

COPY

**BEFORE THE MERIT EMPLOYEE RELATIONS BOARD  
OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE**

IN THE MATTER OF:	)	
TRACY HARRIS,	)	DOCKET NO. 06-10-372
	)	
Grievant,	)	
	)	
v.	)	DECISION AND ORDER ON
	)	MOTION TO DISMISS
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS,	)	
Employer/Agency.	)	

BEFORE John F. Schmutz, Joseph D. Dillon, and Martha Austin, Members, constituting a quorum of the Merit Employee Relations Board pursuant to 29 Del. C. § 5908(a).

**APPEARANCES:**

For the Grievant:  
(no appearance)

For the Department:  
Kevin Slattery  
Deputy Attorney General  
Delaware Dept. of Justice  
820 N. French St.  
Wilmington, DE 19801

**NATURE OF THE PROCEEDINGS**

The grievance appeal concerns the reassignment of the Grievant in 2006, who was employed for three years as a Correctional Officer at the Delaware Correctional Center, from the 7-3 shift at the Education Building to the 8-4 shift at the Security Housing Unit ("SHU"), after an adverse Step Three grievance decision. See Merit Rule No. 18.0.

Prior to the evidentiary hearing, the Department, through counsel, filed a Motion to Dismiss for lack of jurisdiction. Specifically, the Agency claimed that this was not a grievable matter and that the Grievant had no standing to file the grievance or to maintain an appeal to the Board.

A Legal Hearing on the Department's Motion to Dismiss was held on December 20, 2007.

The *pro se* Grievant, Tracy Harris, did not appear for the December 20<sup>th</sup> hearing. Written notification dated November 16, 2007 was sent to Ms. Harris at her address on file with the Board, concerning the scheduling of the December 20<sup>th</sup> hearing. The written notification was not returned to the Board.

In presenting its Motion to Dismiss, the Department made oral argument based upon the reasons set forth in its Motion and requested the grievance be dismissed. This is the decision of the Board on the Motion to Dismiss the appeal.

### **FINDINGS OF FACT**

The Board finds that the Grievant's address on file with the Board was the same address as stated in the written notification dated November 16, 2007, and also finds that the notification was not returned to the Board as undeliverable. The Board further finds that the Department's Motion to Dismiss was unopposed by the Grievant.

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

In the present case and based upon the record presented to the Board, there are two issues: 1) whether the Grievant received notice of the December 20, 2007 hearing, and 2) whether the Board has jurisdiction to consider the grievance filed with the Board on September 15, 2006.

First, the Board concludes that the Grievant had notice of the December 20, 2007 hearing. The Grievant's address on file with the Board was the same address as stated in and sent for the written notification dated November 16, 2007. There were no other records in the Board's file to indicate a change of address for the Grievant.. As such, the Board concludes that the notice, which was not returned as undeliverable, is presumed to have been received. A properly addressed, posted, and mailed notice is presumed to be received by claimant, and mere denial of receipt of notice is insufficient to rebut this presumption. *Robledo v. Stratus v. Unemployment*

*Ins. Appeal Bd.*, 2001 WL 428684, at \*2 (Del.Super.Ct. Mar. 27, 2001).

Second, the Board also concludes that it does not have jurisdiction to consider this matter. *Kreshtool v. Delmarva Power and Light Co.*, 310 A.2d 649, 654 (1973) (powers of administrative agency must be exercised in accordance with statute conferring power upon it). A classified employee's standing to maintain a grievance is limited to an alleged wrong that affects her status in her present position. 29 *Del.C.* § 5943(a). Under the facts presented here, a reassignment to a different location with the Delaware Correctional Center is not a change in status or position as contemplated by Section 5943(a). Also, based upon the record, it appears the Grievant filed her initial grievance alleging a violation of Merit Rule 2.0. However, as the Step 3 Decision indicated and the Agency argued in its Motion, the Grievant presented no evidence to show discrimination.

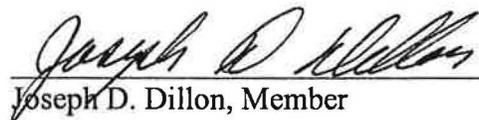
Therefore, by the unanimous vote of the Board hearing this matter, the Motion to Dismiss is granted and the grievance is dismissed.

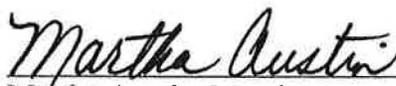
**ORDER**

It is this 25<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2009, the Decision and Order of the Board that the Department's Motion to Dismiss is granted and the grievance appeal is dismissed.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
John F. Schmutz, Member

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Joseph D. Dillon, Member

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Martha Austin, Member