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APPELLANT'S REPLY BRIEF

2 COMES NOW Appellant REZA ZANDIAN ("ZANDIAN"), by 3 and through his attorneys KAEMPFER CROWELL, and hereby 4 submits his reply to the Respondent's Answering Brief 5 ("Answering Brief") filed January 20, 2015, with this Court.¹ 6 ZANDIAN hereby requests that this Court reverse the Order on 7 8 Motion for Order Allowing Costs and Necessary Disbursements 9 and Memorandum of Points and Authorities in Support Thereof 10 (the "Order") issued May 19, 2014, by the District Court in this 11 case below. 12

ARGUMENT

I. NRS 598.0999(2) Fails to Authorize an Award of Attorney's Fees in Litigation Between Private Parties.

MARGOLIN'S contention that NRS 598.0999(2) should be
 liberally construed² is inconsistent with Nevada's

 A reply brief "must be limited to answering any new matter set forth in the opposing brief." NRAP 28(c). Accordingly, only those arguments which were not addressed in *Appellant's Opening Brief* are addressed herein.

² See Answering Brief at 6:11-17. Respondent's application of a mechanic's lien jurisprudence, including reliance upon a California Court of Appeals case, does not justify overriding this Court's consistent decision to apply the American Rule absent an express contractual or statutory exception.

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1	jurisprudence concerning awards of attorneys' fees. Nevada
2	generally follows the "American Rule" which requires that
3	litigants bear their own attorney's fees. ³ The only exception to
4	application of the American Rule in Nevada occurs when a
5	contract, statute or court rule authorizes an award of
7	attorney's fees. ⁴ However, because these exceptions are in
8	
9	"derogation of common law," they are "strictly construed"
10	(emphasis added). ⁵ Strict construction of exceptions to the
11	American Rule do not allow for a liberal construction of NRS
12	598.0999 as requested by MARGOLIN. In fact, deviations from
13	
14	³ See Smith v. Crown Fin. Servs., 111 Nev. 277, 281, 890 P.2d
15	769, 771-72 ("It has been a consistent rule throughout the United
16	States that a litigant has no inherent right to have his attorney's fees paid by his opponent or opponents. Such an item is not recoverable in the ordinary access of demonstration of the second seco
17 18	the ordinary case as damages, nor as costs, and hence is held not allowable in the absence of some provision for its allowance either in
18 19	a statute or rule of court, or some contractual provision or stipulation. This sweeping general rule has been applied in legions of cases to
20	preclude recovery of attorney's fees, whether by the plaintiff or by the defendant, from one's opponent in a civil action." (<i>Quoting</i> 1 Stuart
21	M. Speiser, <i>Attorneys' Fees</i> § 12:3 at 463-64 (1973)). <i>4 See Horgan v. Felton</i> , 123 Nev. 577, 583, 1780 P.3d 982, 986
22	(2007) (<i>citing Rowland v. Lepire</i> , 99 Nev. 308, 315, 662 P.2d 1332, 1336 (1983)).
23	⁵ Bobby Berosini, 114 Nev. at 1352, 971 P.2d at 385 (citing
24	<i>Gibellini v. Klindt</i> , 110 Nev. 1201, 1205, 885 P.2d 540, 543 (1994)).
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the American Rule are justified only by an "express"⁶ statutory
 provision which establishes the exception in "plain terms."⁷

MARGOLIN further claims that ZANDIAN'S argument that NRS 598.0999(2) does not permit an award of attorney's fees because it is limited to an action brought by the District Attorney or Attorney General is clearly erroneous.⁸ A plain reading of NRS 598.0999(2) establishes a conclusion to the contrary. NRS 598.0999 provides:

Civil and criminal penalties for violations.

2. Except as otherwise provided in NRS 598.0974, in any action brought pursuant to the provisions of NRS 598.0903 to 598.0999, inclusive, if the court finds that a person has willfully engaged in a deceptive trade practice, the district attorney of any county in this State or the

⁶ See Sun Realty v. Dist. Ct., 91 Nev. 774, 776, 542 P.2d 1072,
¹⁰⁷⁴ (1975) (citing Dearden v. Galli, 71 Nev. 199, 284 P.2d 384
¹⁸ (1955)).

⁷ Dixon v. Second Judicial Dist. Ct., 44 Nev. 98, 101, 190 P. 352, 353 (1920) ("The general rule is that counsel fees are not recoverable by a successful party either in an action at law or in equity except in the enumerated instances where they are expressly allowed by a statute.... And in the absence of a statute authorizing it in plain terms, no such fee can be taxed on appeal." (*Citing Mooney v. Newton*, 43 Nev. 441, 187 P. 721; *Miller v. Kehoe*, 107 Cal. 340, 40 P. 485)).

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⁸ See Answering Brief at 8:4-6.

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Attorney General bringing the action may recover a civil penalty not to exceed \$5,000 for each violation. The court in any such action may, in addition to any other relief or reimbursement, award reasonable attorney's fees and costs.⁹

This provision does not support the District Court's ruling awarding MARGOLIN post-judgment attorney's fees, nor does it support MARGOLIN'S claim in his Answering Brief.

8 NRS 598.0999(2) is only triggered by actions "brought 9 pursuant to NRS 598.0903-598.0999."10 Those provisions 10 authorize the commencement of an action by the Nevada 11 Attorney General¹¹ and Nevada's district attorneys¹² in regard 12 to deceptive trade practices. The statute does not authorize a 13 14 private right of action. Since the statute's inception on July 1, 15 200113, this Court has not interpreted it to authorize an award 16 of attorney's fees to a private litigant like MARGOLIN. 17 MARGOLIN points to no case analyzing this statutory 18 provision that suggests otherwise. 19

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9 NRS 598.0999(2).

¹⁰ Id.

¹¹ See NRS 598.096; NRS 598.0963

¹² See NRS 598.0983; NRS 598.0985

¹³ *See* 2001 Stat. of Nev. 482.

Page 4

1 When the statute was amended in 2013, the Nevada 2 Legislature expanded the authorization beyond district 3 attorneys and the Attorney General to also include the 4 Commissioner of Consumer Affairs and the Director of the 5 Department of Business and Industry.¹⁴ That amendment, 6 however, did not authorize a private cause of action either. 7

8 Even if the statute is deemed to authorize private causes 9 of action, the plain unambiguous language of NRS 598.0999(2) 10 restricts an award of attorney's fees to only those actions 11 brought by the Attorney General or a District Attorney. The 12 statute provides that the Attorney General or District Attorney 13 14 "may recover a civil penalty" up to \$5,000 for a deceptive trade 15 practice.¹⁵ Then the final sentence of NRS 598.0999 goes on 16 to state, "The court in any such action may, in addition to any 17 other relief or reimbursement, award reasonable attorney's 18 fees and costs."16 The language "any such action" clearly refers 19

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¹⁴ See Senate Bill 488 (77th (2013) Session of the Nevada Legislature). The referenced amendment does not go into effect until July 1, 2015.

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- ¹⁶ See id. (emphasis added).

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¹⁵ NRS 598.0999(2).

to the preceding sentence which addresses the recovery of a 1 2 civil penalty by the Attorney General or district attorney. To 3 read the language otherwise renders the words "in any such 4 action" superfluous and removes all meaning provided by the 5 context. Nevada law rejects such an interpretation.¹⁷ 6

7 This clear point becomes unmistakable when the 8 provision at issue is considered in conjunction with NRS 9 598.0975. That statute directs the disposition of "all fees, civil 10 penalties and any other money collected pursuant to the 11 provisions of NRS 598.0903 to 598.0999, inclusive."¹⁸ Money 12 collected by actions initiated by the Attorney General are to be 13 14 deposited into the State General Fund¹⁹, while money collected 15 in an action initiated by a district attorney are deposited with 16

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¹⁷ Butler v. State, 120 Nev. 879, 892-93, 102 P.3d 71 (2004) 18 ("Statutes should be given their plain meaning and 'must be construed as a whole and not be read in a way that would render 19 words or phrases superfluous or make a provision nugatory. Further, every word, phrase, and provision of a statute is presumed to have 20meaning." (footnote omitted) (quoting Charlie Brown Constr. Co. v. Boulder City, 106 Nev. 497, 503, 797 P.2d 946 (1990); overruled on 21 other grounds, Calloway v. City of Reno, 116 Nev. 250, 993 P.2d 1259 22 (2000)).

¹⁸ NRS 598.0975(1) (emphasis added).

¹⁹ See NRS 598.0975(1)(a).

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1 the county treasurer.²⁰ The only exceptions to the required 2 disposition of funds collected pursuant to NRS 598.0999 are: 3 (1) criminal fines²¹ and (2) "restitution".²² The first category, 4 criminal fines, is not at issue in this appeal. As to the second, 5 NRS 598.0975 directs: 6

Money collected for restitution ordered in such an action *must* be deposited by the Attorney General and credited to the appropriate account of the Attorney General for distribution to the person for whom the restitution was ordered.23

NRS 598.0975 comprehensively addresses money collected 11 pursuant to NRS 598.0999 and directs the disposition of that 12 money. And there is no category of money which flows directly 13 14 from a judgment debtor, such as ZANDIAN, to a judgment 15 creditor, such as MARGOLIN. This conclusively establishes 16 that NRS 598.0999 does not provide authorization for an 17 award of attorney's fees in a private cause of action. 18

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²⁰ See NRS 598.0975(1)(b).

²¹ Presumably, such fines are disbursed in the same manner as other criminal fines.

²² NRS 598.0975(3)(b).

²³ Id.

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1 Finally, even if it was applicable to MARGOLIN's claim in 2 general, the provision does not apply to post-judgment 3 attorney's fees which the Motion requested and the Order 4 granted. Nothing in the language of the provision expresses or 5 implies that it authorizes any award subsequent to a judicial 6 7 adjudication that there has been a violation of Chapter 598 of 8 Nevada Revised Statutes. 9 II. MARGOLIN has Never Sought Attorney's Fees 10 Pursuant to NRS 41.600 and has Therefore Waived Any Claim for Fees Under that Statute. 11 The record on appeal contains no reference to NRS 12 41.600 because: (1) MARGOLIN never sought an award of 13 14 attorney's fees pursuant to NRS 41.600 before the District 15 Court²⁴ and (2) the District Court never based its award of 16 attorney's fees to MARGOLIN upon NRS 41.600, let alone 17 referenced NRS 41.600 in its Order granting the award of post-18 19 20 ²⁴ See Complaint, J.A. at Vol. I, 1-10; Amended Complaint, J.A. at 21 Vol. 1, 11-18; see also Motion, J.A. Vol. III, 411-418; Declaration of Adam McMillen in Support of Plaintiff's Motion, J.A. Vol. III, 419-22 494; Reply in Support of Motion, J.A. at Vol. IV, 506-512; 23 Declaration of Adam McMillen in Support of Reply in Support of Plaintiff's Motion, J.A. at Vol. IV, 513-533.

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1	judgment attorney's fees. ²⁵ MARGOLIN, now for the first time,
2	and with no prior notice to ZANDIAN, seeks to apply NRS
3	41.600 as a basis for an award of attorney's fees. As this Court
4	
5	is well aware, arguments raised for the first time on appeal
6	need not be considered. ²⁶ As such, MARGOLIN's new attempt
7	to seek attorney's fees pursuant to NRS 41.600 should be
8	disregarded by this Court.
9	
10	III. The District Court Abused its Discretion in Authorizing Specialized Fee Rates for Routine Legal
11	Work. ²⁷
12	The District Court enjoys discretion in determining the
13	amount of a reasonable fee award when such an award is
14	authorized by law. But that discretion is not without restraint.
15	Brunzell v. Golden Gate Nat'l Bank ²⁸ established the framework
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17	by which fees are to be evaluated. That <i>Brunzell</i> framework
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	²⁵ See Order on Motion, J.A. at Vol. IV, 549-558.
19	²⁶ Montesano v. Donrey Media Group, 99 Nev. 644, 650 n. 5, 668
20	P.2d 1081, 185 N. 5 (1983); <i>Tupper v. Kroc</i> , 88 Nev. 146, 149, 494 P.2d 1275, 1278 (1972).
21	²⁷ If the Court determines that NRS 598.0999 or NRS 41.600 do
22	not support the District Court's award in the <i>Order</i> , the issue addressed in this Section III is rendered moot and need not be
23	reviewed.
24	²⁸ 85 Nev. 345, 455 P.2d 31 (1969).
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involves consideration of several factors in determining the
reasonable value of legal services.²⁹ One factor, the most
pertinent in this case, requires the District Court to consider *"the character of the work to be done*: its difficulty, its intricacy,
its importance, time and skill required...."³⁰

7 Most of the legal work during the timeframe addressed in 8 the Motion was completed by two attorneys for MARGOLIN, 9 both of whom charged \$300 per hour.³¹ MARGOLIN claimed 10 that this elevated hourly rate was necessary due to counsels' 11 experience and specialized skills in regard to "patent and 12 deceptive trade practices litigation" which is a "niche practice 13 14 that requires a high degree of legal skill and care in order to be 15 performed properly and effectively."32 Noting that "the 16 customary fee charged by attorneys with our experience for 17 similar patent and deceptive trade practices matters in Nevada 18

²⁹ See Brunzell, 85 Nev. at 349-50, 455 P.2d at 33-34.

³⁰ Brunzell, 85 Nev. at 349, 455 at 33 (emphasis in original).

³¹ See J.A. Vol. IV at 553 ("The amount of attorney's fees awarded only includes reasonable attorney's fees from October 18, 2013 to April 18, 2014, as follows: 11.4 hours of work performed by [Attorney 1] at \$300 per-hour (\$3,420.00); [and] 75.3 hours of work performed by [Attorney 2] at \$300 per-hour (\$22,590.00).")

³² J.A. at Vol. III, 416, 419-23.

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KAEMPFER CROWELL 50 West Liberty Street Suite 700 Reno, Nevada 89501 ranges between \$275-\$450 per-hour," MARGOLIN's counsel
argued that the \$300 hourly fee was an appropriate rate for
the work performed from October 18, 2013 through April 18,
2014.³³

While it may very well be the case that an attorney 6 experienced and specialized in patent and intellectual trade 7 8 practice issues justifies a rate of \$300 per hour, that rate is 9 not consistent with the work at issue here. The work of 10 MARGOLIN's counsel from October 2013 to April 2014 11 involved collection efforts toward satisfaction of the Default 12 13 Judgment and oppositions to ZANDIAN's efforts to set aside 14 and stay the Default Judgment.34 This work does not implicate 15 any need for a legal specialist. While MARGOLIN has every 16 right to employ and pay for the services of whomever he 17 wishes to perform work related to his case, the fees for the 18 post-judgment work performed are not reasonable and the 19 20

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³³ J.A. at Vol. III, 420.

³⁴ See J.A. at Vol. I, 44-Vol. IIII, 410; *Docket Sheet* at 3-4 (Nov. 5, 2014) *Zandian v. Margolin*, Nevada Supreme Court Case No. 65960).

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District Court should have reduced the rate to reflect the non specialized rate of a general practitioner.

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KAEMPFER CROWELL 50 West Liberty Street Suite 700 Reno, Nevada 89501 For this reason, the District Court abused its discretion in applying a rate of \$300 per hour for the attorneys involved in this case, and the *Order* should be reversed and remanded on that basis.

CONCLUSION

ZANDIAN respectfully requests that this Court reverse the District Court's Order on Motion for Order Allowing Costs and Necessary Disbursements and Memorandum of Points and Authorities in Support Thereof, and remand this matter to the District Court for further proceedings consistent with this ruling.

DATED this 5th day of March, 2015.

KAEMPFER CROWELL

BY:

SEVERIN A. CARLSON Nevada Bar No. 9373 50 West Liberty Street, Suite 700 Reno, Nevada 89501 **Attorneys for Appellant**

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1	CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE
2	1. I hereby certify that this brief complies with the
3	formatting requirements of NRAP 32(a)(4), the typeface
4 5	requirements of NRAP 32(a)(5) and the type style requirements
6	of NRAP 32(a)(6) because:
7	[X] This brief has been prepared in a
8	proportionally spaced typeface using Microsoft Word 2010 in
9	14 point Bookman Old Style font; or
10	
11	[] This brief has been prepared in a monospaced
12	typeface using [state name and version of word processing
13	program] with [state number of characters per inch and name of
14	type style].
15	2. I further certify that this brief complies with the
16	page or type-volume limitations of NRAP 32(a)(7) because,
17	excluding the parts of the brief exempted by NRAP 32(a)(7)(c),
18 19	it is either:
20	[X] Proportionally spaced, has a typeface of 14
21	points or more and contains 2,357 words; or
22	[] Monospaced, has 10.5 fewer characters per
23	inch, and contains words or lines of text; or
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2 3. Finally, I hereby certify that I have read this 3 appellate brief, and to the best of my knowledge, information 4 and belief, it is not frivolous or interposed for any improper 5 purpose. I further certify that this brief complies with all 6 7 applicable Nevada Rules of Appellate Procedure, in particular 8 NRAP 28(e)(1), which requires every assertion in the brief 9 regarding matters in the record to be supported by a reference 10 to the page and volume number, if any, of the transcript or 11 appendix where the matter relied on is to be found. I 12 13 understand that I may be subject to sanctions in the event 14 that the accompanying brief is not in conformity with the 15 requirements of the Nevada Rules of Appellate Procedure.

DATED this 5th day of March, 2015.

KAEMPFER CROWELL

SEVERIN A. CARLSON (NBN 9373) 50 West Liberty Street, Suite 700 Reno, Nevada 89501 (775) 852-3900 **Attorneys for Appellant**

	ł	
	1	CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE
	2	Pursuant to NRAP 25(1), I declare that I am an
	3	employee of Kaempfer Crowell and that on this 5th day of
	4	March, 2015, I filed the foregoing Appellant's Reply Brief
	5 6	through the Nevada Supreme Court's CM/ECF electronic filing
	7	program which will send notification to the following:
	8	Adam P. McMillen
	9	WATSON ROUNDS 5371 Kietzke Lane
	10	Reno, Nevada 89511
	11	need mind
	12	an employee of Kaempfer Crowell
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