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**Government of the District of Columbia
Public Employee Relations Board**

In the Matter of:)

District of Columbia Water and Sewer)
Authority,)

Petitioner,)

and)

American Federation of Government Employees,)
Local 872,)

Respondent.)
_____)

PERB Case No. 04-A-10

Opinion No. 798

DECISION AND ORDER

I. Statement of the Case

The District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority ("WASA") filed an Arbitration Review Request ("Request") in the above captioned matter. WASA seeks review of an arbitration award ("Award") which rescinded the termination of twenty-two bargaining unit members ("Grievants"). Specifically, the Arbitrator found that WASA violated the parties' collective bargaining agreement ("CBA"). As a result, the Arbitrator ordered the reinstatement of the Grievants to the status quo. WASA contends that the: (1) Arbitrator exceeded his jurisdiction; and (2) Award is contrary to law and public policy. (See Request at pgs. 3 and 6). The American Federation of Government Employees, Local 872 ("Union") opposes the Request.

The issue before the Board is whether "the arbitrator exceeded his jurisdiction" or whether "the award on its face is contrary to law and public policy." D.C. Code § 1-605.02(6) (2001 ed).

II. Discussion

"During September and October of 2001 [WASA terminated] individuals who did not possess the required Commercial Drivers License ("CDL") . . . from duty until they obtained their [Commercial Drivers License,] or CDL permit." (Award at p. 30)¹. The Union filed a grievance alleging that WASA violated Article 23 (Job Descriptions) of the parties' CBA. Specifically, the Union claimed that WASA made changes in the job descriptions of twenty-two employees without first notifying the Union, as required by Article 23 of the CBA. WASA denied the grievance. As a result, the Union invoked arbitration on behalf of the Grievants.

At arbitration WASA argued that the: (1) CDL requirement had existed since 1992; and (2) Union failed to demonstrate the existence of a contractual violation. (See Award at pgs. 32-33). The Union countered that: (1) it did not receive notice of the changes in the job descriptions as required by Article 23 of the CBA; (2) only a "regular license" has been required by WASA; and (3) no CDL requirement previously existed in the job descriptions. (See Award at p. 26). As a result, the Union asked that "the Arbitrator sustain the grievance in its entirety, and requested that [WASA] make every one [sic] affected by the 'CDL requirement' whole in a manner consistent with the [CBA] . . ." (Award at p. 28).

In an Award dated February 20, 2004, the Arbitrator stated that he was "generally liberal in admitting evidence at arbitrations. However, in the instant case, the position descriptions [introduced by WASA] were in a different type and, therefore, [the Arbitrator] considered the descriptions to be incompetent and unreliable." (Award at p. 55). Therefore, the Arbitrator excluded the position descriptions WASA attempted to submit into evidence . . . [at the hearing] due to apparent alterations on the position descriptions. As a result, Arbitrator Donegan found that the weight of the evidence indicated that the requirement of a CDL had not existed since 1992. (See Award at p. 54).

In addition, the Arbitrator determined that "[WASA] did not notify the Union of the changes in the position descriptions. . . . [These changes] required [that] bargaining unit members . . . obtain a [CDL]." (Award at p. 53). The Arbitrator also concluded that "[WASA] did not prove that it gave notice to the Union to bargain over changes in the CBA and concerning the job descriptions." (Award at p. 53). Furthermore, the Arbitrator found that "[WASA] made unilateral changes in the CBA in violation of its duty to bargain, which was in violation of the CBA." (Award at p. 53). Lastly, the Arbitrator directed that "the adverse actions that occurred as a result of the CDL requirement [be] rescinded and the employees . . . [be] returned to the status quo that existed before the adverse actions." (Award at pgs. 54-55). The Arbitrator further determined that "there can be no changes in the job descriptions until the parties have an adequate opportunity to bargain over the proposed changes in the job descriptions." (Award at p. 55).

¹ "CDL" refers to Commercial Drivers License as defined in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 49 CFR Part 383 § 5. See Attachment "A".

As a remedy the Arbitrator directed that WASA should "give proper notice to the Union of its intention to make the CDL a requirement of the . . . job descriptions." (Award at p. 57). In addition, the Arbitrator determined that both parties had a duty to bargain and that all adverse decisions by WASA were rescinded. (See Award at p. 55). Therefore, the Arbitrator directed that all employees be returned to the status quo pending the outcome of "good faith bargaining." (Award at p. 57).

In its Request, WASA takes issue with the Arbitrator's Award. Specifically, WASA asserts that the the Arbitrator exceeded his jurisdiction by: (1) not admitting certain proffered evidence; and (2) requiring in the remedy that WASA bargain over changes in job descriptions. In addition, WASA contends that the Award is contrary to law and public policy. (See Request at p. 3 and p. 6).

The Union opposes the Request claiming that: (1) possessing a CDL had never been a requirement of the grievants' employment; (2) a CDL requirement had never been in the Grievants' job descriptions; and (3) the "Request fails to state proper grounds for appealing an arbitrator's award." (Respondent's Opposition at p. 3). In addition, the Union argues that the Arbitrator was within his authority to rescind the CDL requirement where WASA had failed to provide notice to the Union. (See Respondent's Opposition at pgs. 3-4). In light of the above, the Union is asking that the Board deny WASA's Request.

When a party files an arbitration review request, the Board's scope of review is extremely narrow. Specifically, the Comprehensive Merit Personnel Act ("CMPA") authorizes the Board to modify or set aside an arbitration award in only three limited circumstances:

1. If "the arbitrator was without, or exceeded, his or her jurisdiction";
2. If "the award on its face is contrary to law and public policy"; or
3. If the award "was procured by fraud, collusion or other similar and unlawful means."

D.C. Code § 1-605.02(6) (2001 ed.).

In the present case, WASA contends that the Arbitrator exceeded his jurisdiction because the Award violates Part II, Article 58, § H(3), of the CBA, which provides that "[t]he arbitration hearing shall be informal and the rules of evidence shall not strictly apply." (Request at pgs. 3-4). (emphasis added). At arbitration, WASA attempted to introduce documentary evidence of position descriptions from 1992, purportedly containing the CDL requirement. The Arbitrator did not admit the position descriptions into evidence due to apparent alterations of the document. (See Award at p. 55). WASA argues that "by refusing to admit [WASA's] evidence or allow for testimony to determine the veracity of the proposed exhibits, Arbitrator Donegan eliminated the very basis of [WASA's] defense and acted contrary to the [CBA], which requires the liberal admission of evidence." (Request at p. 4). For the reasons discussed below, we disagree.

We have held and the District of Columbia Superior Court has affirmed that, “[i]t is not for [this Board] or a reviewing court...to substitute their view for the proper interpretation of the terms used in the [CBA].” *District of Columbia General Hospital v. Public Employee Relations Board*, No. 9-92 (D.C. Super Ct. May 24, 1993). See also, *United Paperworkers Int’l Union AFL-CIO v. Misco, Inc.*, 484 U.S. 29 (1987). Furthermore, an arbitrator’s decision must be affirmed by a reviewing body “as long as the arbitrator is even arguably construing or applying the contract.” *Misco, Inc.*, 484 U.S. at 38. Also, we have explained that:

[by] submitting a matter to arbitration “the parties agree to be bound by the Arbitrator’s interpretation of the parties’ agreement, related rules and regulations, as well as the evidentiary findings and conclusions on which the decision is based.”

District of Columbia Metropolitan Police Department v. Fraternal Order of Police/ Metropolitan Police Department Labor Committee, 47 DCR 7217, Slip Op. No. 633 at p. 3, PERB Case No. 00-A-04 (2000); *D. C. Metropolitan Police Department and Fraternal of Police, Metropolitan Police Department Labor Committee (Grievance of Angela Fisher)*, 51 DCR 4173, Slip Op. No. 738, PERB Case No. 02-A-07 (2004).

“It is not for PERB or the reviewing court . . . to substitute their view for the proper interpretation of the terms used in the collective bargaining agreement.” *District of Columbia General Hospital v. Public Employees Relations Board*, No. 9-92 (D.C. super. Ct. May 24, 1993). Also see, *United Paperworkers Int’l Union, AFL-CIO v. Misco, Inc.*, 484 U.S. 29 (1987). Also, “the Board will not substitute its own interpretation or that of the Agency for that of the duly designated Arbitrator.” *District of Columbia Department of Corrections and International Brotherhood of Teamsters*, Local Union No. 246, 34 DCR 3616, Slip Op. No. 157 at p. 3, PERB Case No. 87-A-02 (1987). An arbitrator’s decision must be affirmed by a reviewing body “as long as the arbitrator is even arguably construing or applying the contract.” *Misco, Inc.*, 484 U.S. at 38.

Furthermore, with respect to the Arbitrator’s findings and conclusions, we have stated that resolution of “disputes over credibility determinations” and “assessing what weight and significance such evidence should be afforded” is within the jurisdictional authority of the Arbitrator. See, *American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, District Council 20, AFL-CIO and District of Columbia General Hospital*, 37 DCR 6172, Slip Op. No. 253 at p. 2, PERB Case No. 90-A-04 (1990).

In light of the above, we find that WASA’s argument represents a disagreement with the Arbitrator’s interpretation of Article 58, Section H(3) of the parties’ CBA, and does not provide a sufficient basis for concluding that the Arbitrator exceeded his jurisdiction. WASA merely requests that: (1) we adopt its interpretation of Article 58, Section H(3) of the CBA; and (2) accept as credible the proffered position descriptions which allegedly require the Grievants to possess a CDL.

This does not present a statutory basis for review. Therefore, we cannot reverse the Award on this ground.

As a second basis for review, WASA claims that the Arbitrator exceeded his jurisdiction when, as a remedy, he directed WASA to bargain over the changes in the job descriptions prior to implementation. (See Request at p. 4). In support of this argument, WASA claims that the Arbitrator's equitable power regarding remedies is limited by Article 58, Section H(8) of the parties' CBA. (See Request at pgs. 4-5). Section H(8) provides as follows: "[t]he arbitrator shall not have the power to add to, subtract from or modify the provisions of this agreement or the Authority regulations or policies through the award." Furthermore, WASA asserts that Article 23 of the CBA requires that the Union be given notice concerning changes in the job description², but does not require the parties to bargain over the changes. (See Request at p. 5). WASA contends that the Arbitrator exceeded his jurisdiction by adding the additional requirement that the parties bargain over changes in the job description. (See Request at pgs. 5-6). Therefore, WASA argues that the Arbitrator modified Article 23, by adding a bargaining requirement. We agree.

This Board has held that an arbitrator's authority is derived from "the parties' agreement and any applicable statutory or regulatory provision." *D.C. Department of Public Works and AFSCME, Local 2091*, 35 DCR 8186, Slip Op. No. 194 at p. 2, PERB Case No. 87-A-08 (1988). Furthermore, "[o]ne of the tests that the Board has used when determining whether an Arbitrator has exceeded his jurisdiction and was without authority to render an award is 'whether the Award draws its essence from the collective bargaining agreement.'" *D. C. Metropolitan Police Department and Fraternal of Police, Metropolitan Police Department Labor Committee*, 49 DCR 810, Slip Op. No. 669 at p. 4, PERB Case No. 01-A-02 (2002) (citing *D.C. Public Schools v. AFSCME, District Council 20*, 34 DCR 3610, Slip Op. No. 156 at 5, PERB Case No. 86-A-05 (1987)). See also, *Dobbs, Inc. v. Local No. 1614, International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen and Helpers of America*, 813 F.2d 85 (6th Cir. 1987). The Board has adopted what is meant by "deriving its essence from the terms and conditions of the collective bargaining agreement" from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit in *Cement Division, National Gypsum Co. v. United Steelworkers of America, AFL-CIO, Local 135*, where the Court explained the standard by stating the following:

An arbitration award *fails* to derive its essence from a collective bargaining agreement when the: (1) award conflicts with the express terms of the agreement; (2) award imposes additional requirements that are not expressly provided in the agreement; (3) award is without rational support or cannot be rationally derived from the terms of the agreement, and (4) award is based on general considerations of

²WASA argued before the Arbitrator that the Notice provisions of Article 23 had been met, as the CDL requirement was not a new requirement, but had been in place since 1992. This contention is based on the aforementioned position descriptions which were rejected by the Arbitrator.

fairness and equity, instead of the precise terms of the agreement. 793
F.2d 759, 765 (6th Cir. 1986).³

In the present case, Article 23 of the CBA provides in pertinent part that:

Section A: Copy of Job Description

Each employee covered by this Agreement shall be supplied with a copy of his/her job description. The Local Unions shall be supplied with a copy of each job description upon request. The Local Unions shall be given the opportunity to review substantial changes in job descriptions prior to implementation.

It is clear from the above language of Article 23, that the CBA does not require the parties to bargain prior to implementing changes in the employees' job descriptions. Instead, Article 23 only requires that the Union be given an opportunity to "review substantial changes in job descriptions." As a result, we believe that Article 23 requires that the Union be given notice of the changes prior to implementation. Therefore, we find that the portion of the Award requiring WASA to bargain before implementing changes in job descriptions: (1) conflicts with the express terms of the CBA; (2) imposes the additional requirement to bargain over changes in job descriptions; and (3) cannot be rationally derived from the terms of the CBA. Also, we believe that the portion of the Award which requires WASA to bargain over changes in job descriptions prior to implementation fails to derive its essence from the parties CBA, and therefore, does not meet the *Cement Division* standard. Moreover, the Board can find no evidence identifying the source of the Arbitrator's authority to require the parties to bargain prior to implementation. Therefore, the Board reverses that portion of the Arbitrator's Award requiring the parties to bargain prior to implementation of changes in the position descriptions.

As a third basis for review, WASA contends that the Award is contrary to law and public policy because: (a) the Grievants were required to have a CDL pursuant to federal regulations;⁴ (b) the decision to change the job descriptions is a management right, pursuant to D.C. Code § 1-617.08(a)(1); (c) the Award would infringe on this management right by requiring bargaining; and (d) the awarded remedy of *status quo ante*, returning the Grievants to their positions, is contrary to Board precedent in cases concerning management rights. (Request at pgs. 2, 6, 7 and 8).

In support of this argument, WASA contends that pursuant to the Code of Federal

³*MPD and FOP/MPD Labor Committee*, 49 DCR 810, Slip Op. No. 669, PERB Case No. 01-A-02 (2001).

⁴CFR, Title 49 CFR Part 383.

Regulations, Title 49 CFR Part 383, its employees have been required since 1992 to possess and maintain a valid CDL as a condition of their employment. In addition, WASA asserts that the Arbitrator's Award is contrary to law because it rescinds the discharge of employees who, by federal regulation, were required to possess a CDL. WASA also claims that returning these employees to work would place WASA in violation of the CDL requirement. For the reasons discussed below, we disagree.

"[T]he possibility of overturning an arbitration decision on the basis of public policy is an "extremely narrow" exception to the rule that reviewing bodies must defer to an arbitrator's interpretation of the contract. "[T]he exception is designed to be narrow so as to limit potentially intrusive judicial review of arbitration awards under the guise of Public Policy." *American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO v. United States Postal Service*, 789 F.2d 1, 8 (D.C. Cir. 1986). Furthermore, to set aside an award as contrary to law and public policy, the Petitioner must present applicable law and definite public policy that mandates that the arbitrator arrive at a different result. *AFGE, Local 631 and Dept. Of Public Works*, 45 DCR 6617, Slip Op. No. 365, PERB Case No. 93-A-03 (1993). Also, a petitioner must demonstrate that the arbitration award "compels" the violation of an explicit, well defined, public policy grounded in law or legal precedent. See *United Paperworkers Int'l Union, AFL-CIO v. Misco Inc.*, 484 U.S. 29, 43 (1987). Lastly, the petitioning party has the burden to specify applicable law and definite public policy that mandates that the Arbitrator reach a different result. *MPD v. FOP/MPD Labor Committee*, 47 DCR 717, Slip Op. No. 633, PERB CASE No. 00-A-04 (2000); See also *District of Columbia Public Schools and American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, District Council 20*, 34 DCR 3610, Slip Op. No. 156 at p. 6, PERB Case No. 86-A-05 (1987).

In the present case, WASA argues, as it did before the Arbitrator, that the evidence supports its contention that a CDL requirement had been part of the position descriptions since 1992. However, as noted above, the Arbitrator found that there was no such CDL requirement in the employees' job descriptions. WASA's argument, therefore, merely represents a disagreement with the Arbitrator's findings and conclusions. This Board has held that an employer's disagreement with an arbitrator's findings of fact does not render an award contrary to law and public policy. *District of Columbia Department of Corrections and Fraternal Order of Police/Department of Corrections Labor Committee*, 46 DCR 6284, Slip Op. No. 586, PERB Case No. 99-A-02 (1999). In addition, WASA has the burden to specify applicable law and definite public policy that mandates that the Arbitrator reach a different result. *MPD v. FOP/MPD Labor Committee*, 47 DCR 717, Slip Op. No. 633, PERB CASE No. 00-A-04 (2000). However, WASA only specifically cites 49 CFR Part 383, Section 5, which is a definition section of the Commercial Driver License Standards, Requirements and Penalties. (See Attachment A). This section, by itself, does not mandate that WASA's employees possess a CDL. Furthermore, WASA did not point to any other particular provision in 49 CFR Part 383 requiring that the WASA employees involved in this case be terminated if they did not possess a CDL. Consequently, WASA has not presented a statutory basis for review. As a result, the Board cannot reverse the Award on this ground.

WASA also argues that the remedy is contrary to law and public policy because it requires the parties to bargain over a management right in violation of the CMPA.⁵ As discussed above, the portion of the Award which requires WASA to bargain over changes in the job descriptions prior to implementation fails to derive its essence from the parties CBA. Therefore, we found that the Arbitrator, in this case, exceeded his jurisdiction. As a result, we determined that there was a statutory basis for granting WASA's Request with respect to that portion of the Award. Since we have reversed that portion of the Award, we believe it is not necessary to consider whether the Arbitrator's Award requiring the parties to bargain is a violation of the management rights provisions of the CMPA.

Lastly, WASA argues that the Arbitrator's Award is in violation of law and public policy because the remedy of reinstating the grievants is improper under the law. Relying on *American Federation of Government Employees, Local 872 v. District of Columbia Department of Public Works*, 49 DCR 1145, Slip Op. No. 439, PERB Case No. 94-U-02 and 94-U-08 (2002), WASA argues that a *status quo ante* remedy in this case is improper.⁶ In the *AFGE, Local 872* case, this Board noted that a *status quo ante* remedy which would return employees to their previous positions was inappropriate where: (1) a RIF has already occurred; (2) the duty to bargain only concerns the impact and effect bargaining; (3) the results of such bargaining would have no effect on the RIF; and (4) the record clearly establishes that rescission of the RIF would disrupt or impair the agency's operations.

As noted above, the *AFGE Local 872* case involves a RIF and the duty to bargain concerning impact and effects of the RIF. However, the facts in the *AFGE Local 872* case are not applicable to the present case. Here, the case pertains to the remedy in an Arbitration Award. Moreover, this Board has previously upheld a *status quo ante* remedy in an arbitration award. See, *D.C. Department of Public Works and AFGE, Local 872, 1975 and 2553, AFL-CIO*, 49 DCR 1140, Slip Op. No. 438, PERB Case No. 95-A-08 (2002).

In the present case, WASA had the burden to specify applicable law or definite public policy that would mandate that the Arbitrator arrive at a *different* result. Instead, WASA merely disagrees with the Arbitrator's interpretation of the CBA. We have held that a disagreement with the Arbitrator's interpretation of the agreement does not render an award contrary to law. *D.C. Department of Public Works and AFGE, Local 872, 1975 and 2553, AFL-CIO, supra*.

⁵Specifically, WASA contends the Award violates the management rights provisions of D.C. Code § 1-617.08(a)(1), giving management the right to direct employees of the agency. (See Request at p. 6).

⁶In *AFGE, Local 872*, management unilaterally implemented a reduction in force without providing notice to the union. The union in *AFGE, Local 872* filed an unfair labor practice charge against DPW for failure to bargain in good faith concerning the impact and effects of a reduction in force ("RIF"). In the complaint, the Union had requested a *status quo ante* remedy. This Board found that a *status quo ante* remedy which would return employees to their previous positions was inappropriate.

Consequently, WASA has not presented a statutory basis for review. As a result, the Board cannot reverse the Award on this ground.

Pursuant to Board D.C. Code § 1-605.02(6) (2001 ed.), the Board finds that the Arbitrator exceeded his jurisdiction and was without authority to direct that WASA engage in bargaining with the Union prior to implementing changes in position descriptions. As a result, we grant in part, WASA Arbitration Review Request. Therefore, pursuant to Board Rule 538.4, the Board orders that the Arbitrator's Award be modified to reflect this ruling.

ORDER

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:

- (1) The District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority's Arbitration Review Request is hereby granted in part and denied in part. Specifically, WASA's request for reversal of the Arbitration Award is denied to the extent it requests that the Board overturn the entire Arbitration Award. However, the request is granted in part to the extent that the Board finds that the Arbitrator exceeded his jurisdiction and lacked authority to direct the parties to bargain prior to WASA's implementation of changes in the position descriptions.
- (2) Pursuant to D.C. Code § 1-605.02(6) (2001 ed.) and Board Rule 538.4, the portion of the Arbitration Award that requires the parties to bargain is reversed. Therefore, the Arbitrator's Award is modified to reflect this ruling.
- (3) Pursuant to D.C. Code § 1-605.02(6) (2001 ed.) And Board Rule 538.4, the Board sustains the Arbitrator's decision that: (1) WASA violated the CBA, by not providing the Union the opportunity to review the proposed changes to position descriptions; and (2) that WASA violated the CBA by discharging the grievants. Furthermore, we sustain the Arbitrator's ruling that the grievants be reinstated to their former positions.
- (4) Pursuant to Board Rule 559.1, this Decision and Order is final upon issuance.

BY ORDER OF THE PUBLIC EMPLOYEE RELATIONS BOARD
Washington, D.C.
July 24, 2006

ATTACHMENT "A"

The following are pertinent excerpts of Title 49 CFR Part 383.

TITLE 49-TRANSPORTATION

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

PART 383 COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSE STANDARDS, REQUIREMENTS AND PENALTIES --

Table of Contents

Subpart A-General

Sec. 383.5 Definitions.

As used in this part:

Administrator means the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administrator, the chief executive of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, an agency within the Department of Transportation.

Commercial driver's license (CDL) means a license issued by a State or other jurisdiction, in accordance with the standards contained in 49 CFR part 383, to an individual which authorizes the individual to operate a class of a commercial motor vehicle.

Commercial driver's license information system (CDLIS) means the CDLIS established by FMCSA pursuant to section 12007 of the Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1986.

Commercial motor vehicle (CMV) means a motor vehicle or combination of motor vehicles used in commerce to transport passengers or property if the motor vehicle-- (a) Has a gross combination weight rating of 11,794 kilograms or more (26,001 pounds or more) inclusive of a towed unit(s) with a gross vehicle weight rating of more than 4,536 kilograms (10,000 pounds); or (b) Has a gross vehicle weight rating of 11,794 or more kilograms (26,001 pounds or more); or (c) Is designed to transport 16 or more passengers, including the driver; or (d) Is of any size and is used in the transportation of hazardous materials as defined in this section.

Driver applicant means an individual who applies to a State to obtain, transfer, upgrade, or renew a CDL. **Driver's license** means a license issued by a State or other jurisdiction, to an individual which authorizes the individual to operate a motor vehicle on the highways.

Eligible unit of local government means a city, town, borough, county, parish, district, or other public body created by or pursuant to State law which has a total population of 3,000 individuals or less.

Employee means any operator of a commercial motor vehicle, including full time, regularly employed drivers; casual, intermittent or occasional drivers; leased drivers and independent, owner-operator contractors (while in the course of operating a commercial motor vehicle) who are either directly employed by or under lease to an employer.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

This is to certify that the attached Decision and Order in PERB Case No.04-A-10 was transmitted via Fax and U.S. Mail to the following parties on this the 24th day of June 2006.

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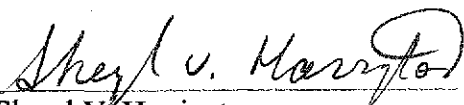
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