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More and more frequently, employers are evading the legal requirement to pay overtime to their employees by choosing to pay them on a salaried basis instead of an hourly wage, and then telling the employees that they're not entitled to overtime because they have an "exempt" job title. But often this practice amounts to nothing more than illegal wage theft from workers who should be classified as hourly and are being denied overtime pay that they deserve.

In June 2016, along with Andrew Santillo of Winebrake & Santillo of Dresher, Pa., I filed a civil case in the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland charging Illinois-based Heartland Dental, LLC, with violating the law by doing just that. Our complaint alleged that Heartland Dental committed wage theft by denying overtime pay, which is normally "time-and-a-half" of their regular pay, to office managers whom the company misclassified as salaried. Heartland Dental hired these office managers to work in dental offices throughout the country.

On May 23, 2017, we obtained a judgment, totaling over \$25,000.00, entered on the basis of settlements with Heartland Dental on behalf of our three clients- all of them residents of Prince George's County, Md., and all of them "salaried" office managers who were improperly denied overtime pay by Heartland Dental.

Heartland Dental is a company that provides office managers, marketing personnel, IT workers, and other support staff to dentists across the country. It works with more than 750 dental offices and pays the workers directly.

We alleged in the lawsuit that Heartland Dental violated federal overtime law by classifying its so-called "S" or salaried office managers in dental offices as exempt from receiving overtime premium pay (or "time-and-a-half" pay) when they worked more than 40 hours in a week.

We pointed out in the complaint that the duties and level of supervision of the "S" office managers were identical to those of other office managers who were being paid hourly and were receiving overtime pay. Accordingly, we asserted Heartland violated the federal Fair Labor Standards Act. We sought damages, penalties and litigation costs from Heartland Dental.

The lawsuit was filed as a collective action on behalf of all people who worked as salaried office managers for Heartland Dental any time after June 16, 2013. We are confident that there are other present and former employees of Heartland Dental who are or have been in this situation, and we hope that others will come forward.

Mr. Santillo and I are very pleased that we obtained this judgment for our c clients and hope that others will also be brave enough to come forward to try to collect the monies they are owed.

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