

## Kia, Hyundai Workers Want Early Nod for \$11.5 Million Fraud Deal

By Alexis Waiss 2026-02-10T15:09:55000-05:00

A group of Mexican nationals who claim they were defrauded when recruited to work for Hyundai and Kia asked a federal court to consider their proposed \$11.5 million settlement.

Jorge Oswaldo Aquino Martinez and seven other named plaintiffs represent a class and collective of workers who were allegedly subjected to an “international RICO scheme involving mail fraud, wire fraud, fraud in foreign labor contracting, visa fraud,” and Fair Labor Standards Act violations, according to a Monday [motion](#) requesting preliminary settlement approval. If the settlement were approved, FLSA collective members would split \$999,870 and some members of the racketeering class would be eligible to receive up to \$16,800 each.

The proposed net settlement covers damages stemming from the workers’ relocation to the US for nonexistent jobs, with some class members claiming greater losses related to not being paid what was promised, the motion said. Hyundai and Kia allegedly used staffing agencies to secure non-immigrant “Trade NAFTA” visas for Mexican engineers and technicians, but then put those engineers and technicians into manual labor jobs with discriminatory pay and excessive work hours.

The case involves hundreds of foreign workers “who were exploited as part of an illegal scheme for cheap labor in Hyundai’s and Kia’s automotive production plant in West Point, Georgia,” the plaintiffs said in a 2023 [complaint](#) filed to the US District Court for the Northern District of Georgia.

“All Defendants knew that TN visas would not and could not be granted for manual labor positions such as the production line laborer positions that Hyundai and Kia wanted filled,” the complaint elaborated. “This was because TN visas are available only to professional level foreign workers to work in professional-level, technical job positions.”

Plaintiffs and their counsel believe their claims are meritorious, the motion said. But “given the difficulties Plaintiffs would have to overcome if they were to litigate these cases to verdict, the recovery under the terms of the Settlement is fair, adequate, and reasonable.”

The proposed settlement is non-reversionary, meaning its funds will be paid to all class and collective members without the need for them to submit a claim. Any excess funds that aren't distributed would be donated to Georgia Legal Services LLC.

The motion also requests the court to approve \$3.45 million in attorneys' fees and costs.

Radford Scott LLP, Hall & Lampros LLP, and Beal Sutherland Berlin & Brown LLC represent the workers. Constangy, Brooks Smith & Prophete LLP represents Kia Georgia Inc. Burr & Forman LLP represents Mobis Alabama LLC, which does business as Hyundai Mobis. Troutman Pepper Hamilton Sanders LLP represents the staffing agencies.

The case is [Martinez v. Mobis Alabama, LLC](#) , N.D. Ga., No. 3:22-cv-00145, settlement motion filed 2/9/26 .

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