

(a) Definitions.—In this section—

(1) the term “covered assistance” means assistance provided for supplemental lost wages payments under subsections (e)(2) and (f) of section 408 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5174), as authorized under the emergency declaration issued by the President on March 13, 2020, pursuant to section 501(b) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 5191(b)) and under any subsequent major disaster declaration under section 401 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 5170) that supersedes such emergency declaration; and

(2) the term “State” has the meaning given the term in section 102 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5122).

(b) Waiver Authority For State Liability.—In the case of any individual who has received amounts of covered assistance to which the individual is not entitled, the State shall require the individual to repay the amounts of such assistance to the State agency, except that the State agency may waive such repayment if the State agency determines that—

(1) the payment of such covered assistance was without fault on the part of the individual; and

(2) such repayment would be contrary to equity and good conscience.

(c) Waiver Authority For Federal Liability.—Any waiver of debt issued by a State under subsection (b) shall also waive the debt owed to the United States.

H.R. 133, 116 Congress, Sec. 262. In this case the Claimant was paid LWA in addition to regular state benefits. We now consider whether the LWA overpayment can be waived.

In deciding the question of fault, we will consider factors such as whether a material statement or representation was made by the Claimant in connection with the application for benefits, whether the Claimant knew or should have known that a fact was material and failed to disclose it, whether the Claimant should have known the Claimant was not eligible for benefits, and whether the overpayment was otherwise directly caused by the knowing actions of the Claimant. *Cf.* 871 IAC 24.50(7) (setting out factors for similar issue under TEUC from 2002). In deciding equity and good conscience we utilize the federal directives by considering the following:

- It would cause financial hardship to the person for whom it is sought; or
- The recipient of the overpayment can show (regardless of their financial circumstances) that due to the notice that such payment would be made or because of the incorrect payment either they have relinquished a valuable right or changed positions for the worse; or
- Recovery would be unconscionable under the circumstances.

Applying these factors to the totality of the circumstances in this case including that there is no evidence of material misrepresentation, we find on this individualized basis that the **LWA overpayment** should be waived on the ground that the Claimant's knowing actions were not directly at fault for the overpayment, and recovery would be unconscionable.

The Employer should note that the Employer will not be charged for any waived LWA.

If after today the Claimant should receive an overpayment decision concerning the overpayment(s) we have waived then the Claimant should appeal that decision. The Claimant should retain our decision to present to IWD in response to any such decision. The Claimant likewise should present this order to IWD if the Claimant should receive a bill for a waived overpayment.

DECISION:

The decision of the Administrative Law Judge dated February 7, 2022 is **AFFIRMED AS MODIFIED IN THE CLAIMANT'S FAVOR** but with **NO EFFECT ON THE EMPLOYER**.

The overpayment of \$1,800 in LWA benefits is hereby waived, and the Claimant has no obligation to pay back those benefits. The Claimant continues to be obliged to repay any overpayment in state benefits, including any extended benefits, that has been or will be assessed since the law does not permit us to waive the regular state benefit or extended benefit overpayments. The Employer will not be charged for waiver of LWA since LWA is a federally funded benefit. In all other respects, the decision of the Administrative Law Judge is affirmed.

James M. Strohman

Ashley R. Koopmans

DISSENTING OPINION OF MYRON R. LINN:

I respectfully dissent from the majority decision of the Employment Appeal Board. After careful review of the record, I would affirm the decision of the administrative law judge without modification.

Myron R. Linn