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/ Attorney General Platkin, Labor Commissioner Asaro-Angelo Sue General Contractor, Subcontractors for Numerous Labor Violations

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 21, 2025

**TRENTON** – Attorney General Matthew J. Platkin and New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOL) Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo today jointly announced a lawsuit against a general contractor and five subcontractors for paying construction workers off the books on a Jersey City complex, denying the workers their lawful pay and benefits.

The lawsuit announced today alleges numerous violations of New Jersey labor laws by Grand Street Construction, LLC (GSC), the general contractor that oversaw construction of 88 Regent Street, a high-end apartment building in Jersey City, and five subcontractors: BWK Construction LLC, P&B Partitions Inc., Blue Star Drywall Corp, Drywall Builders Corp, and Williams Drywall, LLC.

Under the Murphy Administration, New Jersey has strengthened protections for all workers, including in the construction industry. In 2019, Governor Murphy signed legislation that gives DOL expanded authority to enforce labor law violations in the construction industry by holding general contractors liable for violations by their subcontractors. Other legislation signed by Governor Murphy has enhanced NJDOL's authority to assess penalties for an employer's failure to properly classify employees. The lawsuit filed today invokes these critical labor law protections, alleging that general contractor GSC is liable for the labor law violations of its subcontractors and that these defendants must pay penalties because they failed to properly classify workers.

"Our state's construction workers make enormous contributions to our state's economy, and they deserve the full protection of our state's labor laws. Too often, however, general contractors in the construction industry rely on and benefit from subcontractors who take advantage of workers and deny them their rightful pay. Today's lawsuit seeks a stop to this harmful practice," **said Attorney General Platkin**. "Our lawsuit sends a message: we will act against general contractors who benefit from labor violations committed by their subcontractors. Workers deserve their rightful pay and benefits, and taxpayers should not have to foot the bill when these underpaid workers must turn to public benefit programs to take care of their families."

"We will continue to crack down on any business in New Jersey that turns a profit by shortchanging employees to gain an unfair advantage over competitors who play by the rules," **said Labor Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo**. "Construction firms that cheat workers out of the hard-earned pay they depend on will not escape our scrutiny."

A [2022 report](#) estimated that while 26% of New Jersey working families overall had a family member enrolled in one or more social safety net programs providing public financial assistance, the figure for construction workers was estimated to be significantly higher, at 33%.

The [Century Foundation estimates](#) that in 2021, New Jersey taxpayers lost \$329.3 million from worker misclassification, including lost unemployment insurance contributions, Social Security and Medicare contributions, and federal and state income taxes.

This case began with a complaint about potentially unlawful conduct to NJDOL's Wage and Hour Division. NJDOL, the New Jersey Department of Treasury, and the New Jersey Department of Banking and Insurance entered and inspected the construction site on July 28, 2021.

The inspection revealed that at least 34 contractors and subcontractors were performing sprinkler, electrical, HVAC, plumbing, roofing, insulations, framing and drywall, painting, flooring, and scaffolding work. Of those 34, 16 companies [violated State wage, benefit, and tax laws](#), and NJDOL issued an assessment seeking back wages and penalties.

All 16 firms have resolved their liabilities with NJDOL, except for GSC, BWK, P&B, Blue Star, Williams Drywall, and Drywall Builders. These remaining firms have refused to comply with the Wage and Hour Law, Wage Payment Law, and Earned Sick Leave Law, and have failed to properly classify workers as employees.

GSC did not directly employ any construction workers at the site. Instead, it subcontracted drywall work to P&B and BWK. P&B, in turn, subcontracted with Blue Star, Williams, and Drywall Builders. The employees were paid by cash or check. The lawsuit alleges that GSC, BWK, P&B, Blue Star, Williams Drywall, and Drywall Builders:

- failed to pay overtime;
- failed to pay timely wages;
- failed to maintain and produce records of hours and wages;

- failed to maintain and produce records of earned sick leave;
- failed to make available and provide earned sick leave; and
- failed to make required contributions to the New Jersey Unemployment Compensation Fund, Disability Benefits Fund, and Workforce Development Funds.

Additionally, the lawsuit alleges that GSC, BWK, P&B, Blue Star, and Drywall Builders failed to properly classify employees; that GSC, P&B, and Williams Drywall failed to pay workers the minimum wage required by law; and that Drywall Builders unlawfully employed a minor to perform construction work.

The lawsuit seeks, among other things, a judgment that the construction workers that performed the labor at 88 Regent were employees; an award of all unpaid minimum wages and unpaid overtime owed to these employees; an award of damages to the employees as a result of the defendants' failure to provide Earned Sick Leave; an award of all contributions to the Unemployment Compensation Fund, Disability Benefits Fund, Workforce Development Partnership Fund, and Supplemental Workforce Fund for Basic Skills; and other penalties, damages and fees.

NJDOL is represented in this matter by the Office of the Attorney General's Division of Law by Deputy Attorneys General Andrew Simon, Marc D. Peralta, Sara Vasquez, and Daniel Resler, under the supervision of Labor Enforcement Section Chief Eve E. Weissman and Assistant Attorney General Mayur P. Saxena.

Learn more about the illegal practice of employee misclassification [here](#). Businesses can learn about legal requirements and services provided to them at: [nj.gov/labor](https://nj.gov/labor). For more information on worker benefits and protections, visit [myworkrights.nj.gov](https://myworkrights.nj.gov).

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