

COURT OF APPEALS OF UTAH

Jones v. Department of Workforce Services

2025 UT App 201 · No. 20250100-CA · Decided December 26, 2025

SUMMARY

The Utah Court of Appeals affirmed the Workforce Appeals Board’s denial of unemployment benefits to Jeffrey M. Jones after he voluntarily quit his part-time job. The court held that Jones failed to establish good cause or demonstrate that denying benefits would be contrary to equity and good conscience because he could have retained his part-time employment while seeking other work and had not verified that he would receive a payout for unused paid time off.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Court of Appeals of Utah
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Michele M. Christiansen Forster; David N. Mortensen; Amy J. Oliver
JURISDICTION	Utah Court of Appeals
DECIDED	December 26, 2025
DOCKET	20250100-CA
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Original proceeding seeking judicial review of the Workforce Appeals Board's decision denying unemployment benefits after Jones voluntarily quit his job.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The Board's fact-like mixed questions of law and fact concerning good cause and equity and good conscience are reviewed deferentially and upheld if within the realm of reasonableness and rationality. The legal standard applied to a particular mixed question is reviewed for correctness, and factual findings are reviewed for substantial evidence.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published opinion
PARTIES	Jeffrey M. Jones v. Department of Workforce Services

TOPICS

- unemployment benefits
- judicial review of agency action
- administrative law
- standard of review
- appellate procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

administrative law

employment law

unemployment benefits

appellate procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the Workforce Appeals Board correctly determined that Jones failed to establish good cause for voluntarily quitting his job.
2. Whether the Board correctly determined that denying Jones unemployment benefits was not contrary to equity and good conscience.
3. Whether the Board applied the correct legal standards and adequately considered the evidence concerning Jones's reduced hours, financial hardship, storage-unit problems, and expected PTO payout.

HOLDINGS

1. Jones failed to establish good cause because he reasonably could have continued working his part-time job while seeking other employment, and quitting was neither necessary nor shown to provide benefits outweighing the benefits of remaining employed.
2. The denial of benefits was not contrary to equity and good conscience because Jones did not act reasonably, logically, sensibly, or practically when he quit his part-time job because of financial problems.
3. The Board applied the correct legal standards and did not fail to consider the material facts concerning Jones's financial hardship, reduced hours, storage-unit problems, or expected PTO payout.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Thus, we will uphold the Board’s decision so long as it is within the realm of reasonableness and rationality.” (¶ 12)

“To establish good cause, a claimant must show that continuing the employment would have caused an adverse effect which the claimant could not control or prevent” (¶ 13)

“On judicial review, however, this court “will not engage in a free-wheeling judicial foray into the record to impose a decision based on our collective sense of equity and fairness.”” (¶ 20)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Jones worked as a night auditor and temporarily received full-time hours while a coworker was on medical leave. After the coworker returned, Jones's schedule was reduced to approximately 20 to 24 hours per week, causing financial hardship amid a wage garnishment and difficulty paying for a storage unit. Jones quit believing he would receive a lump-sum payment for accrued paid time off, but the employer's 2022 policy eliminated such a payout. He then sought unemployment benefits.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The Department of Workforce Services denied Jones unemployment benefits, concluding that he voluntarily left work without good cause and that denying benefits was not contrary to equity and good conscience. An

administrative law judge affirmed the denial, and the Workforce Appeals Board affirmed the ALJ's decision. Jones sought judicial review in the Utah Court of Appeals, which declined to disturb the Board's decision.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- Sawyer v. Department of Workforce Services, 2015 UT 33, 345 P.3d 1253
- Neckel v. Department of Workforce Services, 2015 UT App 292, 364 P.3d 65
- EAGALA, Inc. v. Department of Workforce Services, 2007 UT App 43, 157 P.3d 334
- Smith v. Board of Review of Industrial Commission, 714 P.2d 1154 (Utah 1986)
- Drake v. Industrial Commission, 939 P.2d 177 (Utah 1997)
- Adams v. Board of Review of Industrial Commission, 776 P.2d 639 (Utah Ct. App. 1989)