

STATE OF WISCONSIN
BEFORE THE WISCONSIN EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS COMMISSION

SHAUNDA STRIBLING, Appellant,

vs.

STATE OF WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES, Respondent.

Case ID: 2.0201

Case Type: PA

DECISION NO. 41484

Appearances:

Shaunda Stribling, 3463 South 79th St., Milwaukee, Wisconsin appearing on behalf of herself.

David Makovec, Attorney, Department of Administration, 101 East Wilson Street, 10th Floor, P.O. Box 7864, Madison, Wisconsin, appearing on behalf of the State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

DECISION AND ORDER

On February 17, 2026, Shaunda Stribling filed an appeal with the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission asserting she had been given a written reprimand in lieu of a one-day suspension without just cause by the State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services. The matter was assigned to Commission Examiner Cara Larson.

On February 5, 2026, pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 227.46(3)(a), Examiner Larson was granted final authority to issue the Commission's decision. A hearing was held via Zoom on April 21, 2026, by Examiner Larson. The parties made oral closing arguments at the end of the hearing.

Being fully advised on the premises, and having considered the matter, the Commission makes and issues the following:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Shaunda Stribling (Stribling) is employed by the State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) as a Human Services Program Coordinator - Senior at the Milwaukee Enrollment Services Department and had permanent status in class at the time of her discipline.

2. The DHS is a state agency responsible for the operation of various Health Services offices including Milwaukee Enrollment Services, located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

3. On December 1, 2025, Stribling was scheduled to work additional hours that she had previously signed up for. Stribling did not report to work for the scheduled shift on December 1, 2025, and also failed to notify the Department that she would be absent. She took vacation hours for her regularly scheduled shift that date.

4. Following an investigation, the DHS issued Stribling a written reprimand in lieu of a one-day suspension on January 21, 2026, for the misconduct referenced in Finding of Facts 3.

Based on the above and foregoing Findings of Fact, the Commission makes and issues the following:

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission has jurisdiction to review this appeal pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 230.44 (1)(c).

2. The State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services had just cause within the meaning of Wis. Stat. § 230.34(1)(a) to issue Shaunda Stribling a written reprimand in lieu of a one-day suspension.

Based on the above and foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, the Commission makes and issues the following:

ORDER

The written reprimand in lieu of a one-day suspension issued to Shaunda Stribling by the State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services is affirmed.

Issued at Madison, Wisconsin, this 11th day of June 2026.

WISCONSIN EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS COMMISSION

Electronically signed by Cara J. Larson

Cara J. Larson, Hearing Examiner

MEMORANDUM ACCOMPANYING DECISION AND ORDER

Section 230.34(1)(a), Stats., provides in pertinent part the following as to certain employees of the State of Wisconsin:

An employee with permanent status in class ... may be removed, suspended without pay, discharged, reduced in base pay or demoted only for just cause.

Section 230.44(1)(c), Stats., provides that a State employee with permanent status in class:

may appeal a demotion, layoff, suspension, discharge or reduction in base pay to the commission . . . if the appeal alleges that the decision was not based on just cause.

Stribling had permanent status in class at the time of her discipline and her appeal alleges that the discipline was not based on just cause.

The State has the burden of proof to establish that Stribling was guilty of the alleged misconduct and that the misconduct constitutes just cause for the discipline imposed. *Reinke v. Personnel Bd.*, 53 Wis.2d 123 (1971); *Safransky v. Personnel Bd.*, 62 Wis.2d 464 (1974).

It is undisputed that Stribling missed an additional shift she voluntarily signed up to work on December 1, 2025, and that she also did not notify the Department that she would be absent. Stribling stated that she took vacation hours for her regularly scheduled shift that date and acknowledged that she forgot about the additional shift she signed up for because she was on vacation. She also emphasizes that she has been a good employee with many years of service and that this incident was an isolated mistake. However, employees are responsible for keeping track of the shifts they agree to work and for notifying the employer if they cannot report for duty. Even though Stribling's failure to report was unintentional, it still violated the Department's attendance expectations and policies.

The discipline imposed was not excessive. Shortly before this incident, the Department addressed Stribling's attendance and leave-management issues through a Letter of Expectation after she took a day off without approved leave. Given this prior warning, the Department determined that formal discipline was warranted and issued a written reprimand in lieu of a one-day suspension.

Because a one-day suspension is the first step in the progressive discipline process, the written reprimand constituted progressive discipline. Stribling committed misconduct by failing to report for a shift she signed up to work without notifying the Department, in violation of the attendance policy. Under these circumstances, a written reprimand in lieu of a one-day suspension was an appropriate level of discipline and is affirmed.

Issued at Madison, Wisconsin, this 11th day of June 2026.

WISCONSIN EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS COMMISSION

Electronically signed by Cara J. Larson

Cara J. Larson, Hearing Examiner