



Board of Administration

Agenda Item 8a1

March 19, 2025

Item Name: Proposed Decision – In the Matter of the Appeal of Survivor Benefits Payable Upon the Death of Harry W. Arnold by MARIE E. ARNOLD, Respondent.

Program: Disability and Survivor Benefits Division

Item Type: Action

Parties' Positions

Staff argues that the Board of Administration should adopt the Proposed Decision.

Respondent Marie E. Arnold'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

Decedent Harry Arnold (Decedent) retired on June 1, 1969, naming his first wife Patricia Arnold as his designated beneficiary. Decedent and Patricia divorced in 1977, and Patricia waived all interest in Decedent's CalPERS benefits.

Decedent married his second wife Aida Arnold in November 1982. In November 1988, Decedent submitted forms to CalPERS naming Aida as his sole designated beneficiary. CalPERS accepted Decedent's forms designating Aida as beneficiary.

Decedent passed away on September 19, 1995. In October 1995, CalPERS informed Aida of the benefits payable to her as Decedent's beneficiary: pro-rata, lump sum death benefit and lifetime Option 2 allowance. Aida submitted a claim to receive the survivor benefits, naming Respondent (her daughter) and her son as beneficiaries.

On December 15, 2023, Respondent claimed that she is entitled to receive half the survivor benefits payable upon Decedent's death. On May 1, 2024, CalPERS informed Respondent that all survivor benefits were paid at the time of Decedent's death, and no further benefits were payable on his behalf.

Respondent appealed. The matter was heard by the Office of Administrative Hearings on December 30, 2024. A Proposed Decision was issued on January 22, 2025, affirming CalPERS' determination and denying the appeal.

Alternatives

- A. 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 January 22, 2025, concerning the appeal of Marie E. Arnold; RESOLVED FURTHER that this Board Decision shall be effective 30 days following mailing of the Decision.

- B. 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 January 22, 2025, concerning the appeal of Marie E. Arnold, 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.

- C. 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 January 22, 2025, concerning the appeal of Marie E. Arnold, 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.

- D. 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 Marie E. Arnold, 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 Marie E. Arnold.

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
Deputy Executive Officer
Customer Services and Support