

**BEFORE THE
EMPLOYMENT APPEAL BOARD
Lucas State Office Building
Fourth floor
Des Moines, Iowa 50319**

KATHERINE M LUETHJE

Claimant

and

MENARD INC

Employer

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HEARING NUMBER: 20B-UI-08984

**EMPLOYMENT APPEAL BOARD
DECISION**

NOTICE

THIS DECISION BECOMES FINAL unless (1) a **request for a REHEARING** is filed with the Employment Appeal Board within **20 days** of the date of the Board's decision or, (2) a **PETITION TO DISTRICT COURT IS FILED WITHIN 30 days** of the date of the Board's decision.

A **REHEARING REQUEST** shall state the specific grounds and relief sought. If the rehearing request is denied, a petition may be filed in **DISTRICT COURT** within **30 days** of the date of the denial.

SECTION: 96.4-3

DECISION

UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS ARE DENIED

The Claimant appealed this case to the Employment Appeal Board. All members of the Employment Appeal Board reviewed the entire record. A majority of the Appeal Board, one member dissenting, finds the administrative law judge's decision is correct. With the following modification, the administrative law judge's Findings of Fact and Reasoning and Conclusions of Law are adopted by the Board as its own. The administrative law judge's decision is **AFFIRMED** with the following **MODIFICATION IN THE CLAIMANT'S FAVOR BUT WITHOUT EFFECT ON THE EMPLOYER**:

The Administrative Law Judge's discussion of any overpaid FPUC benefits is modified to be consistent with the following discussion:

The CARES Act provides:

In the case of individuals who have received amounts of Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation to which they were not entitled, the State shall require such individuals to repay the amounts of such Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation to the State agency, **except** that the State agency may waive such repayment if it determines that—

(A) the payment of such Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation was without fault on the part of any such individual; and

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

PL116-136, Sec. 2104(f)(2). In this case the Claimant filed a claim and the Employer promptly protested raising the issue of availability. While benefits are customarily locked pending the outcome of the first fact finding decision that was not done in this case. The issue was not adjudicated until July, and in the interim benefits were paid to the Claimant. We note that Claimants are advised throughout the appeal process to continue to file weekly claims even if denied benefits. The Claimant here did so and was paid benefits until the Benefits Bureau issued the decision locking the claim in July. The Claimant was paid FPUC in addition to regular state benefits. We now consider whether the FPUC 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. In deciding equity and good conscience we consider whether the overpayment was the result of a decision on appeal, and the financial hardship caused by a decision requiring overpayment. *Cf.* 871 IAC 24.50(7) (setting out factors for similar issue under TEUC from 2002). 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 **FPUC overpayment** should be waived. Although no overpayment was assessed in the Administrative Law Judge's decision we prospectively waive the FPUC overpayment, and this determination should govern any subsequent action by Iowa Workforce.

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

DECISION:

The decision of the Administrative Law Judge dated **September 17, 2020** is **AFFIRMED AS MODIFIED IN THE CLAIMANT'S FAVOR** but with **NO EFFECT ON THE EMPLOYER**.

The overpayment of \$9,000 in FPUC benefits is hereby waived, and the Claimant has no obligation to pay back those benefits. The Claimant's obligation to repay state benefits collected (which stood at \$3,696 at the time of hearing) is not affected by our decision. The Employer will not be charged for waiver of FPUC since FPUC is a federally funded benefit. In all other respects the decision of the Administrative Law Judge is affirmed.

Ashley R. Koopmans

James M. Strohman

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

RRA/fnv