

IN THE COMMONWEALTH COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA

Courtney Gleco Hontz,	:	
Petitioner	:	
	:	
v.	:	
	:	
Unemployment Compensation	:	
Board of Review,	:	No. 662 C.D. 2025
Respondent	:	Submitted: July 24, 2026

BEFORE: HONORABLE ANNE E. COVEY, Judge
HONORABLE LORI A. DUMAS, Judge
HONORABLE STACY WALLACE, Judge

OPINION NOT REPORTED

MEMORANDUM OPINION BY
JUDGE COVEY

FILED: October 20, 2026

Courtney Gleco Hontz (Claimant) petitions this Court, pro se, for review of the Unemployment Compensation (UC) Board of Review's (UCBR) April 14, 2025 order affirming the Referee's decision that denied Claimant UC benefits under Section 402(e) of the UC Law (Law).¹ Essentially, Claimant presents three issues for this Court's review: (1) whether the UCBR erred by denying Claimant UC benefits based on a Protection from Abuse (PFA) order; (2) whether the UCBR erred by concluding that the existence of a PFA order constituted willful misconduct; and (3) whether the Referee violated Claimant's due process rights during the hearing.² After review, this Court affirms.

¹ Act of December 5, 1936, Second Ex. Sess., P.L. (1937) 2897, *as amended*, 43 P.S. § 802(e) (relating to willful misconduct).

² In her Statement of Questions Involved, Claimant presented five additional issues: (1) whether Kingston Township (Employer) failed to meet its burden of proving willful misconduct; (2) whether Employer acted in bad faith by failing to conduct a fair investigation, omitting exculpatory evidence, and later providing inconsistent reasons for Claimant's employment

Claimant was last employed as a full-time police officer for Kingston Township (Employer). On October 31, 2022, Claimant's husband filed a petition for a PFA order against Claimant, alleging therein that she engaged in domestic violence against him (Petition I).³ The Luzerne County Common Pleas Court (Common Pleas) granted a Temporary PFA Order that same date, and Employer placed Claimant on a paid administrative leave. On November 10, 2022, Employer instructed Claimant to continue all hearings that she was required to attend from October 31 through November 22, 2022, for cases in which she was the arresting officer. Claimant did not continue the November 22, 2022 hearings.

Common Pleas held a hearing on November 29, 2022, regarding Petition I, during which Claimant's husband withdrew Petition I. Thereafter, Claimant's husband filed another petition for a PFA order against Claimant (Petition II) due to a different domestic dispute.⁴ Common Pleas held a hearing on December 6, 2022, regarding Petition II. Common Pleas issued a final PFA order (Final PFA Order) directing that Claimant shall not abuse, harass, stalk, threaten, or attempt or threaten to use physical force against her husband. The Final PFA Order remained in effect from December 6, 2022 to December 6, 2023.

On December 8, 2022, the Municipal Police Officers' Education and Training Commission notified Employer that under the Federal Gun Control Act of 1968, 18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(8), and the Pennsylvania Uniform Firearms Act of 1995,

termination; (3) whether Employer had any established policy, rule, or directive in effect at the time of Claimant's employment or employment termination that governed the handling of PFAs or related disciplinary action; (4) whether the UCBR exceeded its authority under Section 704 of the Administrative Agency Law, 2 Pa.C.S. § 704, by affirming on grounds not supported by the Certified Record or raised by Employer; and (5) whether Claimant is eligible for benefits under Section 402(e) of the UC Law. *See* Claimant Br. at 6-7. These issues are subsumed in Claimant's above-stated issues and will be addressed accordingly herein.

³ Claimant filed a reciprocal petition for a PFA order against her husband.

⁴ Claimant also filed another reciprocal petition for a PFA order against her husband.

18 Pa.C.S. § 6105(c)(6), Claimant was prohibited from possessing firearms while the Final PFA Order was in effect.

On December 9, 2022, Claimant engaged in another domestic dispute with her husband that resulted in the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) arresting Claimant and charging her with violating the Final PFA Order.⁵ Because the Final PFA Order did not allow Claimant to possess a firearm, thereby rendering her incapable of carrying out her duties as a police officer, Employer suspended her without pay on December 22, 2022. On December 28, 2022, Employer's Police Department's (Department) former Chief of Police recommended Claimant's employment termination. However, Employer did not discharge Claimant at that time because the Department's newly appointed Chief of Police, Martin Maransky (Police Chief Maransky), was still conducting an internal investigation regarding Claimant's conduct. During that time, Claimant remained on unpaid suspension.

Once Police Chief Maransky completed his investigation on April 25, 2023, he recommended that Employer terminate Claimant's employment for the following reasons: (1) violation of the Department's Code of Conduct (Code of Conduct): Conduct Unbecoming of an Officer, Sections: 1.12(b) - conviction of any crime which constitutes a misdemeanor in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (Commonwealth) (conviction for violating the Final PFA Order); 1.12(c) - conviction of any crime which constitutes a non-traffic summary offense in this Commonwealth (conviction for violation of the summary charge of harassment); 4.06 - failure to comply with any Department order, directive, regulation, etc. (for not continuing the November 22, 2022 hearings); 1.22 - engaging in conduct which adversely affects the Department's morale or efficiency, or which has a tendency to destroy public respect for the Department, and confidence in the operation of its

⁵ Common Pleas held a hearing on January 24, 2023, and found Claimant guilty of violating the Final PFA Order. Claimant appealed from that conviction.

service; 1.10 A - prohibition against repeated violations of the Code of Conduct; and (2) Oath of Office: (i) *I will keep my private life unsullied, as an example to all, and will behave in a manner that does not bring discredit to me or my agency*; and (ii) *honest in thought and deed, both in my personal and official life, I will be exemplary in obeying the law and the Department's Regulations*. On May 16, 2023, Employer held a *Loudermill* hearing⁶ with Claimant. On July 5, 2023, Employer's Manager sent Claimant an employment termination letter (Termination Letter), therein concluding that Claimant violated the Code of Conduct and Oath of Office as charged, and discharged Claimant.⁷

Claimant filed an application for UC benefits. On March 15, 2024, the Harrisburg UC Service Center (UC Service Center) issued a determination (Determination) denying Claimant UC benefits under Section 402(e) of the Law. The last date for Claimant to timely appeal from the Determination was April 5, 2024. On April 5, 2024, Claimant mailed her appeal via certified mail from the Sunbury, Pennsylvania Post Office. On April 9, 2024, the Office of UC Benefits received Claimant's appeal. The Referee held a hearing on February 13, 2025, at which time Claimant was represented by counsel. On February 19, 2025, the Referee ruled that Claimant's appeal was timely, and affirmed the UC Service Center's Determination. Claimant appealed to the UCBR. On April 14, 2025, the

⁶ A *Loudermill* hearing is a pre-termination hearing given to a public employee that due process requires, as established in *Cleveland Board of Education v. Loudermill*, 470 U.S. 532 (1985).

⁷ On November 1, 2024, the Pennsylvania Superior Court reversed the charge of Indirect Criminal Contempt, regarding the violation of the Final PFA Order.

UCBR adopted and incorporated the Referee’s conclusions and findings of fact, and affirmed the Referee’s decision. Claimant appealed to this Court.⁸

Preliminarily,

“[i]n UC cases, the [UCBR] is the ultimate fact-finder and resolves issues of credibility and conflicting evidence[, and t]his Court is bound by those findings, provided they are supported by substantial evidence.” *Rivera v. Unemployment Comp. Bd. of Rev.*, 310 A.3d 348, 352 n.4 (Pa. Cmwlth. 2024). “Substantial evidence is relevant evidence that a reasonable person may accept as adequate to support a finding.” *Id.*

Pham v. Unemployment Comp. Bd. of Rev., 339 A.3d 1047, 1052 (Pa. Cmwlth. 2025).

Claimant first argues that the UCBR erred by affirming the denial of UC benefits where its decision was based solely on the existence of the Final PFA Order, a ground that Employer never alleged in its original employment termination documents or during the Referee hearing. Employer rejoins that there is ample evidence in the record supporting the UCBR’s finding that Employer discharged Claimant as a result of the Final PFA Order. Employer further retorts that Claimant engaged in physical abuse of her husband that led to a Temporary PFA Order and then the Final PFA Order. Employer asserts that Employer first suspended Claimant *with pay* after the entry of the Temporary PFA Order and then changed the suspension to *without pay* after the entry of the Final PFA Order. Employer maintains the Department’s former Chief of Police recommended Claimant’s employment termination.

⁸ This Court’s review is limited to determining whether constitutional rights were violated, whether an error of law was committed, or whether the findings of fact were supported by substantial evidence. *See* 2 Pa.C.S. § 704.

Initially, “a claimant who has been discharged for multiple reasons is disqualified from receiving [UC] benefits even if only one of those reasons amounts to willful misconduct.” *Glenn v. Unemployment Comp. Bd. of Rev.*, 928 A.2d 1169, 1172 (Pa. Cmwlth. 2007); *see also Sipps v. Unemployment Comp. Bd. of Rev.*, 181 A.3d 479, 481 n.4 (Pa. Cmwlth. 2018) (“[An e]mployer need only prove one of the types of misconduct[.]”); *McGroarty v. Unemployment Comp. Bd. of Rev.* (Pa. Cmwlth. No. 320 C.D. 2021, filed Feb. 1, 2022).⁹

Here, Section II of Employer’s July 5, 2023 Termination Letter expressly provided, in relevant part:

[Employer’s Manager] make[s] the following findings of fact which [he] deem[s] relevant to the issue of whether or not [Claimant] should be terminated from [Claimant’s] employment with the Department:

A. On October 31, 2022, [Claimant’s] husband filed [Petition I] against you by which he alleged that you engaged in a course of domestic violence against him during September and October of 2022. **Your husband was granted a Temporary PFA [Order]** on that date, and you were then placed on [a]dministrative [l]eave with [p]ay;

B. On November 1, 2022, then Chief [of Police] and then Sergeant Maransky conducted an in-person interview of [Claimant’s] husband and determined, in part[,] based on his physical appearance, that the allegations he made against you in [Petition I] were credible;

. . . .

E. At a hearing before [Common Pleas] on November 29, 2022, [Claimant’s] husband withdrew the [Petition I] he filed against [Claimant], and [Claimant] withdrew a reciprocal PFA Petition [Claimant] had filed against him.

⁹ This Court’s unreported memorandum opinions may be cited “for [their] persuasive value, but not as a binding precedent.” Section 414 of the Commonwealth Court’s Internal Operating Procedures, 69 Pa. Code § 69.414. *McGroarty* is cited for its persuasive value.

That evening, [Claimant] and [her] husband were involved in another domestic dispute. Following that dispute, [Claimant] and [her] husband again filed reciprocal PFA Petitions against each other. Upon review of those petitions, **[Common Pleas] issued a Temporary PFA [Order] against [Claimant]**, denied [Claimant's] request for a Temporary PFA [Order] against [her] husband, and scheduled a PFA hearing on the reciprocal PFA Petitions for December 6, 2022;

F. Following the December 6th hearing, **[Common Pleas] issued a [Final PFA Order] against [Claimant]** in favor of [her] husband, and denied [Claimant's] request for a PFA [Order] against [her] husband[.]

Certified Record (C.R.) at 22 (emphasis added).

The Termination Letter further described, in pertinent part:

D. The course of [Claimant's] conduct described in Section II [] constitutes a violation of Section 1.22 of the Code of Conduct[:] “Engaging in conduct which adversely affects the morale or efficiency of the [D]epartment or which has a tendency to destroy public respect for the [D]epartment and confidence in the operation of its service[];[”]

E. The course of [Claimant's] conduct described in Section II [] constitutes a violation of Section 1.10 of the Code of Conduct, which includes a prohibition against “Repeated violations of the [] Code of Conduct[];[”] and

F. Finally, the course of [Claimant's] conduct described in Section II also constitutes a violation of the Oath of Office [Claimant] took on March 10, 2021, which includes the following obligations [Claimant] swore to uphold: (i) “I will keep my private life unsullied as an example to all and will behave in a manner that does not bring discredit to me or my agency[];[”] and (ii) “honest in thought and deed both in my personal and official life, I will be exemplary in obeying the law and the regulations of my [D]epartment.”

C.R. at 23-23 (emphasis added). The Referee admitted the Termination Letter into evidence. *See* C.R. at 279; *see also* UC Ex. 32, Employer Ex. 2. Further, Police

Chief Maransky testified regarding the Termination Letter's conclusions. *See* C.R. at 298-304. Clearly, there was substantial evidence supporting the finding that Employer based Claimant's employment termination on, *inter alia*, Claimant's violation of the Final PFA Order. Accordingly, the UCBR properly affirmed the denial of UC benefits on that basis.

Claimant next argues that the UCBR erred by concluding that the existence of a PFA order constituted willful misconduct.

This Court has explained:

“[W]illful misconduct is defined by the courts as: (1) wanton and willful disregard of an employer's interests; (2) deliberate violation of rules; (3) disregard of the standards of behavior which an employer can rightfully expect from an employee; or (4) negligence showing an intentional disregard of the employer's interests or the employee's duties and obligations.” *Johns v. Unemployment Comp[.] [Bd.] of Rev[.]*, 87 A.3d 1006, 1009 (Pa. Cmwlth. 2014)[.]

Pierce-Boyce v. Unemployment Comp. Bd. of Rev., 289 A.3d 130, 135 (Pa. Cmwlth. 2022) (emphasis added). “Whether a claimant's actions constitute willful misconduct is a question of law fully reviewable on appeal.” *Id.* (quoting *Johns*, 87 A.3d at 1010).

Here, Police Chief Maransky testified:

E[m]ployer's] L[awyer] I'm going to ask you to point to the [C]ode [of Conduct] and explain the violations. And which section of the [C]ode [of Conduct] did [Claimant] violate?

[Police Chief Maransky] I believe it was [Section] 122, engaging in conduct which adversely affects the morale or efficiency of the [D]epartment or which has a tendency to destroy public respect for the [D]epartment and competence in the operation of its service.

E[m]ployer's] L[awyer] Okay. And can you just explain how [C]laimant] violated that section of the [C]ode of [C]onduct?

[Police Chief Maransky] Well so that's obviously the public -- **the public expects the [D]epartment] to work efficiently and [] trust[s] that [it is] going to follow the laws and the policies of the [D]epartment. And failure to do that, the public respect drops and then the trust of the public -- losing the public trust.**

E[m]ployer's] L[awyer] Okay. And are there any other sections that were violated?

[Police Chief Maransky] I believe it's [Section] 1.10, repeated violations of [the] [C]ode of [C]onduct or any course of conduct indicating a member has little or no regard for his or her responsibilities as a member of the [D]epartment.

E[m]ployer's] L[awyer] And what's that one based on?

[Police Chief Maransky] That would be the course of conduct -- well not only **the PFA and the actions leading up to the PFA becoming permanent**, but also the responsibility as a member of the [D]epartment to follow orders and specifically going to continue hearings.

C.R. at 298 (emphasis added).

Police Chief Maransky further related:

E[m]ployer's] L[awyer] All right. In the July 5th, 2023 [T]ermination [L]etter, is there a reference to the [O]ath of [O]ffice that she took -- that [C]laimant] took on March 10th, 2020?

[Police Chief Maransky] Yes. That's a typo on 2020. It would be 2021. Yes. On the same page [four], which is under conclusions; the course of conduct described constitutes a violation of [the O]ath of [O]ffice taken on March 10, 2021[,] which includes obligation to (inaudible), which is specifically (inaudible) example to all (inaudible) manner that does not bring discredit to any in the agency. And also (inaudible) my person [sic] and

official life. I will be exemplary in obeying the law and regulations in my [D]epartment.

. . . .

E[m]ployer's] L[awyer] So based on your testimony today, did [C]laimant] disregard the standards of behavior that [E]mployer] expected of its police officers?

[Police Chief Maransky] She did[.] . . .

C.R. at 303-304.

The UCBR concluded:

In this matter, [] [C]laimant[']s employment] was terminated due to having a Final PFA [Order] entered against her, after an internal investigation and conduction of a *Loudermill* hearing. In her appeal from the Referee's decision, [] [C]laimant argues that the Referee determined her ineligibility for benefits under Section 402(e) [of the Law] on matters that were essentially immaterial, including her failure to postpone any hearings in which she was involved in as the arresting officer and required to attend, and an [I]ndirect [C]riminal [C]ontempt charge which was later overturned on appeal. However, the existence of the [Final] PFA [Order] against [] [C]laimant was the reason for the termination, and the Referee's finding that the termination was caused due to willful misconduct in connection with the employment. [] [C]laimant was a police officer subject to a [C]ode of [C]onduct which, in part, defined conduct unbecoming of an officer as "engaging in conduct which adversely affects the morale or efficiency of the Department, or which has a tendency to destroy public respect for the Department and confidence in the operation of its[] service." Further, [] [C]laimant's [O]ath of [O]ffice she took stated "I will keep my private life unsullied, as an example to all, and will behave in a manner that does not bring discredit to me or my agency. . . . Honest in thought and deed, both in my personal and official life, I will be exemplary in obeying the law and the regulations of my Department."

Here, [] [C]laimant's receipt of a [Final PFA Order] against her evidenced a disregard of the standards of behavior which her [E]mployer had a right to expect of her

and evidenced a disregard of [] [E]mployer's interest and her duties and obligations to [] [E]mployer. Accordingly, [] [C]laimant is ineligible for [UC] benefits pursuant to Section 402(e) of the Law.

C.R. at 419-420 (*italics added*). This Court discerns no error in the UCBR's reasoning.

Lastly, Claimant argues that the Referee violated her due process rights during the UC hearing by introducing and relying on a new ground for disqualification - a temporary firearm restriction and the existence of a civil PFA order - without notice to Claimant or an opportunity to respond during the UC hearing process.¹⁰ Employer rejoins that the Certified Record includes the Termination Letter provided to Claimant that sets out the grounds for her discharge, including the entry of the Final PFA Order and the events leading up to the entry of the Final PFA Order. Employer further retorts that because it provided the Termination Letter to the UC Service Center in support of its reasons for the employment termination long before the Referee hearing, it was part of the record that Claimant and/or her lawyer could have reviewed prior to the UC hearing.

As [the Pennsylvania Supreme] Court has emphasized, "the basic tenets of due process apply with equal force in administrative proceedings as they do in judicial proceedings . . . [.] [I]t is fundamental that the key principles underpinning due process include the requirements of notice and an opportunity to be heard." *Pa. Bankers Ass['n] v. Pa. Dep['t] of Banking*, . . . 956 A.2d 956, 965 ([Pa.] 2008); *see also Vann v. [Unemployment Comp. Bd. of Rev.]*, . . . 494 A.2d 1081 ([Pa.] 1985) ([UCBR's] procedural rules regarding appeals must comport with the guarantees of fundamental due process). Adequate notice in this context includes the "right to notice of the issues to be decided, and an

¹⁰ Claimant cites *Grove v. Unemployment Compensation Board of Review*, 601 A.2d 452 (Pa. Cmwlth. 1991), to support her position; however, this Court could find no such case.

opportunity to offer evidence in furtherance of such issues.” *Pa. Bankers Ass’n*, 956 A.2d at 965.

Kozicki v. Unemployment Comp. Bd. of Review, 299 A.3d 1055, 1060 (Pa. Cmwlth. 2023) (emphasis omitted) (quoting *Quigley v. Unemployment Comp. Bd. of Rev.*, 263 A.3d 574, 593-94 (Pa. 2021)).

The Certified Record herein belies Claimant’s due process argument. First, Employer sent Claimant the Termination Letter on July 5, 2023. Further, Employer sent the UC Service Center the Termination Letter on January 9, 2024, as part of Employer’s Questionnaire. The Referee conducted the UC hearing on February 13, 2025, during which Employer offered the Termination Letter and the Referee admitted it into evidence as both a UC and Employer exhibit without objection. The Termination Letter expressly specifies the entry of the Final PFA Order and the events leading up to the entry of the Final PFA Order as reasons for Claimant’s discharge. Further, Police Chief Maransky testified concerning the Termination Letter and how the Final PFA Order and the events leading up to the entry of the Final PFA Order led to Claimant’s discharge.

Moreover, Claimant’s lawyer cross-examined Police Chief Maransky concerning whether the Final PFA Order was a basis for Claimant’s employment termination. Specifically, Police Chief Maransky testified:

C[laimant’s] L[awyer] All right. So getting back to where I was originally, **if we were just talking about the PFAs, she wouldn’t have been terminated.** She would have been suspended, and when it ran out, she would have been eligible for reinstatement, correct?

[Police Chief Maransky] **I would say incorrect.**

....

R[eferee] . . . PFA, final outcome. So in December of 2022 or January of 2023, was it recommended to [Employer] that [Claimant’s employment] should be terminated? That’s a question for you.

[Police Chief Maransky] Right. Yeah.

R[eferee] I just want to make sure that -- I think that's what [Claimant's Lawyer] is getting at.

[Police Chief Maransky] Sure. There's a recommendation that was made, but because of all of these other internal affairs investigations, the decision to terminate [Claimant's employment] was held off.

. . . .

C[laimant's] L[awyer] All right. Getting away from the hypothetical world, **we can agree she was not terminated for the PFAs, correct?**

[Police Chief Maransky] **I disagree with that. She was terminated because of the PFA and the course of conduct and all of the other**

C.R. at 306-307 (emphasis added). Based on the foregoing, the Final PFA Order was not a new ground for Claimant's employment termination and Claimant had notice thereof and an opportunity to respond. Accordingly, the Referee did not violate Claimant's due process rights during the hearing.

For all of the above reasons, the UCBR's order is affirmed.

ANNE E. COVEY, Judge

IN THE COMMONWEALTH COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA

Courtney Gleco Hontz,	:	
Petitioner	:	
	:	
v.	:	
	:	
Unemployment Compensation	:	
Board of Review,	:	No. 662 C.D. 2025
Respondent	:	

ORDER

AND NOW, this 20th day of October, 2026, the Unemployment Compensation Board of Review's April 14, 2025 order is affirmed.

ANNE E. COVEY, Judge