



Board of Administration Educational Day

Action Item – Proposed Decisions of Administrative Law Judges

3. Ronette O. Strown

January 20, 2026

Item Name: Proposed Decision – In the Matter of the Application for Industrial Disability Retirement of RONETTE O. STROWN, Respondent, and NORTH KERN VALLEY STATE PRISON, CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS AND REHABILITATION, Respondent.

Program: Disability and Survivor Benefits Division

Item Type: Action

Parties' Positions

Staff argues that the Board of Administration should adopt the Proposed Decision, as modified. Respondent Ronette O. Strown's (Respondent) position is included in Attachment C, if any.

Strategic Plan

This item is not a specific product of either the Strategic or Annual Plans. The determination of administrative appeals is a power reserved to the Board of Administration.

Procedural Summary

Respondent submitted an application for industrial disability retirement based on orthopedic conditions (neck, back, elbow, wrists, and hands). She later withdrew her bilateral elbow and wrist conditions as bases for her industrial disability retirement application. CalPERS denied the application based on the revised conditions. Respondent appealed this determination, and the matter was heard by the Office of Administrative Hearings on October 7, 2025. Due to North Kern Valley State Prison, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's (Respondent CDCR) failure to appear, the case proceeded as a default under Government Code section 11520 as to Respondent CDCR only. A Proposed Decision was issued on October 27, 2025, affirming CalPERS' determination and denying the appeal.

Alternatives

- A. For use if the Board decides to modify and adopt the Proposed Decision as its own Decision:

RESOLVED, that the Board of Administration of the California Public Employees' Retirement System, pursuant to Government Code section 11517, subdivision (c)(2)(C), which authorizes the Board to "make technical or other minor changes in the proposed decision," hereby modifies the Proposed Decision by: (1) inserting the word "industrial" in front of the words "disability retirement" on page 6, paragraph number 16; page 7, paragraph number 1; page 8, paragraph numbers 1 and 2 (where not quoted); and page 9, paragraph number 4 of the Proposed Decision; (2) replacing the word "Associational" with the word "Association" on page 5, paragraph number 12; (3) replacing the word "Survey" with the word "Surgery" on page 5, paragraph number 12; and (4) replacing "a" to "the" in the first line on page 8 of paragraph 1 under Legal Conclusions. The Board hereby adopts as its own Decision the Proposed Decision dated October 27, 2025, as modified, concerning the appeal of Ronette O. Strown; RESOLVED FURTHER that this Board Decision shall be effective 30 days following mailing of the Decision.

- B. For use if the Board decides to adopt the Proposed Decision as its own Decision:

RESOLVED, that the Board of Administration of the California Public Employees' Retirement System hereby adopts as its own Decision the Proposed Decision dated October 27, 2025, concerning the appeal of Ronette O. Strown; RESOLVED FURTHER that this Board Decision shall be effective 30 days following mailing of the Decision.

- C. For use if the Board decides not to adopt the Proposed Decision, and to decide the case upon the record:

RESOLVED, that the Board of Administration of the California Public Employees' Retirement System, after consideration of the Proposed Decision dated October 27, 2025, concerning the appeal of Ronette O. Strown, hereby rejects the Proposed Decision and determines to decide the matter itself, based upon the record produced before the Administrative Law Judge and such additional evidence and arguments that are presented by the parties and accepted by the Board; RESOLVED FURTHER that the Board's Decision shall be made after notice is given to all parties.

- D. For use if the Board decides to remand the matter back to the Office of Administrative Hearings for the taking of further evidence:

RESOLVED, that the Board of Administration of the California Public Employees' Retirement System, after consideration of the Proposed Decision dated October 27, 2025, concerning the appeal of Ronette O. Strown, hereby rejects the Proposed Decision and refers the matter back to the Administrative Law Judge for the taking of additional evidence as specified by the Board at its meeting.

E. Precedential Nature of Decision (two alternatives; either may be used):

1. For use if the Board wants further argument on the issue of whether to designate its Decision as precedential:

RESOLVED, that the Board of Administration of the California Public Employees' Retirement System requests the parties in the matter concerning the appeal of Ronette O. Strown, as well as interested parties, to submit written argument regarding whether the Board's Decision in this matter should be designated as precedential, and that the Board will consider the issue whether to designate its Decision as precedential at a time to be determined.

2. For use if the Board decides to designate its Decision as precedential, without further argument from the parties.

RESOLVED, that the Board of Administration of the California Public Employees' Retirement System, hereby designates as precedential its Decision concerning the appeal of Ronette O. Strown.

Budget and Fiscal Impacts: Not applicable

Attachments

Attachment A: Proposed Decision

Attachment B: Staff's Argument

Attachment C: Respondent(s) Argument(s)

Kimberly A. Malm
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Customer Services and Support