CHRISTOPHER HAMILTON ET AL. v. VAIL CORPORATION ET AL.
Cases No. C095844 and C097604

Defendants Vail Resorts, Inc., The Vail Corporation, and Heavenly Valley, Limited Partnership, are related companies that own and operate ski resorts in many states. Beginning in 2020, employees sued the ski resort operators in separate lawsuits in California and in Colorado alleging labor law violations, including failing to pay employees for all hours worked. Certain employees (like plaintiffs here) sought in their competing lawsuits to be named class representatives, meaning they each wanted the court hearing their case to agree those certain employees could represent the "class" of all employees nationwide.

At some point, the suing California employees reached a settlement agreement with Vail Resorts for around $13 million. They then asked a court in California to appoint them as class representatives and approve the settlement. If approved, the settlement agreement would cover a nationwide class of employees. The suing Colorado employees objected, in part because they believed the settlement amount was too low, and because approval of the settlement would extinguish their outstanding suit. The Colorado plaintiffs moved to intervene in, or join, the California lawsuit and to reject the settlement agreement. But the trial court denied their motion to intervene and entered judgment approving the settlement agreement.

On appeal, the intervenors argue:

(1) The trial court erred in denying their motion to intervene;

(2) The trial court lacked jurisdiction to consider the settlement;

(3) The trial court improperly presumed the settlement was fair; and

(4) The trial court erred in certifying the class action.