

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

Christopher L. Sanders : State Civil Service Commission
v. :
Department of General Services : Appeal No. 31543

Christopher L. Sanders Gerard N. Mangieri
Pro Se Attorney for Appointing Authority

ADJUDICATION

This is an appeal by Christopher L. Sanders challenging his removal from regular Equal Opportunity Specialist 2 employment with the Department of General Services. A hearing was held on May 29, 2025, and July 8, 2025, via video, before Hearing Officer Edward Bohan.

The Commissioners have reviewed the Notes of Testimony and exhibits introduced at the hearing. The issues before the Commission are whether the appointing authority has established just cause for appellant's removal and whether appellant has established his removal was motivated by discrimination.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. By letter dated January 6, 2025, appellant was removed from his position as an Equal Opportunity Specialist 2, regular status, with the Department of General Services, effective January 6, 2025. Comm. Ex. A.
2. The appeal was properly raised before this Commission and was heard under Section 3003(7)(i) and 3003(7)(ii) of Act 71 of 2018. Comm. Ex. C.
3. The Department of General Services (hereinafter “appointing authority”) charged appellant with Failure to Perform Work between August 5, 2024, and October 30, 2024, for approximately 370.5 hours. Comm. Ex. A.
4. Appellant worked for the appointing authority as an Equal Opportunity Specialist 2 in the Bureau of Diversity, Inclusion, and Small Business Opportunities (hereinafter “BDISBO”). He began working in that position on December 9, 2023. N.T. p. 346.

5. Appellant worked from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. N.T. pp. 378-179
6. The BDISBO certifies small businesses across the Commonwealth so those businesses can be picked by prime contractors under Commonwealth contracting opportunities. N.T. p. 28.
7. The three main units of the BDISBO are certification, goal setting, and compliance. N.T. p. 29.
8. Appellant first joined the BDISBO as an administrative officer in the certification unit, where he was responsible for processing applications. N.T. p. 83.
9. When appellant began working as an Equal Opportunity Specialist 2 in December 2023, he moved to work in the compliance unit, working as the specialist over the Health Choices contract. N.T. pp. 83-84.
10. On August 5, 2024, appellant began working in the goal-setting unit. He was assigned to perform goal-setting work in construction under the training of Office Manager Rocky Wright. N.T. pp. 53-54. 64.

11. Wright was assigned to work with appellant to get him acclimated to project estimates that come to BDISBO in Excel format. He trained appellant one-on-one to handle the detailed aspects of construction. N.T. pp. 86-87.
12. Equal Opportunity Specialist 3 Kheea Anderson, Goal Setting Supervisor, began supervising appellant's work in August 2024. N.T. p. 57.
13. Anderson's supervision of appellant was limited to ensuring both Wright and appellant were made aware of their joint assignments. N.T. pp. 57-58.
14. The three computer systems used in the goal-setting unit are PRISM, JAGGAER, and e-Builder. The systems are used to navigate the Commonwealth's e-marketplace. N.T. pp. 46-47.
15. On or around October 4, 2024, Administrative Officer 5 Lisa Sanford, Director of the BDISBO, Compliance Supervisor Corey Burnett, and Wright were unable to reach appellant via phone or email concerning the late completion of his work log in Excel and in the PRISM system for the annual report. N.T. pp. 89-96.

16. Sanford conducted an in-person meeting with appellant, Wright, and Burnett to review the expectations regarding the status of appellant's projects. N.T. p. 96.
17. Following the in-person meeting, Wright copied Sanford on emails where he gave appellant directions on training projects. N.T. pp. 96-97.
18. Sanford also received notice of project delays from status inquiries from the director of Capital Programs. Sanford checked those delays against appellant's goal-setting tracking log on Excel. N.T. pp. 97-98.
19. Per internal office policy with the BDISBO, employees in the goal-setting unit have a ten-day business turnaround policy. N.T. p. 41.
20. Upon review of appellant's goal-setting tracking log, Sanford found a few projects assigned to appellant and Wright for training purposes were many days over the ten-day turnaround time. N.T. p. 99.
21. Sanford asked Human Resources to investigate appellant's work. N.T. p. 99.

22. Human Resource Analyst 2 Natalie Renee Sowers created an internal document to help track what she was reviewing of appellant's work, to include email and internet captures. N.T. p. 470; AA Ex. 3.
23. For the month of August 2024, Sowers calculated appellant failed to work for a total of 134 hours. AA Ex. 3.
24. For the month of September 2024, Sowers calculated appellant failed to work for a total of 107 hours. AA Ex. 3.
25. For the month of October 2024, Sowers calculated appellant failed to work for a total of 129.5 hours. AA Ex. 3.
26. During Sowers' review period of August 5, 2024, through October 30, 2024, appellant used approved leave on: September 6 (7.5 hours); September 19 (7.5 hours); September 20 (7.5 hours); October 1 (7.5 hours); October 24 (5.25 hours); and October 25 (7.5 hours). AA Ex. 1.
27. During that review period, appellant also received holiday leave on September 2, 2024, and October 14, 2024. AA Ex. 1.

28. Sowers calculated a total of 370.5 hours during the period of August 5, 2024, through October 30, 2024, for which appellant failed to work. AA Ex. 3.
29. Sowers provided a summary and overview of the information, but the disciplinary decision ultimately remained with Sanford. N.T. pp. 471-472.
30. During the months of August, September, and October 2024, appellant was responsible for work in the compliance unit for the Health Choices project, as well as eight to ten projects in the goal-setting unit. N.T. pp. 101-102.
31. The e-Builder program contains a summary of the key milestones of the project, as well as details of every time someone opens or makes changes to the file. N.T. pp. 137-138.
32. Appellant was assigned to work the Cheyney University Project on August 2, 2024. Appellant's first entry into the project was on August 8, 2024, when he accepted the project. Appellant uploaded the goal-setting report on August 16, 2024, which was 14.3 days after it was assigned. N.T. pp. 141-158; AA Ex. 6.

33. Appellant was assigned to the PennWest California Project on August 23, 2024. N.T. pp. 204-205.
34. Wright emailed appellant a copy of the PennWest project and the Capitol Complex fire alarm project construction cost summaries on August 23, 2024, stating, “Take these two and I’ll do them with you. I’m off next week, though. 3 disciplines.” AA Ex. 8.
35. Appellant first viewed the PennWest file on September 3, 2024, and he accepted the project on September 16, 2024. Appellant and Wright viewed the project on September 18, 2024. N.T. pp. 204-205; AA Ex. 7.
36. Sanford emailed appellant on September 3, 2024, asking if the PennWest project was complete. Appellant responded, “No not at the moment will do a follow up for more details.” N.T. p. 175; AA Ex. 9.
37. On September 20, 2024, appellant received a voicemail from David Leasure, Capital Programs, inquiring as to the status of the PennWest project

and whether appellant needed any additional details due to the sensitive timeline of the project. The voicemail appeared in Outlook as a transcript in appellant's email. N.T. pp. 181-182; AA Ex. 10.

38. Appellant emailed Leasure requesting details on the cost estimate on September 3, 2025. Leasure provided the estimate on September 5, 2024. Appellant emailed Leasure again on September 26, 2024, asking for the estimate a second time. N.T. pp. 186-187, 193-194; AA Exs. 11, 12.
39. Appellant submitted the PennWest project on September 27, 2024, which totaled 36.9 days turnaround time. N.T. pp. 191-194; AA Ex. 7.
40. On August 23, 2024, appellant was assigned the Capitol Complex fire alarm project. Appellant accessed the file on August 24 and 25, 2024. N.T. pp. 194-198; AA Exs. 8, 13.
41. On September 13, 2024, appellant sent an email clarifying a mistake in the Capitol Complex project cost estimate. Appellant received a response on September 19, 2024, with the corrected information. N.T. pp. 200-203; AA Ex. 14.

42. Appellant used sick leave on September 19 and 20, returning on September 23, 2024. He completed the goal calculation on September 24, 2024. N.T. p. 203; AA Exs. 1, 13.
43. Appellant submitted the Capitol Complex fire alarm project on September 25, 2025, totaling 35.3 days turnaround time. N.T. p. 204; AA Ex. 13.
44. On September 11, 2024, appellant was assigned the Sweet Valley project. N.T. p. 207; AA Ex. 15.
45. On September 24, 2024, an employee from Capital Programs emailed Anderson asking for an update on the project. Anderson forwarded the email inquiry to appellant and Burnett. N.T. pp. 210-211; AA Ex. 16.
46. The Capital Programs employee emailed appellant and Burnett directly on September 24, 2024, stating the Sweet Valley and PennWest projects had an “end of day suspense.” AA Ex. 16.
47. Appellant submitted the Sweet Valley project on September 24, 2024, totaling 15.3 days turnaround time. N.T. p. 208; AA Ex. 15.

48. Appellant was assigned the Clarks Summit State Hospital Project on September 13, 2024. He accepted the project on September 16, 2024. N.T. p. 216; AA Ex. 17.
49. On September 16, 2024, appellant exchanged emails with an employee from Capitol Programs discussing the proper documentation for the cost breakdown of the project. N.T. pp. 218-221; AA Ex. 18.
50. On September 23, 2024, the Capital Programs employee emailed appellant inquiring about the status of the project. Appellant replied, “I am still in the process of completing this goal setting I’m looking to complete this by this week.” N.T. p. 223; AA Ex. 19.
51. Appellant submitted the Clarks Summit State Hospital Project on September 27, 2024, totaling 16.2 days turnaround time. N.T. p. 224; AA Ex. 17.
52. On September 13, 2024, Anderson emailed Wright asking if Wright and appellant could tackle the Clarks Summit State Hospital and Hermitage Readiness Center goal requests. Wright emailed

Anderson the same day confirming he and appellant would handle the requests, copying appellant on the email. N.T. p. 232; AA Ex. 21.

53. On October 16, 2024, Anderson emailed Wright and appellant asking again if they could handle the goal setting for the Hermitage Readiness Center project. Appellant replied, “I’m working on that project right now.” N.T. p. 235; AA Ex. 22.
54. The Hermitage Readiness Center project had multiple goals. The first goal was assigned to appellant on September 13, 2024. Appellant submitted the project on September 27, 2024, totaling 15.2 days turnaround time. N.T. pp. 236-237; AA Ex. 20.
55. The second goal for the Hermitage Readiness Center project was assigned to appellant on October 16, 2024. Appellant submitted the project on October 17, 2024, totaling two days turnaround time. N.T. pp. 236-237; AA Ex. 20.

56. On October 9, 2024, Appellant was assigned a Capitol Complex project for both the goal-setting unit and the compliance unit. Appellant submitted the project within one day. N.T. pp. 240-241; AA Ex. 23.
57. From August 5, 2024, through October 30, 2024, appellant continued to work in the compliance unit for Burnett. N.T. p. 438.
58. Appellant helped Burnett prepare a Standard Operating Procedure for the compliance unit, input vendor information, and worked on the Health Choices project. N.T. pp. 442-452.
59. For the Health Choices project, appellant consistently either opened or made changes to the spreadsheet from April through August 2024. N.T. p. 128; AA Exs. 4-5.
60. Appellant received no disciplinary notices, warnings or reprimands of any kind concerning his work performance during the period of August 5, 2024, through October 30, 2024. N.T. p. 349.

DISCUSSION

By letter dated January 6, 2025, the appointing authority removed appellant from his position as an Equal Opportunity Specialist 2, regular status. Comm. Ex. A. Appellant challenged this action under Section 3003(7)(i) of Act 71 of 2018 (hereinafter “the Act”¹). 71 Pa.C.S.A. § 3003(7)(i). Thus, the first issue before the Commission is whether the appointing authority has established just cause for the removal.

In an appeal challenging the removal of a regular status employee, the appointing authority bears the burden of proving just cause for the removal and must prove the substance of the charges underlying the removal. *Long v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board*, 112 Pa. Commw. 572, 535 A.2d 1233 (1988). Factors supporting the just cause removal of a civil service employee must be related to the employee’s job performance and touch in some logical manner upon the employee’s competency and ability to perform his job duties. *Woods v. State Civil Service Commission*, 590 Pa. Commw. 337, 912 A.2d 803 (2006).

The appointing authority charged appellant with failure to perform work for approximately 370.5 hours between August 5, 2024, and October 30, 2024. Comm. Ex. A.

¹ Act of June 28, 2018, P.L. 460, No. 71, § 1.

In support of its charge, the appointing authority presented the testimony of Equal Opportunity Specialist 3 Kheea Anderson,² Administrative Officer 5 Lisa Sanford,³ and Human Resource Analyst 3 Natalie Renee Sowers.⁴ Appellant testified on his own behalf and presented the testimony of Contract Compliance Supervisor Corey Burnett.⁵ The evidence provided by the parties has been reviewed by the Commission and is summarized below.

Appellant previously worked for the appointing authority with the Bureau of Diversity, Inclusion and Small Business Opportunity (hereinafter “BDISBO”) as an administrative officer in the certification unit. Upon his promotion to an Equal Opportunity Specialist 2 in December of 2023, appellant moved to the compliance unit of the BDISBO. On August 5, 2024, appellant also began working in the goal-setting unit under the training of Office Manager Rocky Wright. *See Findings of Fact Nos. 8-10.* Appellant’s initial work in the goal-setting unit was restricted to construction, which was within Wright’s specialty. N.T. pp. 54-56.

² Anderson works for the appointing authority as an Equal Opportunity Specialist 3, or Goal Setting Supervisor. N.T. p. 25. She has worked in that position for four and a half years. *Id.* In that capacity, Anderson acts as the subject matter expert on goal setting within the BDISBO, and she monitors the BDISBO resource accounts. N.T. p. 43.

³ Sanford works for the appointing authority as an Administrator Officer 5, or Director of the BDISBO. N.T. p. 77. She has worked in that position since October 2018. N.T. p. 78. In that capacity, Sanford oversees the day-to-day operations of the BDISBO. N.T. p. 82.

⁴ Sowers works for the Office of Administration as a Human Resource Analyst 3, or Employee Relations Analyst. N.T. pp. 464-465. She has worked in that position for a year and a half. N.T. p. 465. In that capacity, Sowers primarily works for the Department of General Services handling issues within the office. N.T. p. 466.

⁵ Burnett works for the appointing authority as a Contract Compliance Supervisor. N.T. p. 436. He has worked in that position for three years and seven months. *Id.*

Kheea Anderson worked as the Goal-Setting Supervisor for the BDISBO. Anderson's supervision was limited to assigning projects, and she was not involved in the day-to-day work or responsibility of the assignment. N.T. p. 57. Anderson emphasized she made sure Wright and appellant knew of the assignments, since they were working on them together as part of appellant's training. *See* Finding of Fact No. 13. However, the day-to-day supervision of the BDISBO fell to its director, Lisa Sanford. N.T. p. 82. Sanford trained appellant on how to review and re-summarize construction projects for the goal-setting aspect of his new position. N.T. p. 86. The remainder of appellant's one-on-one training concerning the details of construction rested with Wright, allowing Sanford to focus on the day-to-day supervisory assignments. N.T. pp. 87-88.

At the end of September of 2024, Sanford asked Anderson's team to ensure all projects which had been awarded during the fiscal year were sent to the compliance team. N.T. pp. 90-91. Sanford considered it a special, high-priority project, and asked employees to update the information in Excel, as well as update the PRISM software. N.T. p. 93. After Wright checked appellant's spreadsheet and saw he had not filled in his information, Sanford sent appellant an email with the link asking him to correct and complete it. N.T. pp. 93-94. At that time, around October 4, 2024, Sanford, Wright, and Compliance Supervisor Corey Burnett attempted to contact appellant via phone and email, but they could not reach him. *See* Finding of Fact No. 15.

Upon appellant's return to the office, Sanford conducted an in-person meeting with appellant, Wright, and Burnett to review the expectations regarding his projects. *See* Finding of Fact No. 16. Sanford testified she began to pay closer attention to appellant's work following the meeting. N.T. p. 99. Wright copied

Sanford on emails he sent to appellant with directions for projects. Additionally, if the director of the Capital Programs asked Sanford about the status of something, she became aware of any delays and checked those delays against appellant's goal-setting tracking log on Excel. Sanford noted a few projects assigned to Wright and appellant for training purposes which were several days over the ten-day turnaround time. *See Findings of Fact Nos. 17-20.*

In light of the noted delays in appellant's work, Sanford approached human resources asking them to investigate appellant's work performance. *See Finding of Fact No. 21.* Human Resource Analyst 2 Natalie Renee Sowers created an internal document to track appellant's work, notating appellant's email and internet captures for each working day from August 5, 2024, through October 30, 2024. During that period, Sowers found appellant failed to perform work for 370.5 hours. *See Findings of Fact Nos. 22-28.*

During the period of Sowers's review from August through October of 2024, appellant was responsible for work in the compliance unit for the Health Choices project, as well as eight to ten projects in the goal-setting unit. *See Findings of Fact No. 30.* Any time appellant viewed, accepted, or made changes to a file to which he was assigned, his actions were saved on the e-Builder program. *See Findings of Fact No. 31.* In the beginning of August, appellant submitted the Cheyney University Project 14.3 days after it was assigned. *See Findings of Fact No. 32.* At the end of August, appellant was assigned the PennWest project and the Capitol Complex fire alarm project simultaneously. Appellant submitted the PennWest project in 36.9 days turnaround time, and he completed the Capitol Complex fire alarm project in 35.3 days. *See Findings of Fact Nos. 33-43.*

In September of 2024, appellant handled three projects for the goal-setting unit. He completed the Sweet Valley project in 15.3 days turnaround time, the Clarks Summit State Hospital Project in 16.2 days turnaround time, and the first part of the Hermitage Readiness Center project in 15.2 days turnaround time. *See* Findings of Fact Nos. 47-54. In October of 2024, appellant completed the second part of the Hermitage project in two days, and he completed a Capitol Complex project for both the goal-setting unit and the compliance unit within one day. *See* Findings of Fact Nos. 55-56.

While working on his assigned projects for the goal-setting unit, appellant continued performing work for the compliance unit of the BDISBO. *See* Findings of Fact Nos. 57-58. Appellant testified that there were times Wright was not available, in which case Wright instructed appellant to work on other projects for the compliance or certification units. N.T. pp. 397-402. For example, when Wright assigned the PennWest and Capitol Complex projects on August 23, 2024, he pointed out to appellant he would be off that following week. *See* Findings of Fact No. 34. Wright's instruction for appellant to wait for Wright's availability with certain goal-setting work included dealing with client emails. Wright preferred to handle direct communication himself since appellant was still in training. N.T. pp. 400-403. Additionally, for his work on the Health Choice project in the compliance unit, appellant helped navigate client's questions about the PRISM software with Contract Compliance Supervisor Corey Burnett. N.T. pp. 407-412. Burnett testified appellant had a good work ethic, and there was only one time appellant had an issue with understanding an assignment. N.T. pp. 438-440.

Sanford also testified that appellant's work product was very good when it was completed. N.T. pp. 289-290. From the beginning, the problem was just about timeliness, not about the completion or appellant's understanding of the work. N.T. p. 290. Sanford further stated the grace period for a trainee was fifteen days, and that it was appellant's responsibility to come forward as a trainee if his work took longer than that period. N.T. p. 289. No time period was established for when appellant should have started working on his own. N.T. p. 275. Appellant had a short turnaround period for the last two projects he submitted in October of 2024. N.T. pp. 275-276. Sanford testified that from August to October, appellant showed a definite improvement in his turnaround time. N.T. p. 287. Nonetheless, Sanford reviewed the calendar produced by the human resource investigation and concluded they had reached the correct amount of unaccounted work hours. N.T. pp. 307-308. She testified that between August and October 2024, there were too many full business days where, based on appellant's level of work, he had unaccounted for time. N.T. pp. 243-244.

Having carefully reviewed the evidence, we find the appointing authority has failed to establish the charges against appellant and therefore did not have just cause in removing appellant from his position as an Equal Opportunity Specialist 2. The appointing authority presented evidence concerning an inability to reach appellant on October 4, 2024, and concerning appellant's untimely completion of projects in August and September 2024. This evidence alone does not equate to a finding of hours of work not performed. Moreover, the appointing authority did not charge appellant for a failure to perform satisfactory work. Appellant worked for the goal-setting unit on a training period from August through October 2024. It was unreasonable for the appointing authority to rely on appellant to come forward with issues he may have been experiencing in training. Sanford and Burnett testified

to appellant's good work product during that period. While Sanford did reach out to appellant during that period inquiring about the status of certain projects, her communications never addressed any specific issues with appellant's work. Appellant did not receive any disciplinary notices or warnings throughout his training period that corrective action may be required. *See Findings of Fact No. 60.* Appellant's timely completion of projects often depended on Wright's availability, and many projects were completed within or near the grace period of fifteen days. Moreover, Sanford agreed that appellant's turnaround period greatly improved by the end of his training period in October. Nonetheless, the present charge relates to an allegation of failure to perform work, not to appellant's performance of satisfactory work. Thus, the sole issue before the Commission is whether the appointing authority met its burden of proving appellant did not perform work for approximately 370.5 hours. The appointing authority failed to present evidence in support of this charge.

Ultimately, it is unclear to the Commission how Sowers reached her calculation of 370.5 hours. Appellant's duties were overseen by Wright, who acted as appellant's one-on-one trainer from August through December of 2024. Sowers did not speak with Wright when determining how appellant spent his day-to-day work hours. The appointing authority did not have Wright testify as to those activities. Instead, the appointing authority presented the testimonies of Anderson and Sanford, who testified they were not involved in appellant's day-to-day activities. Thus, their testimonies alone cannot support findings of appellant's failure to perform work for a certain number of hours per day where they did not

observe his day-to-day work performance. Instead, the Commission finds credible both appellant's and Burnett's testimonies concerning appellant's day-to-day work activities.⁶

The Commission cannot rely on a charge of 370.5 hours for work not performed where the calculation of those hours is erroneous. For the first week of September 2024, Sowers wrote "check FMLA/sick." *See* AA Ex. 3. Despite this notation, appellant's approved sick leave was not entered on any days of the calendar from August to October 2024, to include September 6. This miscalculation of hours by failing to consider approved leave occurred within Sowers's calendar again on September 19, 20, and October 1, 24, and 26. *See* AA Exs. 1, 3. Thus, appellant was charged with not working on days when he was on approved leave.

Additionally, the calendar does not account for appellant's updates to projects or times he viewed projects despite even Sanford's testimony to those accesses and changes. For example, appellant and Wright viewed the PennWest project together on September 18, 2024. *See* Findings of Fact No. 35. On Sowers's calendar for September 18, 2024, she notated "9:36am: invite, 11-11:30am: meeting; some internet act. But no varied." *See* AA Ex. 3. Sowers calculated that appellant had 6.5 hours of unaccounted work that day. This calculation fails to account for work appellant performed with Wright on the PennWest project as reflected by e-Builder. Throughout her calculations, Sowers failed to account for work appellant performed for the compliance or goal-setting units despite tracking logs showing

⁶ It is within the purview of the Commission to determine the credibility of the witnesses. *State Correctional Institution at Gaterford, Department of Corrections v. Jordan*, 505 A.2d 339, 341 (Pa. Commw. 1986).

appellant's access to projects. Furthermore, appellant testified there were periods he was instructed to hold off on working on certain goal-setting projects based on Wright's unavailability. Both appellant and Burnett credibly testified that appellant completed work for the compliance unit simultaneously with work he performed for the goal-setting unit, particularly when work with the goal-setting unit was put on hold. This work was also not reflected in Sowers's calculation. In her investigation, Sowers failed to question either of appellant's direct supervisors, Wright and Burnett, concerning appellant's daily work activities. Therefore, her calculation of 370.5 hours of work not performed is an incomplete representation of appellant's work activities from August through October of 2024.

While there may have been days appellant did not perform work, it is not the Commission's role to calculate hours worked versus not worked. The Commission cannot infer that appellant failed to perform work for a total of 370.5 hours. This finding must be based solely on substantial evidence. In *A.P. Weaver & Sons v. Sanitary Water Bd*, 3 Pa. Commw. 499, 503, 284 A.2d 515, 517 (1971), the Court found that, "Substantial evidence is more than a mere scintilla. It means such relevant evidence as a reasonable mind might accept as adequate to support a conclusion [. . .] it must do more than create a suspicion of the existence of the fact to be established." Sowers's calculation of hours must be sustained by some affirmative support. Testimony concerning delayed project submissions without further evidence of appellant's day-to-day activities is not sufficient. The appointing authority failed to present substantial evidence supporting a finding of 370.5 hours of work not performed.

The Commission notes appellant further alleged his removal was motivated by racial discrimination and retaliation. In finding the appointing authority failed to establish just cause for appellant's removal from his Equal Opportunity Specialist 2 position, the Commission need not address appellant's discrimination claims heard under section 3003 (7)(ii) of the Act. Accordingly, we enter the following:

CONCLUSION OF LAW

The appointing authority has not presented evidence sufficient to establish just cause for removal under Section 2607 of Act 71 of 2018.

ORDER

AND NOW, the State Civil Service Commission, by agreement of its members, sustains the appeal of Christopher L. Sanders challenging his removal from regular Equal Opportunity Specialist 2 employment with the Department of General Services. The State Civil Service Commission orders the following:

1. Within thirty (30) calendar days, the January 6, 2025, removal action shall be expunged from Christopher L. Sanders's record;
2. Within thirty (30) calendar days, Christopher L. Sanders shall be returned to the position of Equal Opportunity Specialist 2, regular status, with the Department of General Services;

3. Within thirty (30) calendar days, Christopher L. Sanders shall be reimbursed such wages and emoluments which would have been received, but for his improper removal, less wages earned and benefits received under the Public Laws of Pennsylvania as established by a sworn statement to be submitted by Christopher L. Sanders;
4. Within thirty (30) calendar days of the issued date of this opinion, the Department of General Services shall submit written notice of compliance with this Order to the Executive Director of the State Civil Service Commission.

State Civil Service Commission

Maria P. Donatucci
Chairwoman

Gregory M. Lane
Commissioner

Pamela M. Iovino
Commissioner

Issued: November 20, 2025