

**BEFORE THE PERSONNEL BOARD OF THE STATE OF ALABAMA
IN THE MATTER OF THE APPEAL OF
STEVEN SYKES**

ORDER

January 21, 2026

This matter came before the Board based upon the dismissal of the Employee from his employment with the Alabama Medicaid Agency (“AMA”). AMA dismissed the Employee effective November 8, 2024, based upon charges contained in a letter dated the same and pending resolution of the related criminal matter. The Employee timely filed his appeal to the State Personnel Board. This matter was assigned to Administrative Law Judge Sheila R. Graves, and a hearing was held on November 5, 2025. The Administrative Law Judge’s Recommended Order is now before the Board for consideration. Oral argument was requested by the Employee; however, he failed to appear at the January 21, 2026 Personnel Board Meeting.

AMA charges that the Employee violated the following Alabama State Personnel Board Rule 670–X–19–.01(1)(b) – More serious violations that may result in suspension or discharge on the first offense: (b)(13) – Conduct unbecoming a state employee.

The Employee’s personnel file did not contain any prior disciplinary history.

During the hearing, AMA presented evidence that the Employee’s dismissal stemmed from a September 2024 arrest wherein the Employee’s wife reported that the Employee choked her, bit her ear, threw a bottle that hit their son, took her cell phone, and attempted to stop her from using a neighbor’s telephone to call the police. The Employee’s

wife stated in the report she had been physically abused during their entire marriage. During the investigation, AMA discovered that the wife first filed a police report in April 2023 which also alleged the Employee physically abused her and that it had been going on for several years. However, the wife refused to sign an arrest warrant or seek a Protection from Abuse order. The April 2023 incident was not reported to AMA at that time.

Although the criminal charges were dismissed, the Commissioner testified that her concern was whether an incident as serious as the one alleged had more likely than not occurred at the hands of someone in the Employee's position of trust and knowledge of sensitive information and personal contact with extremely vulnerable persons. The Commissioner also found the written observations of the police lieutenant describing the Employee's wife's injuries of bruising and the son's injury of a small knot on his head were consistent with the wife's version of events in the 2024 report. The hospital nurse's notes that the wife had bruises "all over her body" were also consistent with the wife's version of events.

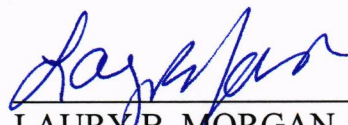
In his testimony, the Employee denied that he had ever been violent toward the wife. The Employee testified the wife has an alcohol problem, that she often falls and hurts herself. The Employee stated the wife filed the 2023 police report in retaliation for informing the wife's family of her drinking problem. The Employee denied the events of September 2024 as reported by the wife; instead, he testified that the wife had been bitten and scratched while working at a daycare a day or two before the arrest. The wife also testified in the hearing via FaceTime from a hospital bed that the information in the police report was inaccurate and that she supported the dismissal in the criminal action, stating "I

told them that I did not want to press charges.” The ALJ characterized her testimony as groggy and less than coherent.


The Administrative Law Judge, having observed and carefully considered the witnesses’ demeanor, testimony, and all the documentary evidence, found the totality of the evidence established the Employee was appropriately dismissed and recommended the Board uphold the dismissal. The Board hereby adopts by reference the findings of fact and conclusions of law as found by the Administrative Law Judge as a part of this Order, as if fully set forth herein.

The Board has carefully considered the Administrative Law Judge’s Recommended Order. The Board is of the opinion that the decision of the appointing authority to dismiss the Employee is supported by the evidence and that termination is warranted.

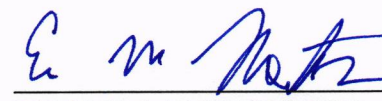
It is therefore the Order of this Board that the decision of the appointing authority to dismiss the Employee is hereby UPHELD.



LAURY B. MORGAN
SECRETARY

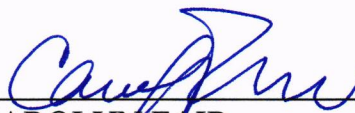


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