

a reasonable extension of the time allowed for response to an Order to Show Cause." Therefore, Judge Randall found "(1) that the Respondent's letter dated March 22, 1998, is deemed as a request to accept a late filing, (2) that three days is a reasonable extension of time to file this request, and (3) that the Respondent has subsequently requested a hearing in this matter within that reasonable time." The Acting Deputy Administrator agrees with Judge Randall's conclusion that she had jurisdiction in this matter.

As to the merits of this case, the Acting Deputy Administrator finds that on February 11, 1997, the Texas State Board of Medical Examiners (Board) issued an order temporarily suspending Respondent's license to practice medicine in the State of Texas. Subsequently, on February 18, 1997, the Texas Department of Public Safety canceled his state controlled substance registration.

In his request for a hearing, Respondent argued that his medical license was unjustly suspended by the Board. He requested that DEA postpone taking any action against his DEA registration "until the temporary suspension of [his] Texas license is further adjudicated." However, Respondent did not deny that he is not currently authorized to handle controlled substances in Texas.

The DEA does not have statutory authority under the Controlled Substances Act to issue or maintain a registration if the applicant or registrant is without authority to handle controlled substances in the state in which he conducts his business. 21 U.S.C. 802(21) 823(f) and 824(a)(3). This prerequisite has been consistently upheld. See *Romeo J. Perez, M.D.*, 62 FR 16,193 (1997); *Demetris A. Green, M.D.*, 61 FR 60,728 (1996); *Dominick A. Ricci, M.D.*, 58 FR 51,104 (1993).

Here it is clear that Respondent is not currently authorized to handle controlled substances in Texas, where he is registered with DEA. Since Respondent lacks this state authority, he is not entitled to a DEA registration in that state.

In light of the above, Judge Randall properly granted the Government's Motion for Summary Disposition. It is well settled that where there is no material question of fact involved, there is no need for a plenary, administrative hearing. Congress did not intend for administrative agencies to perform meaningless tasks. *Gilbert Ross, M.D.*, 61 FR 8664 (1996); *Philip E. Kirk, M.D.*, 48 FR 32,887 (1983), *aff'd sub nom Kirk v. Mullen*, 749 F.2d 297 (6th Cir. 1984). As Judge Randall noted, "[h]ere, there is

no dispute concerning the material fact that the Respondent currently lacks state authority to handle controlled substances in Texas."

Accordingly, the Acting Deputy Administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration, pursuant to the authority vested in him by 21 U.S.C. 823 and 824 and 28 CFR 0.100(b) and 0.104, hereby orders that DEA Certificate of Registration BC2334364, previously issued to Garth A.A. Clark, M.D., be, and it hereby is, revoked. The Acting Deputy Administrator further orders that any pending applications for renewal of such registration, be, and they hereby are, denied. This order is effective November 12, 1998.

Dated: October 6, 1998.

Donnie R. Marshall,

Acting Deputy Administrator.

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DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Office of the Secretary

Advisory Council on Employee Welfare and Pension Benefit Plans Notice of Renewal

In accordance with the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act and Office of Management and Budget Circular A-63 and after consultation with the General Services Administration (GSA), the Secretary of Labor has determined that the renewal of the Advisory Council on Employee Welfare and Pension Benefit Plans is in the public interest in connection with the performance of duties imposed on the Department of section 512(a)(1) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

The Advisory Council on Employee Welfare and Pension Benefit Plans shall advise the Secretary of Labor on technical aspects of the provisions of ERISA and shall provide reports and/or recommendations by November 14 of each year on its findings to the Secretary of Labor.

The Council shall be composed of fifteen members appointed by the Secretary. Not more than eight members of the Council shall be of the same political party. Three of the members shall be representatives of employee organizations, at least one of whom shall be representative of any organization members of which are participants in a multiemployer plan; three of the members shall be representatives of employers (at least one of whom shall be representative of employers maintaining or contributing to

multiemployer plans); three members shall be representatives appointed from the general public (one of whom shall be a person representing those receiving benefits from a pension plan); and there shall be one representative each from the fields of insurance, corporate trust, actuarial counseling, investment counseling, investment management, and the accounting field.

The Advisory Council will report to the Assistant Secretary of the Pension and Welfare Benefits Administration. It will function solely as an advisory body and in compliance with the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, and its charter will be filed under the Act. For further information, contact Sharon K. Morrissey, Executive Secretary, Advisory Council on Employee Welfare and Pension Benefit Plans, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20210, telephone (202) 219-8921.

Signed at Washington, DC, this 5th day of October, 1998.

Alexis M. Herman,

Secretary of Labor.

[FR Doc. 98-27377 Filed 10-9-98; 8:45 am]

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MERIT SYSTEMS PROTECTION BOARD

Opportunity To File Amicus Briefs in *Bracey v. Office of Personnel Management*, MSPB Docket No. DC-831E-97-0643-I-1, and *Wilson v. Office of Personnel Management*, MSPB Docket No. AT-844E-97-0645-I-1

AGENCY: Merit Systems Protection Board.

ACTION: The Merit Systems Protection Board has requested an advisory opinion from the Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) concerning the interpretation of regulations promulgated by OPM. The Board is providing interested parties with an opportunity to submit amicus briefs on the same questions raised in the request to OPM. The Board's request to OPM is reproduced below:

"Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 1204(e)(1)(A), the Merit Systems Protection Board requests an advisory opinion concerning the interpretation of regulations promulgated by the Office of Personnel Management.

"*Background.* The appellants in the above-captioned cases became unable to perform the duties of their most recently-held positions of record because of medical conditions. In each case the employing agency provided the

appellant with light duty, and in each case the light duty assignment ended due to a wide-ranging reduction in force that was not directed specifically at eliminating light-duty assignments. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) denied the appellants' applications for disability retirement on the ground that the employing agencies had 'accommodated' the appellants' medical conditions.

"*Applicable regulations.* The Bracey appeal arises under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS). The governing CSRS regulations promulgated by OPM provide in pertinent part that an individual is entitled to a disability annuity only if, inter alia: He or she, 'while employed in a position subject to the [CSRS],' became 'disabled because of a medical condition, resulting in a service deficiency in performance, conduct, or attendance, or if there is no actual service deficiency, the disabling medical condition must be incompatible with either useful and efficient service or retention in the position'; and the employing agency is 'unable to accommodate the disabling medical condition in the position held or in an existing vacant position.' 5 CFR 831.1203(a)(2), (4).

"For purposes of the CSRS regulations, *disabled* means: unable * * * because of disease or injury, to render useful and efficient service in the employee's current position, or in a vacant position in the same agency at the same grade or pay level for which the individual is qualified for reassignment.

"5 CFR 831.1202. *Accommodation* means: an adjustment made to an employee's job or work environment that enables the employee to perform the duties of the position. Reasonable accommodation may include modifying the worksite; adjusting the work schedule; restructuring the job; obtaining or modifying equipment or devices; providing interpreters, readers, or personal assistants; and reassigning or retraining the employee.

"*Id.* *Vacant position* means: an unoccupied position of the same grade or pay level and tenure for which the employee is qualified for reassignment that is located in the same commuting area and is serviced by the same appointing authority of the employing agency.

"*Id.* The Wilson appeal arises under the Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS). The governing FERS regulations promulgated by OPM differ somewhat from the CSRS regulations quoted above. The FERS regulations provide in pertinent part that an

individual is entitled to a disability annuity only if, inter alia: He or she, 'while employed in a position subject to FERS,' became 'disabled because of a medical condition, resulting in a deficiency in performance, conduct, or attendance, or if there is no such deficiency, the disabling medical condition must be incompatible with either useful and efficient service or retention in the position'; '[a]ccommodation of the disabling medical condition in the position held' is 'unreasonable'; and the individual did 'not * * * decline[] an offer of reassignment to a vacant position.' 5 CFR 844.103(a)(2), (4), (5).

"5 CFR 844.102. *Accommodation* means: a reasonable adjustment made to an employee's job or work environment that enables the employee to perform the duties of the position. Accommodation may include modifying the worksite; adjusting the work schedule; restructuring the job; obtaining or modifying equipment or devices; providing interpreters, readers, or personal assistants; and retraining the employee.

"*Id.* *Vacant position* means: an unoccupied position of the same grade or pay level and tenure for which the employee is qualified for reassignment that is located in the same commuting area and, except in the case of a military reserve technician, is serviced by the same appointing authority of the employing agency.

"*Id.* *Request for an advisory opinion.* The Board requests an advisory opinion on the following related questions concerning the above-quoted regulations:

"(1) Is a light-duty assignment considered a 'position' under the CSRS and FERS regulatory definitions of 'disabled,' 'accommodation,' and 'vacant position,' when the light-duty assignment does not constitute an established position in the employing agency?

"(2) If an employee covered by the CSRS cannot perform the duties of his or her position of record or any established position in the employing agency, is a light-duty assignment an 'accommodation' under 5 CFR 831.1203(a)(4)?

"(3) If an employee covered by FERS cannot perform the duties of his or her position of record or any established position in the employing agency, is a light-duty assignment a 'reasonable accommodation' under 5 CFR 844.103(a)(4)?"

DATES: All briefs in response to this notice shall be filed with the Clerk of the Board on or before November 12, 1998.

ADDRESSES: All briefs should include the case names and docket numbers noted above (*Bracey v. Office of Personnel Management*, MSPB Docket No. DC-831E-97-0643-I-1, and *Wilson v. Office of Personnel Management*, MSPB Docket No. AT-844E-97-0645-I-1) and be entitled "Amicus Brief." Briefs should be filed with the Office of the Clerk, Merit Systems Protection Board, 1120 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20419. Parties wishing to obtain copies of the initial decisions in *Bracey* and *Wilson* should contact one of the individuals listed below.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Shannon McCarthy, Deputy Clerk of the Board, or Matthew Shannon, Counsel to the Clerk, (202) 653-7200.

Dated: October 5, 1998.

Robert E. Taylor,

Clerk of the Board.

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NATIONAL FOUNDATION ON THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES

National Endowment for the Arts; Leadership Initiatives Advisory Panel

Pursuant to section 10(a)(2) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Public Law 92-463), as amended, notice is hereby given that a meeting of the Leadership Initiatives Advisory Panel (Open Studio section) to the National Council on the Arts will be held on October 16, 1998. The panel will meet via teleconference from 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. in Room 617 at the Nancy Hanks Center, 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20506.

This meeting is for the purpose of Panel review, discussion, evaluation, and recommendation on applications for financial assistance under the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act of 1965, as amended, including information given in confidence to the agency by grant applicants. In accordance with the determination of the Chairman of May 14, 1998, these sessions will be closed to the public pursuant to subsection (c)(4)(6) and (9)(B) of section 552b of Title 5, United States Code.

Further information with reference to this meeting can be obtained from Ms. Kathy Plowitz-Worden, Panel Coordinator, National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, DC 20506, or call (202) 682-5691.