

**LOUISIANA STATE BOARD OF
SOCIAL WORK EXAMINERS**

IN THE MATTER OF

COMPLAINT NO. 2023-121

CIERA HARRELL

COMPLAINT NO. 2025-71

CREDENTIAL NO. 14227 (LAPSED)

VOLUNTARY SURRENDER OF REGISTRATION

WHEREAS, CIERA HARRELL ("Ms. Harrell") is a credentialed social worker and is subject to the jurisdiction and rules and regulations of the Louisiana Social Work Practice Act (La. R.S. 37:2701, *et seq.*), and the Professional and Occupational Standards of the Louisiana State Board of Social Work Examiners ("Board" or "LABSWE") (LAC 46:XXV §101, *et seq.*);

WHEREAS, on February 20, 2023, the Board office received a report from the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections, indicating that Ms. Harrell was arrested on February 13, 2023, and charged with three (3) counts of felony Medicaid fraud in violation of La. R.S. 14:70.1;

WHEREAS, Ms. Harrell did not self-report the arrest to the Board;

WHEREAS, on March 7, 2023, the Board office initiated a complaint against Ms. Harrell for failure to report her February 13, 2023, arrest and charge for felony Medicaid fraud;

WHEREAS, by letter dated March 7, 2023, the Board notified Ms. Harrell of the complaint filed against her, provided Ms. Harrell with a summary of the nature of the complaint, and requested that Ms. Harrell, within fifteen (15) days, provide a written response giving her review of the allegations raised in the complaint;

WHEREAS, by correspondence dated March 9, 2023, and received by the Board on March 29, 2023, Ms. Harrell responded to the complaint, giving her response to the allegations contained therein.

WHEREAS, on or about October 23, 2024, Ms. Harrell pled guilty to one count of Medicaid fraud in violation of La. R.S. 14:70.1;

WHEREAS, on or about November 15, 2024, the Board office received a report from the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections, indicating that Ms. Harrell was arrested on November 6, 2024, and charged with (i) Domestic Abuse Aggravated Assault, (ii) False Imprisonment: Offender Armed With Dangerous Weapon; and (iii) Cruelty To The Infirm;

WHEREAS, Ms. Harrell did not self-report the arrest to the Board;

WHEREAS, on or about November 22, 2024, the Board office initiated a complaint against Ms. Harrell for failure to report her November 6, 2024, arrest and charges;

WHEREAS, by letter dated November 22, 2024, the Board notified Ms. Harrell of the complaint filed against her, provided Ms. Harrell with a summary of the nature of the complaint, and requested that Ms. Harrell, within fifteen (15) days, provide a written response giving her review of the allegations raised in the complaint;

WHEREAS, the parties present the following facts as the basis for the Voluntary Surrender of Registration:

1. Ms. Harrell is a Registered Social Worker ("RSW"), registered by the Board to engage in the practice of social work in the State of Louisiana pursuant to the Social Work Practice Act, La. R.S. 37:2701 *et. seq.*, as evidenced by lapsed Credential Number 14227.

2. Ms. Harrell was arrested on February 13, 2023, and charged with three (3) counts of felony Medicaid fraud in violation of La. R.S. 14:70.1.
3. Ms. Harrell did not self-report the February 13, 2023 arrest to the Board.
4. Ms. Harrell subsequently pled guilty to felony Medicaid fraud in violation of La. R.S. 14:70.1.
5. Ms. Harrell was arrested on November 15, 2024, and charged with domestic abuse aggravated assault, false imprisonment: offender armed with dangerous weapon, and cruelty to the infirmed;
6. Ms. Harrell did not self-report the November 15, 2024 arrest to the Board.

WHEREAS, the respondent, Ms. Harrell, has indicated her desire to voluntarily surrender her registration with LABSWE, lapsed Credential No. 14227;

WHEREAS, the respondent, Ms. Harrell, acknowledges that the following will result due to her voluntary surrender of her RSW registration with LABSWE:

1. A report of this Voluntary Surrender of Registration and the conditions under which the registration was surrendered shall be submitted to the National Practitioners Data Bank ("NPDB").
2. Public notification of this Voluntary Surrender of Registration by publishing and reporting in, including but not limited to, the LABSWE website, the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB), and the National Practitioner Data Bank-Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank (NPDB-HIPDB).
3. A five (5) year waiting period before Ms. Harrell will be eligible to apply for a social work credential with the LABSWE.
4. In the event that Ms. Harrell seeks a social work credential with the Board after the five (5) year period addressed above at Paragraph 3, a hearing may be held by LABSWE to afford Ms. Harrell an opportunity to present evidence that she is fit to practice social work in Louisiana. After such hearing, LABSWE may deny or grant the credential, and in the event of licensure, certification, or registration, the Board

may place any conditions or restrictions on Ms. Harrell's social work practice if deems appropriate.

5. In addition to any conditions or restrictions placed by the Board, if she reapplies for a social work credential, Ms. Harrell shall meet all requirements set forth at La. R.S. 37:2714(E), which includes continuing education hours and passing the Board's open book exam.
6. Ms. Harrell shall pay a fine in the amount of ONE THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS (\$1,000.00) within eighteen (18) months from the date all parties sign this Voluntary Surrender of Registration. The payments shall be made on a quarterly basis with the first payment being due within ninety (90) days from the date all parties sign this Voluntary Surrender of Registration. Payment shall be made by credit card, certified check, or money order.
7. Ms. Harrell shall reimburse costs associated with Complaint Nos. 2023-121 and 2025-71 in the amount of TWO THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED AND 00/100 DOLLARS (\$2,500.00) within eighteen (18) months from the date all parties sign this Voluntary Surrender of Registration. The payments shall be made on a quarterly basis with the first payment being due within ninety (90) days from the date all parties sign this Voluntary Surrender of Registration. Payment shall be made by credit card, certified check, or money order.
8. Ms. Harrell further acknowledges that failure to reimburse the fees set forth above at Paragraphs 6 and 7 will require the Board to take further action in collection of this debt. Respondent has eighteen (18) months to reimburse the expenses before the debt will be considered final and transferred to the Louisiana Office of Debt Recovery (ODR). After transfer, the debt is subject to an additional collection fee of up to twenty-five percent (25%) of the total debt liability, as provided for in La. R.S. 47:1676 (E).
9. Ms. Harrell specifically acknowledges that failure to comply with the terms of this Voluntary Surrender of Registration may result in a denial of any license, certificate, or registration applied for, in accordance with La. R.S. 37:2717.

WHEREAS, Ms. Harrell acknowledges that she has had the opportunity to thoroughly review the content of this Voluntary Surrender of Registration and that she is informed of and understands her rights to due process in connection with administrative charges, and that prior to final disciplinary action against her registration, she would be entitled to have notice of a hearing on the allegations and charges asserted against her through the filing of an Administrative

Complaint, and to have an administrative adjudication of such charges, at which time Ms. Harrell would be entitled to be represented by legal counsel, to call witnesses and to present evidence on her own behalf in defense or in mitigation of the charges made, and to a decision thereon by the Board based upon written findings of fact and conclusions of law pursuant to La. R.S. 49:950, *et seq.*;

WHEREAS, notwithstanding her right to an administrative hearing and a decision thereon as provided by La. R.S. 49:975-980, in recognition of the stipulations set forth above and for the final disposition of this administrative action, Ms. Harrell, nonetheless, waives her right to formal adjudication and voluntarily surrenders to the Board her registration to practice as a social worker in the state of Louisiana as evidenced by lapsed Credential No. 14227. Ms. Harrell also hereby authorizes a member of the Disciplinary Committee or the Board attorney to present this Voluntary Surrender of Registration to the Board for its consideration, and to fully disclose to and discuss with the Board the circumstances of this surrender, and she waives any objection to such disclosures under La. R.S. 49:950, *et seq.*;


WHEREAS, Ms. Harrell acknowledges, stipulates and agrees that the voluntary surrender of her registration shall be deemed by the Board to have the same effect as if the Board had entered an order of revocation upon the conclusion of formal administrative proceedings.

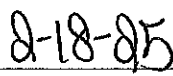
WHEREAS, by the voluntary surrender of her RSW registration, Ms. Harrell, moreover, acknowledges, stipulates, and agrees that she hereby waives any right to which she may be entitled pursuant to the Louisiana Administrative Procedure Act, or which otherwise may be afforded to her by law, to contest her agreement to, or the force and effect of this document in any Court related to the matters referred to herein;

WHEREAS, Ms. Harrell acknowledges that she has had the opportunity to seek the advice and guidance of legal counsel with respect to this Stipulation;

Effect of Non Acceptance of Agreement. Ms. Harrell acknowledges that this Voluntary Surrender of Registration is subject to the approval of the Board. She further acknowledges and agrees that if the Board rejects this Voluntary Surrender of Registration, it will be void, and an Administrative Complaint may be filed relative to the allegations contained herein. If this Voluntary Surrender of Registration is rejected by the Board, it will not constitute a waiver of Ms. Harrell's right to a hearing on the matters alleged in an Administrative Complaint and the admissions contained herein will have no effect. She further agrees that if the Board rejects this Voluntary Surrender of Registration, the members of the Board may decide the matter after a hearing, and their consideration of this Voluntary Surrender of Registration shall not alone be grounds for recusal of any member of the Board, including any claims that the Board is biased against her, that it cannot fairly decide the case, or that it has received *ex parte* communication.

WHEREAS, based upon the above, CIERA HARRELL surrenders her RSW registration held with LABSWE, lapsed Credential No. 14227.


CIERA HARRELL


Date

**BOARD ORDER
AND
ACCEPTANCE OF THE VOLUNTARY SURRENDER OF REGISTRATION BY THE
LOUISIANA STATE BOARD OF SOCIAL WORK EXAMINERS:**

By a majority vote of the Board members voting in favor of the foregoing Voluntary Surrender of Registration at the Board meeting on March 21, 2025, the Board hereby adopts said Voluntary Surrender of Registration, and makes it an Order of this Board.

Accordingly, the Board orders as follows:

1. A report of this Voluntary Surrender of Registration and the conditions under which the registration was surrendered shall be submitted to the National Practitioners Data Bank ("NPDB").
2. Public notification of this Voluntary Surrender of Registration by publishing and reporting in, including but not limited to, the LABSWE website, the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB), and the National Practitioner Data Bank-Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank (NPDB-HIPDB).
3. A five (5) year waiting period before Ms. Harrell will be eligible to apply for a social work credential with the LABSWE.
4. In the event that Ms. Harrell seeks credentialing by the Board after the five (5) year period addressed above at Paragraph 3, a hearing may be held by LABSWE to afford Ms. Harrell an opportunity to present evidence that she is fit to practice social work in Louisiana. After such hearing, LABSWE may deny or grant a social work credential, and in the event of registration, certification or licensure, the Board may place any conditions or restrictions on Smith's social work practice it deems appropriate.
5. In addition to any conditions or restrictions placed by the Board, if she reapplies for a social work credential, Ms. Harrell shall meet all requirements set forth at La. R.S. 37:2714(E), which includes continuing education hours and passing the Board's open book exam.
6. Ms. Harrell shall pay a fine in the amount of ONE THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS (\$1,000.00) within eighteen (18) months from the date all parties sign this Voluntary Surrender of Registration. The payments shall be made on a quarterly basis with the first payment being due within ninety (90) days from the date all parties sign this Voluntary Surrender of Registration. Payment shall be made by credit card, certified check, or money order.

7. Ms. Harrell shall reimburse legal costs associated with Complaint Nos. 2023-121 and 2025-71 in the amount of TWO THOUSAND FIFTY-FIVE AND 00/100 DOLLARS (\$2,055.00) within eighteen (18) months from the date all parties sign this Voluntary Surrender of Registration. The payments shall be made on a quarterly basis with the first payment being due within ninety (90) days from the date all parties sign this Voluntary Surrender of Registration. Payment shall be made by credit card, certified check, or money order.
8. Ms. Harrell further acknowledges that failure to reimburse the fees set forth above at Paragraphs 6 and 7 will require the Board to take further action in collection of this debt. Respondent has eighteen (18) months to reimburse the expenses before the debt will be considered final and transferred to the Louisiana Office of Debt Recovery (ODR). After transfer, the debt is subject to an additional collection fee of up to twenty-five percent (25%) of the total debt liability, as provided for in La. R.S. 47:1676 (E).
9. Ms. Harrell specifically acknowledges that failure to comply with the terms of this Voluntary Surrender of Registration may result in a denial of any license, certificate, or registration applied for, in accordance with La. R.S. 37:2717.

FOR THE BOARD:

 DPN LCSW BACS
Dr. Hyacinth McKee, LCSW-BACS, Chair