

MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF
THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
STATE EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF ILLINOIS

January 8, 2026

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the State Employees' Retirement System of Illinois was held on Thursday, January 8, 2026, at 8:45 a.m. in the System's Springfield office at 2101 S. Veterans Parkway.

Committee Members Present:

Marvin Becker, Chairperson
Arnold Black, Vice-Chairperson
Timothy Blair, Executive Secretary

Others Present:

Jeff Houch, Associate Executive Secretary
Samantha Goetz, General Counsel
Cory Mitchell, Manager, Claims Division
Jessica Blood, Recording Secretary
Aaron Evans, Attorney, Sorling Northrup
James Hernandez, Claimant

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Chairperson Becker presented the minutes of the Executive Committee's meeting on December 11, 2025, for approval. Copies of the minutes were previously emailed to Committee members for review. Chairperson Becker moved to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairperson Black and passed unanimously.

Routine Claims Report

The Routine Claims Report for December 2025 was presented. Following a brief discussion, the Routine Claims Report for December 2025, as prepared by staff, was received by the Committee.

Old Business

Roxanne Casey – Appeal Overpayment of Temporary Disability Benefits – Recommendation

Roxanne Casey has been on SERS' temporary disability benefit since November 2023. SERS was notified in October that Ms. Casey was approved for Social Security

disability benefits, with an entitlement date of January 2025.

An overpayment of SERS benefits was set up from January 2025, through September 2025.

Ms. Casey is requesting a telephone appeal against the overpayment of benefits. She stated she thought the money owed to SERS should have been deducted before she was paid. She disagrees with the overpayment.

After hearing Ms. Casey present her appeal at their December 2025 meeting, the Committee referred to external counsel for a recommendation.

Attorney Evans presented Recommendation No. 2026-1, to deny Ms. Casey's appeal. Following a brief discussion, Chairperson Becker moved to adopt Recommendation No. 2026-1. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairperson Black and passed unanimously.

New Business

Terra Jenkins – Appeal Denial of Continued Nonoccupational Disability Benefits – Formal Hearing via Teleconference – 9:00 a.m.

Jeff Houch, Associate Executive Secretary, informed the Committee that Ms. Jenkins requested to defer her appeal.

James Hernandez – Appeal Overpayment of Occupational Disability Benefits – Springfield – 9:45 a.m.

James Hernandez was on occupational disability benefits from September 1, 1998 until October 31, 2022. Mr. Hernandez worked as a Youth Supervisor II and Correctional Officer with IDOC. Mr. Hernandez and IDOC entered into a settlement agreement dated February 13, 2001 to settle his workers' compensation act claim. The settlement stipulated that Mr. Hernandez was permanently disabled from employment in his previous occupation as Youth Supervisor II or Correctional Officer and agreed not to seek reemployment in that capacity or any other capacity within IDOC.

Mr. Hernandez was required to submit disability certifications twice a year. None of the certifications to SERS reported he made more than the then-applicable quarterly amount. He consistently certified he did not exceed the earning through employment or self-employment.

In June 2022, Mr. Hernandez applied for the position of Juvenile Justice Specialist Intern at IDJJ and was hired effective October 24, 2022. He included his work history as a driver for Uber/Lyft beginning in 2016 and that he still did it as needed. He indicated on his application that he did not have a disability and documentation from a physician stating that he would be able to perform the job requirements in the position without any restrictions, but that he was disabled as to his previous job as a ride share driver. His occupational benefits stopped at this time. As an aside, it was determined

that Mr. Hernandez was ineligible to be hired by IDJJ due to his settlement agreement with IDOC. He applied for retirement effective May 1, 2023.

The Office of Executive Inspector General investigated Mr. Hernandez's work history and determined that he misrepresented his income on certification documents he submitted to SERS, which allowed him to collect disability benefits to which he was not entitled. The investigation found that Mr. Hernandez falsely certified his eligibility for disability benefits in each of his biannual disability certifications between 2019 and 2022.

Due to the determination that Mr. Hernandez was not eligible for disability benefits during that time caused an overpayment of benefits. It also caused an issue as to service credits which disrupted his retirement benefits as well. In total, from benefits and retirement overpayments, there is an arrearage of \$253,445.96.

Mr. Hernandez is appealing the overpayment, insisting that he did not make over the quarterly earnings limitation and therefore did not falsify the disability certifications, and making the retirement date and service credits correct.

He has requested a personal appeal.

Following Mr. Hernandez's presentation of his appeal, the Committee referred to external counsel for a recommendation.

Dawn Mustread – Appeal for Reciprocal Pension

Dawn Mustread retired with SERS on June 3, 2023. She marked the box of reciprocal retirement as a "No". Ms. Mustread contends this was in error. Ms. Mustread also had service from TRS and SURS. When she retired from TRS, she included SERS on the application. Ms. Mustread was informed she would not have been able to retire from TRS without the years of service with SERS.

Ms. Mustread is appealing to change her retirement to reciprocal so that her benefits are not interrupted. She is requesting a written appeal.

After reviewing the information presented, Executive Secretary Blair moved to approve Ms. Mustread's appeal. The motion was seconded by Chairperson Becker and passed unanimously.

Susana Cabezudo – Appeal Suspension of Nonoccupational Disability Benefits – Gainful Employment

Susana Cabezudo worked as a switchboard operator for the Department of Human Services and has been on disability since November of 2022, due to medical issues. Ms. Cabezudo moved to Florida in 2023.

Ms. Cabezudo was employed by the Florida Department of Corrections, and exceeded

the quarterly earnings limitation during the third quarter of 2024, and the first 2 quarters of 2025.

Based on her 2024 tax return, it is also likely that Ms. Cabezudo exceeded such limitation during the 4th quarter of 2024. Ms. Cabezudo is appealing the suspension of her disability benefits.

Following a review of the facts of the case, Executive Secretary Blair moved to deny Ms. Cabezudo's appeal. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairperson Black and passed unanimously.

There being no further business to be brought before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 10:28 a.m.

The next meeting of the Executive Committee is scheduled for February 5, 2026, in the System's Springfield office.

Marvin Becker, Chairperson

Arnold Black, Vice-Chairperson

Timothy Blair, Executive Secretary