

EMPLOYMENT APPEALS BOARD DECISION
2026-EAB-0654

Affirmed
Disqualification

PROCEDURAL HISTORY: On February 5, 2026, the Oregon Employment Department (the Department) served notice of an administrative decision concluding that claimant quit working for the employer without good cause and was disqualified from receiving benefits from January 4, 2026 to January 2, 2027 (decision # L0015885501). Claimant filed a timely request for hearing. On March 12, 2026, ALJ Franco conducted a hearing, and on March 24, 2026 issued Order No. 26-UI-324881, modifying decision # L0015885501 by concluding that claimant quit work without good cause and was disqualified from receiving benefits effective July 27, 2025. On March 30, 2026, claimant filed an application for review with the Employment Appeals Board (EAB).

On May 14, 2026, EAB issued EAB Decision 2026-EAB-0308, reversing Order No. 26-UI-324881 and remanding the matter for additional development of the record. On June 18, 2026, ALJ Franco conducted a hearing,¹ and on June 26, 2026, issued Order No. 26-UI-333723, again modifying decision # L0015885501 by concluding that claimant quit work without good cause and was disqualified from receiving benefits effective July 27, 2025. On July 13, 2026, claimant filed an application for review of Order No. 26-UI-333723 with EAB.

WRITTEN ARGUMENT: Claimant submitted a written argument on July 13, 2026.² EAB considered that argument in reaching this decision.

FINDINGS OF FACT: (1) St. Charles Health System, Inc. employed claimant as an executive assistant in their hospital system located in central Oregon from January 2024 until August 1, 2025.

¹ The employer appeared at both the March 12, 2026 and the June 18, 2026 hearings via a representative. However, no witness testified on behalf of the employer at either hearing.

² Claimant previously submitted written arguments on March 30, 2026 and April 8, 2026. EAB did not consider the March 30, 2026 written argument because claimant did not state that she provided a copy of the argument to the employer as required by OAR 471-041-0080(2)(a) (May 13, 2019). EAB considered the parts of claimant's April 8, 2026 argument that were based on the hearing record.

(2) Claimant began working for the employer as an executive assistant in their legal department, and reported to a manager of administration, but was shortly thereafter assigned to report to an interim manager. The interim manager was often busy and claimant felt that she had not had a complete onboarding. In April 2024, the employer moved claimant from the legal department to the information technology (IT) department. In the fall of 2024, the employer assigned a new manager of administration to supervise claimant. Claimant felt that this manager was critical of her at times and would micromanage her work. At other times, however, claimant thought the manager would praise her performance or apologize after being stern with her.

(3) When claimant was moved to the IT department, the employer assigned claimant to support an executive in that department. Also at that time, and continuing until on or about January 2025, the IT department underwent a reorganization. In her role supporting the IT executive, claimant interacted frequently with the employer's human resources (HR) department during the reorganization, setting up new hire interviews and sitting in on meetings.

(4) In February or March 2025, claimant started to have difficulty sleeping and panic attacks. Claimant attributed the ailments to stress from work.

(5) One of claimant's work duties for the IT executive was to charge certain of the executive's expenses, such as travel and meal expenses, to the employer. Although claimant did not receive formal training on this job task, she consulted with other assistants for guidance, and believed that she charged the executive's expenses properly. When booking flights for the executive, claimant followed a protocol she was told by a previous assistant, which included sending screenshots of flights to the chief executive assistant for review. When charging meals and snacks, claimant did as she had seen other departments do, such as charging for meals and snacks during long meetings and documenting all who were present.

(6) In the spring of 2025, the employer's vice president of HR called claimant and told her that she would be receiving a call from an attorney for the employer. Later that day, and on one additional occasion about two weeks later, claimant had video calls with an attorney for the employer. In the interviews, the attorney asked claimant about certain of the executive's expenses that were charged to the employer, many of which involved flights, fuel purchases, and certain added-on expenses. Claimant had made most of these charges on the executive's behalf, following his orders, while some of the charges were made by the executive directly and without claimant's knowledge.

(7) In the interviews, the attorney told claimant that the investigation was confidential, and claimant explained that when she made charges for the executive, she did so based on the protocol she was told about by the previous executive assistant. Because of the attorney interviews, claimant grew concerned about her "professional standing and being blamed for" the executive's charges and travel arrangements. March 12, 2026 Audio Record at 12:07.

(8) Claimant's concerns about the investigation contributed to her sleep difficulties and panic attacks, and caused her to begin to have an eye twitch. Claimant did not contact her manager or anyone in the HR department with concerns or requests for assistance because she felt she "didn't know who [she] could trust." June 18, 2026 Transcript at 25.

(9) On June 5, 2025, the executive went to claimant's office and the two discussed the charges. Claimant had previously seen an email in the executive's inbox from the employer's chief financial officer (CFO), attaching a spreadsheet of charges the executive was being asked to reimburse. The executive handed claimant a reimbursement check, and stated, "This is just a lesson that we're going to learn." June 18, 2026 Transcript at 6. The executive asked claimant to deliver the check to the employer's finance department.

(10) "[F]rom then on, [claimant] just got scared[.]" June 18, 2026 Transcript at 6. Because of the investigation of the executive, claimant developed a "fear of being fired." March 12, 2026 Audio Record at 20:12. At some point after the June 5, 2025 meeting with the executive, claimant applied for a different job with the employer but was not offered the position.

(11) In or around late June 2025, claimant decided that she would quit working for the employer. In late June 2025, claimant told her manager that she desired to resign effective July 17, 2025. The manager asked if claimant would continue working an additional two weeks and resign effective August 1, 2025, and claimant agreed to do so. Following this conversation, claimant gave notice by email of her intent to resign effective August 1, 2025. In the resignation email, claimant stated that her reason for quitting was that she was "moving for personal reasons." March 12, 2026 Audio Record at 8:44. A few months after her resignation, in October 2025, claimant moved to Los Angeles, California. However, moving was not the reason claimant quit work.³ Rather, claimant quit working for the employer because she felt she was "in danger of losing [her] job." June 18, 2026 Transcript at 5. Claimant also was concerned about her professional standing and it was "an integrity type of decision to just kind of step away." June 18, 2026 Transcript at 29.

(12) No one had ever told claimant that she was in danger of being discharged or that the employer believed she had engaged in any wrongdoing. Claimant never asked the employer whether her job was in jeopardy or what the status of the attorney's investigation was, and she did not know at the time of her resignation that she would face any repercussions once the investigation was completed. During the attorney interviews, the attorney did not say that claimant was suspected of any wrongdoing herself and never gave any indication that claimant would be held accountable for the executive's charges.

(13) On August 1, 2025, claimant resigned as planned. Prior to resigning her employment, claimant did not contact her manager or the employer's HR department to raise any concerns or ask for assistance. Claimant did not feel comfortable reaching out to the HR department because they had been pursuing the investigation of the executive.

(14) After claimant left work, on or about September 1, 2025, the employer discharged the executive claimant had supported.

CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS: Claimant voluntarily left work without good cause.

³ Claimant stated in her resignation notice that she was quitting because she was moving for personal reasons, even though that was not the reason for her resignation. Claimant did so because she wanted to give a reason that would leave her in good standing with the employer, and work colleagues knew that she did stand-up comedy, so quitting to move to Los Angeles and pursue that occupation "just became the easier thing to tell people[.]" June 18, 2026 Transcript at 27.

A claimant who leaves work voluntarily is disqualified from the receipt of benefits unless they prove, by a preponderance of the evidence, that they had good cause for leaving work when they did. ORS 657.176(2)(c); *Young v. Employment Dept.*, 170 Or App 752, 13 P3d 1027 (2000). “Good cause . . . is such that a reasonable and prudent person of normal sensitivity, exercising ordinary common sense, would leave work.” OAR 471-030-0038(4) (September 22, 2020). “[T]he reason must be of such gravity that the individual has no reasonable alternative but to leave work.” OAR 471-030-0038(4). The standard is objective. *McDowell v. Employment Dept.*, 348 Or 605, 612, 236 P3d 722 (2010).

The primary reason claimant quit working for the employer was she felt she was “in danger of losing [her] job.” June 18, 2026 Transcript at 5; *see also* March 12, 2026 Audio Record at 20:12 (“I was more in fear of being fired and that is why I ultimately decided to resign.”). Claimant left work without good cause to the extent she quit work for this reason.

Precedent holds that a person may have good cause to quit work where they face an impending discharge that would not be for misconduct and other criteria are met. *See McDowell v. Employment Dep’t.*, 348 Or 605, 236 P3d 722 (2010) (claimant had good cause to quit work to avoid being discharged, not for misconduct, when the discharge was imminent, inevitable, and would be the “kiss of death” to claimant’s future job prospects). However, the record does not show that claimant was in danger of being discharged. No one ever told claimant that she was at risk of being discharged or that the employer believed she had engaged in any wrongdoing. Claimant never asked the employer whether her job was in jeopardy or what the status of the attorney’s investigation of the executive was, and claimant did not know at the time of her resignation that she would face any repercussions once the investigation was completed.

The available evidence does not suggest that the employer planned to hold claimant responsible for the executive’s charges by discharging her. Some of the charges were made by the executive directly, and those made by claimant herself were made on the executive’s behalf and at his direction, without claimant having received any formal training and with claimant having followed a protocol she learned from another assistant or based upon what she had seen other departments do. Under those circumstances, it is unlikely that the employer would have blamed claimant for improper charges or discharged her for that reason. Given that claimant had seen the CFO’s email with a spreadsheet of charges for the *executive* to reimburse, and had received the reimbursement check from the *executive* to give to the finance department, at the time claimant resigned, all indications were of the employer holding the *executive* responsible for the charges, not claimant. As claimant did not establish that the employer was likely to discharge her, she did not meet her burden to prove that she quit work with good cause based on her concern that she would be discharged.

Similarly, claimant quit work without good cause to the extent she resigned because she feared that her professional standing would suffer, or that she needed to “step away” as a matter of “integrity” because she would be blamed for the executive’s charges. June 18, 2026 Transcript at 29. The employer never told claimant that she was the subject of the attorney’s investigation, and during the attorney’s interviews, the attorney neither said that claimant was suspected of any wrongdoing herself nor gave any indication that claimant would be held accountable for the executive’s charges. Furthermore, claimant explained to the attorney during the interviews that she had made the charges based on the protocol she was told about by the previous executive assistant. It stands to reason that the employer would take this into account, as well as the facts that claimant had not received formal training on how to expense the

charges and had had incomplete onboarding training in the first place, and likely conclude that any errors on claimant's part were honest mistakes. Claimant did not prove that she was likely to be blamed for the charges since, as discussed above, at the time of her resignation, the employer had held only the executive responsible for the charges by requiring him to make reimbursements.

Claimant also left work without good cause to the extent she did so because of the sleep difficulties and panic attacks she had been experiencing. It is not evident that the frequency and severity of these ailments were such that a reasonable person of ordinary sensitivity would quit work. Claimant testified that the ailments began in February or March of 2025, possibly before she was interviewed by the attorney, and that she initially attributed them to work stress from the IT reorganization. June 16, 2026 Transcript at 24. Claimant further testified that the investigation into the executive contributed to her sleep difficulties and panic attacks, and caused her to begin to have an eye twitch. June 16, 2026 Transcript at 24-25. However, claimant stated that, at that juncture, the panic attacks were triggered by the attorney interviews and the CFO's email that she had seen. June 16, 2026 Transcript at 25. This suggests that the panic attacks may have occurred on a limited number of occasions and months before her resignation, since the attorney interviews took place in the spring of 2025 and she saw the CFO's email at some point before June 5, 2025, but she left work on August 1, 2025.

Claimant also testified that her concerns about the investigation left her not knowing what to do, and sometimes caused her to cry. June 16, 2026 Transcript at 25. However, claimant failed to pursue the reasonable alternative of simply asking, either of her manager or the HR department, whether her job was in jeopardy or what the status of the attorney investigation was. Doing so likely would have provided some clarity, eased her concerns, and relieved the ailments she was experiencing to some degree. It was not futile for claimant to pursue this alternative. Although she was told the investigation into the executive was confidential, it would not have breached confidentiality to merely ask, either her manager or the HR department, if the employer planned to discipline or discharge her; or, if they were not at liberty to discuss that, when the investigation into the executive would be completed.

Both claimant's manager and the HR department were reasonable employer contacts with which claimant could have made such inquiries. The manager's occasional criticism of claimant's work performance or tendency to micromanage did not mean it was fruitless for claimant to ask her whether her job was in jeopardy, particularly since the manager also sometimes praised claimant's performance or would apologize after being stern with claimant. As for the HR department, claimant asserted that she did not feel "comfortable" with human resources "because they were the ones that were pursuing" the investigation of the executive. June 18, 2026 Transcript at 6. Claimant also stated that she "didn't even know that [she] had an HR representative until her resignation." March 12, 2026 Audio Record at 14:27.

However, over the course of her employment, claimant had had numerous contacts with human resources, given her frequent interactions with the HR department during the IT reorganization. Claimant clearly had reason to know that human resources existed as a department within the organization and, as an employee herself, it is not logical for claimant to have failed to understand until she resigned that the HR department was available to offer assistance. Further, while some discomfort at broaching the subject with someone within the HR department was understandable, a reasonable person would have contacted the department to ask whether their job was in jeopardy before leaving work.

For the reasons discussed above, claimant voluntarily quit work without good cause. Claimant is disqualified from receiving unemployment insurance benefits effective July 27, 2025.

DECISION: Order No. 26-UI-333723 is affirmed.

D. Hettle and A. Steger-Bentz;
S. Serres, not participating.

DATE of Service: August 24, 2026

NOTE: You may appeal this decision by filing a Petition for Judicial Review with the Oregon Court of Appeals **within 30 days of the date of service stated above**. See ORS 657.282. For forms and information, visit <https://www.courts.oregon.gov/courts/appellate/forms/Pages/appeal.aspx> and choose the appropriate form under “File a Petition for Judicial Review.” You may also contact the Court of Appeals by telephone at (503) 986-5555, by fax at (503) 986-5560, or by mail at 1163 State Street, Salem, Oregon 97301.

Please help us improve our service by completing an online customer service survey. To complete the survey, please go to <https://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/5552642/EAB-Customer-Service-Survey>. If you are unable to complete the survey online and wish to have a paper copy of the survey, please contact our office.



Understanding Your Employment Appeals Board Decision

English

Attention – This decision affects your unemployment benefits. If you do not understand this decision, contact the Employment Appeals Board immediately. If you do not agree with this decision, you may file a Petition for Judicial Review with the Oregon Court of Appeals following the instructions written at the end of the decision.

Simplified Chinese

注意 – 本判決會影響您的失業救濟金。如果您不明白本判決，請立即聯繫就業上訴委員會。如果您不同意此判決，您可以按照該判決結尾所寫的說明，向俄勒岡州上訴法院提出司法複審申請。

Traditional Chinese

注意 – 本判決會影響您的失業救濟金。如果您不明白本判決，請立即聯繫就業上訴委員會。如果您不同意此判決，您可以按照該判決結尾所寫的說明，向俄勒岡州上訴法院提出司法複審申請。

Tagalog

Paalala – Nakakaapekto ang desisyong ito sa iyong mga benepisyo sa pagkawala ng trabaho. Kung hindi mo naiintindihan ang desisyong ito, makipag-ugnayan kaagad sa Lupon ng mga Apela sa Trabaho (Employment Appeals Board). Kung hindi ka sumasang-ayon sa desisyong ito, maaari kang maghain ng isang Petisyon sa Pagsusuri ng Hukuman (Petition for Judicial Review) sa Hukuman sa Paghahabol (Court of Appeals) ng Oregon na sinusunod ang mga tagubilin na nakasulat sa dulo ng desisyon.

Vietnamese

Chú ý - Quyết định này ảnh hưởng đến trợ cấp thất nghiệp của quý vị. Nếu quý vị không hiểu quyết định này, hãy liên lạc với Ban Kháng Cáo Việc Làm ngay lập tức. Nếu quý vị không đồng ý với quyết định này, quý vị có thể nộp Đơn Xin Tái Xét Tư Pháp với Tòa Kháng Cáo Oregon theo các hướng dẫn được viết ra ở cuối quyết định này.

Spanish

Atención – Esta decisión afecta sus beneficios de desempleo. Si no entiende esta decisión, comuníquese inmediatamente con la Junta de Apelaciones de Empleo. Si no está de acuerdo con esta decisión, puede presentar una Aplicación de Revisión Judicial ante el Tribunal de Apelaciones de Oregon siguiendo las instrucciones escritas al final de la decisión.

Russian

Внимание – Данное решение влияет на ваше пособие по безработице. Если решение Вам непонятно – немедленно обратитесь в Апелляционный Комитет по Трудоустройству. Если Вы не согласны с принятым решением, вы можете подать Ходатайство о Пересмотре Судебного Решения в Апелляционный Суд штата Орегон, следуя инструкциям, описанным в конце решения.

Khmer

ចំណុចសំខាន់ – សេចក្តីសម្រេចនេះមានផលប៉ះពាល់ដល់អត្ថប្រយោជន៍គ្មានការងារធ្វើរបស់លោកអ្នក។ ប្រសិនបើលោកអ្នកមិនយល់អំពីសេចក្តីសម្រេចនេះ សូមទាក់ទងគណៈកម្មការឧទ្ធរណ៍ការងារភ្លាមៗ។ ប្រសិនបើលោកអ្នកមិនយល់ស្របចំពោះសេចក្តីសម្រេចនេះទេ លោកអ្នកអាចដាក់ពាក្យប្តឹងសុំឲ្យមានការពិនិត្យរឿងក្តីឡើងវិញជាមួយតុលាការឧទ្ធរណ៍រដ្ឋ Oregon ដោយអនុវត្តតាមសេចក្តីណែនាំដែលសរសេរនៅខាងចុងបញ្ចប់នៃសេចក្តីសម្រេចនេះ។

Laotian

ເອົາໃຈໃສ່ – ຄໍາຕັດສິນນີ້ມີຜົນກະທົບຕໍ່ກັບເງິນຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອການຫວ່າງງານຂອງທ່ານ. ຖ້າທ່ານບໍ່ເຂົ້າໃຈຄໍາຕັດສິນນີ້, ກະລຸນາຕິດຕໍ່ຫາຄະນະກຳມະການອຸທອນການຈ້າງງານໃນທັນທີ. ຖ້າທ່ານບໍ່ເຫັນດີນຳຄໍາຕັດສິນນີ້, ທ່ານສາມາດຍື່ນຄໍາຮ້ອງຂໍການທົບທວນຄໍາຕັດສິນນຳສານອຸທອນລັດ Oregon ໄດ້ໂດຍປະຕິບັດຕາມຄໍາແນະນຳທີ່ບອກໄວ້ຢູ່ຕອນທ້າຍຂອງຄໍາຕັດສິນນີ້.

Arabic

هذا القرار قد يؤثر على منحة البطالة الخاصة بك، إذا لم تفهم هذا القرار، إتصل بمجلس منازعات العمل فوراً، و إذا كنت لا توافق على هذا القرار، يمكنك رفع شكوى للمراجعة القانونية بمحكمة الاستئناف بأوريغون و ذلك بإتباع الإرشادات المدرجة أسفل القرار.

Farsi

توجه - این حکم بر مزایای بیکاری شما تاثیر می گذارد. اگر با این تصمیم موافق نیستید، بلافاصله با هیأت فرجام خواهی استخدام تماس بگیرید. اگر از این حکم رضایت ندارید، می‌توانید با استفاده از دستورالعمل موجود در پایان آن، از دادگاه تجدید نظر اورگان درخواست تجدید نظر کنید.

Employment Appeals Board - 875 Union Street NE | Salem, OR 97311

Phone: (503) 378-2077 | 1-800-734-6949 | Fax: (503) 378-2129 | TDD: 711

Email: appealsboard@employ.oregon.gov

Website: www.Oregon.gov/employ/pages/employment-appeals-board.aspx

The Oregon Employment Department is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Language assistance is available to persons with limited English proficiency at no cost.

El Departamento de Empleo de Oregon es un programa que respeta la igualdad de oportunidades. Disponemos de servicios o ayudas auxiliares, formatos alternos y asistencia de idiomas para personas con discapacidades o conocimiento limitado del inglés, a pedido y sin costo.