

MAKE-A-WISH 5k Run & Walk Sunday April 13, 1997 2:00 p.m. **Research Park**

\$12 in advance, \$15 day of event PRIZES TO BE AWARDED

lated state wage laws by pressuring workers to pick up trash and do other tasks without pay before or after their regular shifts, a jury ruled yesterday.

The 12-member King County Superior Court jury was unanimous on the two most critical questions, finding that the violations showed a pattern of failing to pay overtime and were committed willfully with an intent to deprive employees of pay. The ruling could affect 12,000 to 13,000 workers in Washington state.

The seven-man, five-woman jury had deliberated for 7 1/2 days over a two-week period since receiving the case March 26.

a separate hearing, the format of which has yet to be determined.

Taco Bell, a Mexican fast-food chain based in Irvine, Calif., said it would appeal.

Company vice president Jonathan Blum said that company officials believe any violations were isolated, not a systemwide problem, and that they would appeal the jury's finding that the problems were systemic.

Because of that finding, everybody who worked at 62 companyowned restaurants in the past five years becomes eligible for damages, not just the seven who brought the original lawsuit.

would probably seek a court order to bring Taco Bell into compliance.

Among other things, one witness testified she had to make up worker schedules at home, without com-pensation. She also had to participate in "cleaning parties" before corporate inspections were scheduled, and the only pay was some pizza, she said. The company said there were a few "unfortunate incidents" but no pattern of abuse. The plaintiffs had argued that the

company violated labor laws at 62 corporate-owned restaurants in Washington over the past five years. The violations involved employ-

ees waiting until after they started

clocking out, working during and rest breaks, and failing tor work on company records. They contended that thep

regional managers in char Taco Bells in the state was ti holding down labor costs an minimum-wage employees, of them minors, people wit job skills and little education cent immigrants who spoke lish as a second language. Eager for even low-paying

they were required to pick up prepare food and do other work before and after the tim were supposed to begin work, lawsuit contended.



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