hearing on June 25, 2024, Mr. Beck relayed to the court that counsel had a productive meet and confer, but Carlos' counsel needed additional time to discuss settlement with her client and his family. Carlos' counsel confirmed this representation, and all counsel agreed to continue the hearing to July 18, 2024 to enable Carlos' counsel time to discuss the settlement discussion with her client and his family.

However, on the same day as this hearing (i.e. June 25, 2024), Carlos and his counsel filed a Hague Petition for the Return of the Minor Child and a request for a No Notice *Ex Parte*Order for immediate pick up of the minor child with assistance of the U.S. Marshall in the

United States Court for the Northern District of California. The Federal Court issued an Order to Show Cause regarding Jurisdiction, and Carlos' counsel filed a declaration in response providing additional information regarding jurisdiction. Despite having a Temporary Restraining Order to protect her address and location and Mylea having filed a Declaration with the State Court for an address for service (which Carlos' counsel provided to the Federal Court), Carlos used his counsel, a third party, to proactively search for and obtain Mylea's protected, confidential residential address. Carlos' counsel used LexisNexis, an attorney only tool, to obtain the address, and used a "process server" to verify this address. This report was attached to Carlos' counsel's

² It is important to note that since Mr. Beck interviewed Mylea's contacts in Mexico and included their reports as a part of the corroborating evidence in his report, several contacts have become unavailable and unwilling to testify as witnesses, including Mylea's attorney in Mexico.

violation of the temporary restraining order in the Declaration of Erika A. Lee re Updates for the Court, filed on July 12, 2024.

Between the June 25, 2024 hearing and the hearing on July 18, 2024, Carlos and his

declaration and published into the public record. Mylea's counsel put the court on notice of this

Between the June 25, 2024 hearing and the hearing on July 18, 2024, Carlos and his counsel continued to use the Federal Court action to try and circumvent the TRO. The most egregious examples are: (1) The judge in the Federal Hague proceeding ordered the parties to "meet and confer" to explore settlement of the matter. Carlos and his attorney refused to engage in any fruitful discussions absent Mylea participating in the same room as Carlos. Counsel suggested that to comply with the current TRO, Mylea would participate in the settlement discussions by being in a separate "zoom room". Carlos and his attorney refused and repeatedly demanded her to be in the same room with Carlos – either physically or on zoom; and (2) After refusing Mylea's proposal for supervised visitation, which minor's counsel agreed to, Carlos and his attorney demanded zoom visitation with Ileana all counsel present on multiple occasions.

The District Attorney filed a Hague Petition for Return of the Minor Child in Mendocino County on July 10, 2024. A hearing on the State Hague Action was set for July 18, 2024.

In anticipation of the hearing on July 18, 2024, Mr. Beck submitted a supplemental report, which provided key updates to the court and deep concerns for Ileana in light of Carlos' questionable litigation tactics and his clear communication that he would not act in Ileana's best interest, only having his own interests at heart.

At the hearing on July 18, 2024, the court dealt with all pending issues before it and determined that the appropriate next steps were to set trial on Mylea's DVRO, following the guidance of *Fernandez v. Abin* (2011) 191 Cal.App.4th 1015.. The court discussed the

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Login v. Esparza Case No.: 23FL00613

interrelationship between the Hague Petition(s) and the DVRO, and determined that conducting the DVRO trial was appropriate and prudent, while the Hague action was still pending. The court provided its reasoning and relied on authority provided in *In re Marriage of Emilie DLM &* Carlos C (2021) Cal. App.5th 76. The court also acknowledged that based on Abin, it needed to address the DVRO before taking any further action, including addressing the Motion to Quash (which was directly addressed in the Abin decision). The court further determined it was necessary and appropriate to communicate with the court in the foreign jurisdiction under Family Code Section 3424. The court stayed the State Hague Action in light of the Federal Hague Action, and set trial on Mylea's DVRO for August 22, 2024 at 10:30am in Department A. The court admonished Carlos, informing him that a violation of the TRO would make the decision simple. The parties and counsel stipulated to admissibility of Minor's Counsel's original report for all purposes at the hearing, without further testimony; however, Carlos' counsel refused to stipulate to Minor's counsel's supplemental report.

In the afternoon on August 12, 2024, only a few days before the deadline of trial briefs, exhibits, and witnesses, Carlos' counsel emailed Mylea's counsel suggesting that they file a joint brief to inform the court that moving forward with the DVRO trial violates Article 16 of the Hague. Mylea's counsel denied the proposal for a joint brief, disagreeing with her legal position and indicating that the court had already acknowledged and ruled on this issue; a DVRO trial was clearly not a violation of Article 16 of The Hague Treaty. Further requests and discussions were conducted via email on August 13, 2024, and a mention of an ex parte, wherein Mylea's counsel re-iterated that it was collateral estoppel regarding this issue and advised that if an ex parte was pursued in this regard, Mylea's counsel would seek sanctions accordingly.

At 11:30pm on August 13, 2024, Carlos' counsel filed an ex parte application in the Federal Court to Stay the proceedings in the State Court. The parties were already scheduled to appear in Federal Court for a hearing on August 14, 2024. At the hearing on August 14, 2024 in the Federal Court, Judge Orrick admonished Carlos and his counsel for the filing of the ex parte, stating that the delay in seeking relief was enough reason on its own to deny the ex parte, and appeared to be "gamesmanship of the most transparent type". Judge Orrick went on to acknowledge that the State Court had clear jurisdiction to decide the DVRO, and its determination would be very helpful in making the determination on the Hague Action. Judge Orrick requested briefing from the parties and counsel on which court would be better situated to ultimately determine the Hague Action, or more appropriate under the law, given the concurrent actions. Judge Orrick expressed his concern that the best interest of the child was not the focus of the parties. After Judge Orrick expressed this concern, Carlos and his counsel relayed that the best interest of the child was not a consideration of the Hague. Judge Orrick was extremely upset by this comment and admonished Carlos and his counsel to consider the human rights in this case and informed them that their position tells him something about how this matter has been litigation and Carlos' perspective, which was appalling. It is important to note the litigation tactics engaged in by Carlos between the federal and state courts in the context of Mylea's request for a DVRO and Judge Orrick's determination and characterization of such in that Carlos' domestic violence abuse of Mylea has clearly continued in the litigation arena.

The parties are set for trial on Mylea's Domestic Violence Restraining Order on August 22, 2024 in Department A. Mylea is requesting that the court grant her request for a 5-year Domestic Violence Restraining Order with Ileana as a protected party due to the physical abuse,

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Petitioner's Trial Brief Page 6 sexual abuse, threats, and coercive control she underwent during and after their relationship, which has severely affected Ileana. Carlos' violations of the TRO, conduct throughout these proceedings, and clear litigation abuse support and corroborate Mylea's request for Domestic Violence Restraining Order.

II. <u>LEGAL ARGUMENT</u>

The purpose of the Domestic Violence Protection Act (DVPA) is to prevent acts of domestic violence, abuse, and sexual abuse and to provide for a separation of the persons involved in the domestic violence for a period sufficient to enable these persons to seek a resolution of the causes of the violence. Cal. Fam. Code 6220. Under the DVPA, a court is authorized to issue a protective order to restrain any person for the purpose of preventing a recurrence of domestic violence and ensuring a period of separation of the persons involved upon reasonable proof of a past act or acts of abuse. *In re Marriage of Davila & Majia* (2018) Cal.App.5th (citing Fam. Code Section 6300).

"Abuse" under the DVPA is defined as intentionally or recklessly cause or attempt to cause bodily injury, sexual assault, to place a person in reasonable apprehension of imminent serious bodily injury to that person or another, or to engage in any behavior that has been or could be enjoined under Section 6320. Abuse is not limited to the actual infliction of physical injury or assault. Cal. Fam. Code Section 6203.

Behavior that has been or could be enjoined under Section 6320 includes molesting, attacking, striking, stalking, threatening, sexually assaulting, battering, falsely impersonating another, harassing, telephoning, destroying personal property, contacting (directly or indirectly), by mail or otherwise, coming within a specific distance of, or disturbing the peace of the party.

Login v. Esparza Petitioner's Trial Brief
Case No.: 23FL00613 Page 7

Cal. Fam. Code Section 6320. "Disturbing the peace of the other party" refers to conduct that, based on the totality of the circumstances, destroys the mental or emotional calm of the other party. Cal. Fam. Code Section 6320(c). "This conduct includes, but is not limited to, coercive control, which is a pattern of behavior that in purpose or effect interferes with a person's free will and personal liberty." *Id*.

Cal. Fam. Code Section 6320(c) enumerates examples of coercive control, which are not limited to:

- (1) Isolating the other party from friends, relatives, or other sources of support.
- (2) Depriving the other party of basic necessities.
- (3) Controlling, regulating, or monitoring the other party's movements, communications, daily behavior, finances, economic resources, or access to services.
- (4) Compelling the other party by force, threat of force, or intimidation, including threats based on actual or suspected immigration status, to engage in conduct from which the other party has a right to abstain or to abstain from conduct in which the other party has a right to engage.
- (5) Engaging in reproductive coercion, which consists of control over the reproductive autonomy of another through force, threat of force, or intimidation, and may include, but is not limited to, unreasonably pressuring the other party to become pregnant, deliberately interfering with contraception use or access to reproductive health information, or using coercive tactics to control, or attempt to control, pregnancy outcomes.

A DVRO may be issued where the petitioner proves by a preponderance of evidence that there has been an act of abuse. *Cooper v. Bettinger* (2015) 242 Cal.App.4th 77, 99; *Hatley v.*

Login v. Esparza

Case No.: 23FL00613

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denied because the parties had contact between the physical violence and the filing of the DVRO. The appellate court has quickly corrected erroneous denials of a DVRO based on a lag between the abuse and a protective order application, noting that survivors of abuse respond and

Further, a court cannot deny a request for a DVRO based on the amount of time that has

Southard (2023) 94 Cal. App. 5th 579. The testimony of the person requesting the restraining

order alone is sufficient evidence for the court to issue a DVRO. In re Marriage of Fregoso &

Hernandez (2016) 5 Cal. App. 5th 698, 703 (confirming that the testimony of one witness, even

lapsed between the most recent incident of abuse and the request for protection, nor can it be

that of a party, may constitute substantial evidence); see also Fam. Code Section 6300.

DVRO based, in part, on the fact that the main incident of abuse occurred in March of 2022 and the petitioner did not file her request until April 25, 2022. *Vinson v. Kinsey* (2023) 93

Cal.App.5th 1166, 1173. The trial court indicated that it did not "understand why there was a delay in requesting the restraining order." *Id.* at 1177. The court then mistakenly interpreted

process their abuse in various ways. In Vinson v. Kinsey, the trial court denied the issuance of a

petitioner's continued contact with the respondent after the primary incident of abuse to mean

that she was "not particularly concerned about the threats made by the respond. *Id.*

The appellate court reversed the decision, finding that the trial court's interpretation imposed a "singular vision of how an abused woman should act." *Id.* at 1176. The appellate court then stated, "[a]ll women exposed to violence and abuse in their intimate relations do not respond similarly, contradicting the mistaken assumption that there exists a singular 'battered woman profile.' Like other trauma victims, battered women differ in the type and severity of their psychological reactions to violence and abuse, as well as their strategies for responding to

Login v. Esparza
Case No.: 23FL00613

Petitioner's Trial Brief
Page 10

violence and abuse." *Id.* (citing *In re I.B.* (2020) 53 Cal.App.5th 133, 155, quoting Dutton, *Understanding Women's Responses to Domestic Violence: A Redefinition of Battered Woman Syndrome* (1993) 21 Hofstra L.Rev.1191, 1225.). While the court may consider the timing of a restraining order request as a part of the totality of the circumstances, "[t]he length of time since the most recent act of abuse is not, by itself, determinative." Cal. Fam. Code Section 6301(c).

Here, Mylea has met her burden of proof by a preponderance of the evidence that there has been an act of abuse against her by Carlos through her own declarations, the violations of the TRO and litigation abuse (discussed in more detail below), as well as the testimony that will be provided at the trial. Mylea endured years of physical and sexual abuse during their relationship, as well as threats and control. During their relationship, Carlos would rape and physically force himself on Mylea, despite her clear objections and lack of consent. The presence of guns in the house communicated to Mylea that she was not safe, and Carlos would remind her of this fact. On several occasions, Carlos put his guns in Ileana's diaper and would laugh. One such instance was when he put a gun in Ileana's diaper after becoming jealous because Mylea was speaking to someone on the phone. This instilled a baseline sense of fear for herself and Ileana. She was not safe in her own home – a fear which was corroborated by the fact that Carlos installed cameras in the home and would monitor her every move as well as her conversations with others in the home.

These traumatic experiences built the foundation for her fear after the parties' relationship ended and were ever present in the years following their separation. Upon their separation, Mylea instantly knew there was no way for her to leave Mexico due to the abuse and fear for her and Ileana's lives. Carlos ensured that Mylea was watched and followed. He once

1 again reminded Mylea of his complete and utter control over her and the legal system in Mexico 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

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when he unilaterally withheld Ileana from Mylea until she was coerced into signing an agreement that was favorable to him. Mylea's testimony surrounding this event and the immense trauma that both she and Ileana faced are prime evidence of Carlos' coercive control and willingness to use the parties' minor child as a weapon and instrument to inflict his abuse and control. This agreement left Mylea homeless, without any transportation, and without any immediate financial support. During their relationship, Carlos ensured that Mylea was completely financially reliant on him and would not allow her to return to work after the birth of Ileana. Instead, he "permitted" her to only work at his family's restaurant.

Carlos' continued coercion after the parties' separation clearly communicated to Mylea that she was not free and that he would not abide by the agreement that he coerced her into signing under duress. Moreover, Carlos and his family's control over law enforcement ensured Carlos' ability to disregard any agreement or orders. Carlos and his family continually picked up Ileana during Mylea's designated time, and would threaten Mylea that she would never see Ileana again, leaving her powerless to seek recourse. Carlos continued to threaten Mylea, telling her that he would make her disappear, she could not leave Mexico, and informing her that he was still watching her. Mylea reasonably believed these threats to be true due to Carlos and his family's control and power over law enforcement and judiciary in the area, and their use of law enforcement to threaten and harass her.

Mylea finally found an opportunity to leave Mexico with Ileana after Carlos had just returned from a trip to Disneyland in the United States with Ileana. Believing that Carlos would be more amenable to Mylea taking a trip with Ileana, she informed him that she would be

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Login v. Esparza Petitioner's Trial Brief Case No.: 23FL00613 Page 11

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Login v. Esparza Case No.: 23FL00613

traveling to Puerto Vallarta, as he would not allow her to go outside of Mexico. Carlos agreed to the trip and Mylea immediately fled to California for protection from his violence and control.

1. Carlos' violation of the Temporary Restraining Order and his litigation abuse

Evidence of post-filing abuse is "plainly relevant," particularly when the abuse occurred after the issuance of a TRO. In re Marriage of F.M. & M.M. (2021) 65 Cal.App.5th 106, 117. Family Code Section 6203(a)(4) specifically provides that engaging in behavior that has been enjoined by a TRO pursuant to section 6320 constitutes abuse for the purposes of the DVPA. It follows, therefore, that violations of the TRO constitute additional acts of abuse, specifically constituting abuse that disturb the peace of the protected party. N.T. v. H.T. (2019) 34 Cal.App.5th 595, 603. A knowing violation of the restraining order cannot be characterized as de minimis and a technical violation. *Id.* at 603 (citing *Lister v. Bowen* (2013) 215 Cal.App.4th 319, 334-335), "Restraining orders are intended to 'increase a victim's safety, decrease a victim's fear of future harm, and improved a victim's overall sense of well-being and self-esteem." (Stats. 2014, ch. 635 section 1, subd.(f).). Courts have held that "any violation of a restraining order is very serious, and gives very significant support for renewal of a restraining order." Lister, 215 Cal.App.4th at 355. The abuser's very act of defying a court order can, by itself, exacerbate a victim's feelings of helplessness and fear. Logan & Walker, Civil Protective Order Outcomes (2009) 24 J. Interpersonal Violence 675,684. An abuser's violation of a DVRO leaves the victim feeling that no remedy will ever be effective in stopping abuse. See *Lister*, 215 Cal.App.4th at 333 ("A defendant's conduct can place a victim in reasonable fear of serious bodily injury without involving any violence.").

> Petitioner's Trial Brief Page 12

prime evidence of his abuse that must be considered by the court. After being served with the Temporary Order and knowing that Mylea's residential address was protected and confidential, he enlisted the assistance of a third party – his counsel – to search for and ascertain her residential address. This violation has no justification whatsoever and was purely to instill fear on Mylea. The searching and ascertainment of her residential address instilled immense fear in Mylea for the safety of her and Ileana. After becoming aware he knew her residential address, she immediately sought refuge with a friend for many days and contacted the police. While she sought refuge, Mylea consistently received notifications on her phone through her Ring app that an unknown person was coming to her door day and night. She further started seeing suspicious individuals sitting in vehicles outside her workplace.

In the instant case, Carlos' violation of the Temporary Restraining Order is relevant and

After seeing that Carlos was in Mendocino County for the last hearing, Mylea became instantly terrified because her address was no longer confidential, and he was in the area. This caused Mylea's counsel to put the court on notice of this fear and admonish Carlos. Mylea is limited in her resources and had already moved from her aunt's residence in Chico because Carlos and his family knew where Mylea's aunt lived. Since the discovery of her address, despite its confidentiality and the TRO, Mylea has lived in constant fear; constantly looking over her shoulder for Carlos. Mylea has also noticed a black SUV parked outside of her workplace and seemingly tracking her on several occasions, which has instilled even more fear.

Carlos' violation of the TRO, coupled with his litigation abuse in the State and Federal Court, is prime evidence of his abusive conduct and control. A fact which the Federal court recognized, on the record. Carlos has completely and utterly disregarded the judicial system and

Login v. Esparza Petitioner's Trial Brief
Case No.: 23FL00613 Page 13

is treating the California judicial system with the same expectations as he receives in Mexico where he has complete control. Carlos, by and through his counsel, has demanded that Mylea confront him under the guise of settlement in the federal court, despite a valid restraining order and her fear, and has employed emotional abuse to try and coerce Mylea into circumventing court orders for visitation. All the while, Carlos has employed his counsel, an officer of the court, to aid, acquiesce and abet the continuation of the abuse and disregard for the Temporary Restraining Order. On two separate occasions, Carlos and his counsel have gone behind the back of this court to try and obtain orders more favorable to him, and which he knows would be traumatic for Ileana, including the no notice TRO while settlement was being discussed in state court; and the ex parte request for a stay of this proceeding after this Court had already ruled on this issue. This ex parte request for a stay was recognized by the Federal Court as "gamesmanship at its most transparent", and indicated Carlos' litigation tactics were deceptive. The Federal Court further recognized and admonished Carlos for his lack of focus on Ileana's best interest, and stated that the way this case has been litigated tells him something about the perspective of Carlos, which he found to be appalling.

III. CONCLUSION

Based upon the foregoing, the evidence provided to the court by Mylea and minor's counsel in their declarations and reports, the violations of the TRO and litigation abuse by Carlos, and additional testimony by Mylea her witnesses, will show by a preponderance of the evidence that there have been numerous acts of abuse in the past; as well as ongoing abuse. This abuse is all encompassing, and still persists despite the protection of the court. Carlos' abuse has deeply impacted Ileana, causing her immense separation anxiety from Mylea, which Mylea continues to

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Login v. Esparza Petitioner's Trial Brief
Case No.: 23FL00613 Page 14

1	try and address with Ileana. Therefore, Mylea is requesting protection for herself and Ileana from			
2	Carlos and his abuse and requesting a five year restraining order.			
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4	Date: 08/15/2024	LAW OFFICES OF B J FADEM & ASSOCIATES, APC		
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6		ERIKA A. LEE, ESQ.		
7		Attorney for Petitioner		
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Login v. Esparza
Case No.: 23FL00613

Petitioner's Trial Brief
Page 15