

1 Deborah Z. Wissley, Hearing Officer  
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8 BEFORE THE BOARD OF RETIREMENT  
9 VENTURA COUNTY EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION

10 In the Matter of the Application for )  
11 Disability Retirement of: )  
12 Bruton, Geoffrey, )  
13 Applicant. )  
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REPORT TO BOARD RE LAPSE OF  
HEARING OFFICER'S JURISDICTION  
[Rule 5, VCERA New Model Disability  
Retirement Hearing Rules]  
CASE NO. 20-023

TO THE BOARD OF RETIREMENT OF THE VENTURA COUNTY EMPLOYEE'S  
RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION:

Please accept this writing as a report made pursuant to Rule 5 of the VCERA New Model  
Disability Retirement Hearing Rules.

I was assigned as the Hearing Officer of the above-captioned matter on January 4, 2022. The  
Board directed that the hearing take place by January 24, 2024.

I was notified of the assignment on July 28, 2023. Shortly thereafter, the hearing was  
scheduled for the agreed date of January 22, 2024.

On November 16, 2023, Applicant's attorney requested an unopposed 90-day continuance  
of the hearing due to his wife's serious, protracted illness and his care-taking responsibilities.  
Finding good cause, I requested and was granted an extension of jurisdiction to May 24, 2024, and  
I rescheduled the hearing to the agreed date of May 8, 2024.

On April 19, 2024, Applicant's attorney requested an unopposed hearing continuance of  
unspecified duration due to his wife's ongoing illness. Applicant's attorney indicated that he had  
retained co-counsel to assist him with his workload, but that assistance had become unavailable.

1           Given the circumstances, Respondent County of Ventura Risk Management's attorney  
2 suggested a 270-day continuance. Respondent VCERA's attorney voiced no objection to a  
3 continuance, but requested a specification of the continuance's duration, without stating a preference.

4           On April 19, 2024, I issued an email in which I made a finding of good cause, vacated the  
5 May 8, 2024 hearing date, and stated that the hearing would be rescheduled pursuant to further input  
6 and consideration.

7           Based upon the nature of Applicant Attorney's family emergency, I believe it is unrealistic  
8 to expect to be able to reschedule the hearing for a date within even several months, and that a  
9 hearing, testimony transcription, briefing and a recommendation on the application will likely extend  
10 the matter well into 2025 - and beyond what will be my likely retirement date as a VCERA hearing  
11 officer.

12           I am therefore not requesting that my jurisdiction be extended beyond its current expiration  
13 date of May 24, 2024.

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16 DATED: April 25, 2024

Respectfully submitted,

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