

- DECISION -

Claimant:
LYNELLE J KILGORE

Decision No.: 3108-BR-11

Date: September 09, 2011

Appeal No.: 1047628

S.S. No.:

Employer:
KDW MANAGEMENT LLC

L.O. No.: 64

Appellant: Claimant

Issue: Whether the claimant left work voluntarily, without good cause within the meaning of Maryland Code, Labor and Employment Article, Title 8, Section 1001.

- NOTICE OF RIGHT OF APPEAL TO COURT -

You may file an appeal from this decision in the Circuit Court for Baltimore City or one of the Circuit Courts in a county in Maryland. The court rules about how to file the appeal can be found in many public libraries, in the Maryland Rules of Procedure, Title 7, Chapter 200.

The period for filing an appeal expires: October 10, 2011

REVIEW ON THE RECORD

After a review on the record, the Board adopts the following findings of fact and conclusions of law and reverses the hearing examiner's decision:

The claimant was employed as a bartender from June 15, 2008 until October 12, 2010, earning \$ 8.00 per hour plus tips. The claimant left her position to take another job at a catholic school that offered better pay, a better work environment and health benefits for the claimant and her children.

The General Assembly declared that, in its considered judgment, the public good and the general welfare of the citizens of the State required the enactment of the Unemployment Insurance Law, under the police

powers of the State, for the compulsory setting aside of unemployment reserves to be used for the benefit of individuals unemployed through no fault of their own. *Md. Code Ann., Lab. & Empl. Art., § 8-102(c)*. Unemployment compensation laws are to be read liberally in favor of eligibility, and disqualification provisions are to be strictly construed. *Sinai Hosp. of Baltimore v. Dept. of Empl. & Training, 309 Md. 28 (1987)*.

The Board reviews the record *de novo* and may affirm, modify, or reverse the findings of fact or conclusions of law of the hearing examiner on the basis of evidence submitted to the hearing examiner, or evidence that the Board may direct to be taken, or may remand any case to a hearing examiner for purposes it may direct. *Md. Code Ann., Lab. & Empl. Art., § 8-510(d)*; *COMAR 09.32.06.04(H)(1)*. The Board fully inquires into the facts of each particular case. *COMAR 09.32.06.02(E)*.

“Due to leaving work voluntarily” has a plain, definite and sensible meaning, free of ambiguity. It expresses a clear legislative intent that to disqualify a claimant from benefits, the evidence must establish that the claimant, by his or her own choice, intentionally and of his or her own free will, terminated the employment. *Allen v. Core Target Youth Program, 275 Md. 69 (1975)*. A claimant’s intent or state of mind is a factual issue for the Board of Appeals to resolve. *Dept. of Econ. & Empl. Dev. v. Taylor, 108 Md. App. 250, 274 (1996)*, *aff’d sub. nom., 344 Md. 687 (1997)*. An intent to quit one’s job can be manifested by actions as well as words. *Lawson v. Security Fence Supply Company, 1101-BH-82*. In a case where medical problems are at issue, mere compliance with the requirement of supplying a written statement or other documentary evidence of a health problem does not mandate an automatic award of benefits. *Shifflet v. Dept. of Emp. & Training, 75 Md. App. 282 (1988)*.

There are two categories of non-disqualifying reasons for quitting employment. When a claimant voluntarily leaves work, he has the burden of proving that he left for good cause or valid circumstances based upon a preponderance of the credible evidence in the record. *Hargrove v. City of Baltimore, 2033-BH-83*; *Chisholm v. Johns Hopkins Hospital, 66-BR-89*.

Quitting for “good cause” is the first non-disqualifying reason. *Md. Code Ann., Lab. & Empl. Art., § 8-1001(b)*. Purely personal reasons, no matter how compelling, cannot constitute good cause as a matter of law. *Bd. Of Educ. Of Montgomery County v. Paynter, 303 Md. 22, 28 (1985)*. An objective standard is used to determine if the average employee would have left work in that situation; in addition, a determination is made as to whether a particular employee left in good faith, and an element of good faith is whether the claimant has exhausted all reasonable alternatives before leaving work. *Board of Educ. v. Paynter, 303 Md. 22, 29-30 (1985)* (requiring a “higher standard of proof” than for good cause because reason is not job related); *also see Bohrer v. Sheetz, Inc., Law No. 13361, (Cir. Ct. for Washington Co., Apr. 24, 1984)*. “Good cause” must be job-related and it must be a cause “which would reasonably impel the average, able-bodied, qualified worker to give up his or her employment.” *Paynter, 303 Md. at 1193*. Using this definition, the Court of Appeals held that the Board correctly applied the “objective test”: “The applicable standards are the standards of reasonableness applied to the average man or woman, and not to the supersensitive.” *Paynter, 303 Md. at 1193*.

The second category or non-disqualifying reason is quitting for “valid circumstances”. *Md. Code Ann., Lab. & Empl. Art., § 8-1001(c)(1)*. There are two types of valid circumstances: a valid circumstance may be (1) a substantial cause that is job-related or (2) a factor that is non-job related but is “necessitous or compelling”. *Paynter 202 Md. at 30*. The “necessitous or compelling” requirement relating to a cause for leaving work voluntarily does not apply to “good cause”. *Board of Educ. v. Paynter, 303 Md. 22, 30 (1985)*. In a case where medical problems are at issue, mere compliance with the requirement of supplying a written statement or other documentary evidence of a health problem does not mandate an automatic award of benefits. *Shifflet v. Dept. of Emp. & Training, 75 Md. App. 282 (1988)*.

Section 8-1001 of the Labor and Employment Article provides that individuals shall be disqualified from the receipt of benefits where their unemployment is due to leaving work voluntarily, without good cause arising from or connected with the conditions of employment or actions of the employer or without, valid circumstances. A circumstance for voluntarily leaving work is valid if it is a substantial cause that is directly attributable to, arising from, or connected with the conditions of employment or actions of the employing unit or of such necessitous or compelling nature that the individual had no reasonable alternative other than leaving the employment.

In the instant case, the claimant’s primary motivation for voluntarily quitting her job for new employment was health benefits for her and her children.

The Board has held, however, that when quitting a job that does not offer health benefits to accept a job that has health benefits may be for valid circumstances within the meaning of § 8-1001. *David v. Lester Schuster, LLC, 438-BH-03*. The need to look for and accept employment that offer health care benefits is not solely economic. *Id.* There is a large segment of the American population that lacks health care benefits which is creating a serious nationwide health care crisis. *Id.* The need for individuals to have health benefits is a health concern as well as an economic concern. *Id.* Given the high cost of medical care today, the claimant’s quitting one job that offered no health benefits for a job that offered health benefits was both of such a “necessitous” and “compelling” nature that the claimant had no reasonable alternative other than leaving employment. *Id.*

The Board notes that the hearing examiner did not offer or admit the *Agency Fact Finding Report* into evidence. The Board did not consider this document when rendering its decision.

The Board finds based on a preponderance of the credible evidence that the claimant meet her burden of demonstrating that she quit for valid circumstances within the meaning of *Maryland Annotated, Labor & Employment Article, § 8-1001*. The decision of the hearing examiner shall be reversed for the reasons stated herein.

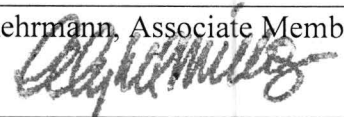
DECISION

It is held that the claimant voluntarily quit, but for valid circumstances connected with the work, within the meaning of Maryland Code Annotated, Labor and Employment Article, Title 8 Section 1001. No disqualification is imposed based upon the claimant's separation from employment with KDW MANAGEMENT, LLC.

The Hearing Examiner's decision is reversed.



Eileen M. Rehrmann, Associate Member



Clayton A. Mitchell, Sr., Associate Member

RD

Copies mailed to:

LYNELLE J. KILGORE

KDW MANAGEMENT LLC

SIDE POCKETS

Susan Bass, Office of the Assistant Secretary

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS DECISION

LYNELLE J KILGORE

SSN #

Claimant

Vs.

KDW MANAGEMENT LLC

Employer/Agency

Before the:

**Maryland Department of Labor,
Licensing and Regulation**

Division of Appeals

1100 North Eutaw Street

Room 511

Baltimore, MD 21201

(410) 767-2421

Appeal Number: 1047628

Appellant: Claimant

Local Office : 64 / BALTOMETRO

CALL CENTER

February 09, 2011

For the Claimant: PRESENT

For the Employer: PRESENT, MARK DRONEBURG

For the Agency:

ISSUE(S)

Whether the claimant's separation from this employment was for a disqualifying reason within the meaning of the MD. Code Annotated, Labor and Employment Article, Title 8, Sections 1001 (Voluntary Quit for good cause), 1002 - 1002.1 (Gross/Aggravated Misconduct connected with the work), or 1003 (Misconduct connected with the work).

FINDINGS OF FACT

The claimant began working for this employer on or about June 15, 2008. At the time of separation, the claimant was working as a bar tender. The claimant last worked for the employer on or about October 12, 2010, before quitting. The claimant resigned from her employment to accept a another job that offered more pay.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Md. Code Ann., Labor & Emp. Article, Section 8-1001 provides that an individual is disqualified from receiving benefits when unemployment is due to leaving work voluntarily. The Court of Appeals interpreted Section 8-1001 in Allen v. CORE Target City Youth Program, 275 Md. 69, 338 A.2d 237

(1975): “As we see it, the phrase ‘leaving work voluntarily’ has a plain, definite and sensible meaning...; it expresses a clear legislative intent that to disqualify a claimant from benefits, the evidence must establish that the claimant, by his or her own choice, intentionally, of his or her own free will, terminated the employment.” 275 Md. at 79.

Md. Code Ann., Labor & Emp. Article, Section 8-1001 provides that an individual shall be disqualified for benefits where unemployment is due to leaving work voluntarily without good cause arising from or connected with the conditions of employment or actions of the employer, or without valid circumstances. A circumstance is valid only if it is (i) a substantial cause that is directly attributable to, arising from, or connected with conditions of employment or actions of the employing unit; or (ii) of such necessitous or compelling nature that the individual has no reasonable alternative other than leaving the employment.

In Total Audio-Visual Systems, Inc. v. DLLR, 360 Md. 387 (2000), the Court held that an individual who has left his or her employment to accept other employment has not left his or her job for good cause as defined in Section 8-1001(b)(1) of the Labor & Employment Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland. This is because quitting ones job for purely economic reasons is neither necessitous nor compelling. See also Plein v. Dep't of Labor Licensing & Regulation, 369 Md. 421, 800 A.2d 757 (2002); Gagne v. Potomac Talking Book Services, Inc., 374-BH-03.

EVALUATION OF EVIDENCE

The Hearing Examiner considered all of the testimony and evidence of record in reaching this decision. Where the evidence was in conflict, the Hearing Examiner decided the Facts on the credible evidence as determined by the Hearing Examiner.

The claimant had the burden to show, by a preponderance of the evidence, that she voluntarily quit her position for reasons that constitute either good cause or valid circumstances pursuant to the Maryland Unemployment Insurance Law. Hargrove v. City of Baltimore, 2033-BH-83. In this case, this burden has not been met.

The claimant acknowledged that she quit her job with the employer to accept a job that offered better pay. Quitting ones job for purely economic reasons is neither necessitous nor compelling. Total Audio-Visual Systems, Inc., *supra*.

It is thus determined that the claimant has concurrently failed to demonstrate that the reason for quitting rises to the level necessary to demonstrate good cause or valid circumstances within the meaning of the sections of law cited above.

DECISION

IT IS HELD THAT the claimant's unemployment was due to leaving work voluntarily without good cause or valid circumstances within the meaning of Md. Code Ann., Labor & Emp. Article, Section 8-1001. Benefits are denied for the week beginning October 10, 2010 and until the claimant becomes reemployed and earns at least 15 times the claimant's weekly benefit amount in covered wages and thereafter becomes unemployed through no fault of the claimant.

The determination of the Claims Specialist is affirmed.

H. Abromson

H Abromson, Esq.
Hearing Examiner

Notice of Right to Request Waiver of Overpayment

The Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation may seek recovery of any overpayment received by the Claimant. Pursuant to Section 8-809 of the Labor and Employment Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, and Code of Maryland Regulations 09.32.07.01 through 09.32.07.09, the Claimant has a right to request a waiver of recovery of this overpayment. This request may be made by contacting Overpayment Recoveries Unit at 410-767-2404. If this request is made, the Claimant is entitled to a hearing on this issue.

A request for waiver of recovery of overpayment does not act as an appeal of this decision.

Esto es un documento legal importante que decide si usted recibirá los beneficios del seguro del desempleo. Si usted disiente de lo que fue decidido, usted tiene un tiempo limitado a apelar esta decisión. Si usted no entiende cómo apelar, usted puede contactar (301) 313-8000 para una explicación.

Notice of Right to Petition for Review

Any party may request a review either in person, by facsimile or by mail with the Board of Appeals. Under COMAR 09.32.06.01A (1) appeals may not be filed by e-mail. Your appeal must be filed by February 24, 2011. You may file your request for further appeal in person at or by mail to the following address:

Board of Appeals
1100 North Eutaw Street
Room 515
Baltimore, Maryland 21201
Fax 410-767-2787
Phone 410-767-2781

NOTE: Appeals filed by mail are considered timely on the date of the U.S. Postal Service postmark.

Date of hearing: January 14, 2011

AEH/Specialist ID: RBA8U

Seq No: 001

Copies mailed on February 09, 2011 to:

LYNELLE J. KILGORE
KDW MANAGEMENT LLC
LOCAL OFFICE #64
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