

**SOUTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND REGULATION
DIVISION OF INSURANCE**

**IN THE MATTER OF
STEPHANIE BALE
LICENSEE**

)
)
)

**FINAL DECISION
INS 19-20**

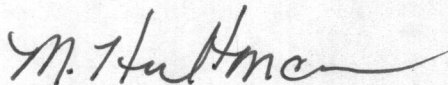
After reviewing the record and the proposed order of the Hearing Examiner in this matter,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that pursuant to SDCL 1-26D-4, the Hearing Examiner's Proposed Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Proposed Order, dated June 28, 2019, is adopted in full.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the South Dakota Non-resident Insurance Producer License of Stephanie Bale will hereby be revoked.

Parties are hereby advised of the right to further appeal the final decision to Circuit Court within (30) days of receiving such decision, pursuant to the authority of SDCL 1-26.

Dated this 9th day of July, 2019.



Marcia Hultman, Secretary
South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation
123 W. Missouri Ave.
Pierre, SD 57501

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND REGULATION

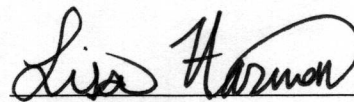
IN THE MATTER OF
STEPHANIE BALE

INS 19-20

NOTICE OF ENTRY OF PROPOSED
FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSION OF LAW,
AND DECISION AND FINAL DECISION

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that attached hereto, is a true and correct copy of the Proposed Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Decision, and Final Decision entered by Marcia Hultman, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation, on July 9, 2019.

Dated this 10th day of July, 2019.



Lisa M. Harmon
Legal Counsel
South Dakota Division of Insurance
124 S. Euclid Ave., 2nd Floor
Pierre, SD 57501
(605) 773-3563

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

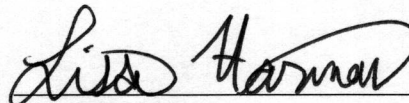
I, Lisa Harmon, the undersigned, do hereby certify that on the date shown below, a true and correct copy of the Proposed Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Decision, and Final Decision with respect to the above-entitled action was sent U.S. Certified Mail and First-Class Mail thereon, to the following:

Stephanie Bale
1 Willow St., Apt. 7
Lockport, NY 14094-4872

Homesite Insurance Company
One Federal Street, Suite 400
Boston, MA 02110

Homesite Insurance Company of the Midwest
Rebecca Buchanan-Mackie
One Federal Street, Suite 400
Boston, MA 02110

Dated this 10th July, 2019 in Pierre, South Dakota.



Lisa M. Harmon
Legal Counsel
South Dakota Division of Insurance
124 S. Euclid Ave., 2nd Floor
Pierre, SD 57501
(605) 773-3563

**STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA
OFFICE OF HEARING EXAMINERS**

**IN THE MATTER OF
STEPHANIE BALE**

**INS 19-20
PROPOSED DECISION**

This matter came for hearing before the Office of Hearing Examiners on June 26, 2019 pursuant to a Notice of Hearing issued by the South Dakota Division of Insurance (“Division”) on May 10, 2019. Lisa M. Harmon appeared as counselor for the Division. Stephanie Bale did not appear, either in person or through counsel. The Division admitted its Exhibits 1 through 7 into evidence and moved that the Hearing Examiner enter these Proposed Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Proposed Decision as a default disposition to this contested case.

ISSUE

Whether the Non-Resident Insurance Producer License of Stephanie Bale should be revoked due to failing to timely respond to the Division; failing to timely report an administrative action to the Division; and for having revocation actions in other states in violation of SDCL §§ 58-30-167(2) and (9), 58-30-193, 58-33-66, and 58-33-68.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Stephanie Bale was licensed by the Division as an insurance producer on September 11, 2017. The license is currently active. (Exhibit 1).
2. Stephanie Bale was the subject of an administrative action in different jurisdictions. (Exhibits 2, and 7).
3. Stephanie Bale did not report the administrative actions to the Division.
4. The Division sent inquiries to Stephanie Bale at the address of record regarding licensure matters. (Exhibits 3, 4, and 5).
5. Stephanie Bale responded to the Division’s inquiry only regarding her address. (Exhibit 6).
6. Any additional Findings of Fact included in the Reasoning section of this decision are incorporated herein by reference.
7. To the extent any of the foregoing are improperly designated and are instead conclusions of law, they are hereby redesignated and incorporated herein as conclusions of law.

REASONING

This case involves a request by the Division to revoke the South Dakota Non-Resident Insurance Producer's License of Stephanie Bale. As a consequence of the potential loss of Respondent's livelihood from the lack of licensure, the burden of proof in this matter is higher than the preponderance of evidence standard, which applies in a typical administrative hearing. "In matters concerning the revocation of a professional license, we determine that the appropriate standard of proof to be utilized by an agency is clear and convincing evidence." *In re Zar*, 434 N.W.2d 598, 602 (S.D. 1989). Our Supreme Court has defined "clear and convincing evidence" as follows:

The measure of proof required by this designation falls somewhere between the rule in ordinary civil cases and the requirement of our criminal procedure, that is, it must be more than a mere preponderance but not beyond a reasonable doubt. It is that measure or degree of proof which will produce in the mind of the trier of facts a firm belief or conviction as to the allegations sought to be established. The evidence need not be voluminous or undisputed to accomplish this.

Brown v. Warner, 78 S.D. 647, 653, 107 NW2d 1, 4 (1961).

SDCL 58-30-193 states that "[A]n insurance producer shall report to the director any administrative action taken against the insurance producer in another jurisdiction... within thirty days of the final disposition of the matter. This report shall include a copy of the order, consent order, or other relevant legal documents." SDCL 58-33-66(1) requires Stephanie Bale to respond to the Division and supply requested documents within twenty days from the receipt of a request. In addition, the Division considers SDCL 58-30-167 (shown in pertinent part) as follows:

The director may... revoke or refuse to continue, any license issued under this chapter... after a hearing... The director may... revoke... an insurance producer's... for any one or more of the following causes:

- (2) Violating any insurance laws or rules, subpoena, or order of the director or of another state's insurance director, commissioner, or superintendent;
- (9) Having an insurance producer license, or its equivalent, denied, suspended, or revoked in any other state, province, district, or territory;

The evidence indicates that Stephanie Bale violated the insurance laws of another jurisdiction, failed to report that action, had a license revoked in other jurisdictions, and failed to respond to Division inquiries regarding the actions. Applying the law to the Findings of Fact it is clear the Non-Resident Insurance Producer License of Stephanie Bale is subject to revocation and should be revoked.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

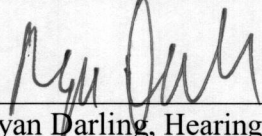
1. The Division has jurisdiction over Stephanie Bale and the subject matter of this contested case. The Office of Hearing Examiners is authorized to conduct the hearing and issue a proposed decision pursuant to SDCL 1-26D-4.
2. The Division bears the burden of establishing the alleged statutory violations by clear and convincing evidence.
3. The Division established by clear and convincing evidence that Stephanie Bale violated SDCL § 58-30-193.
4. The Division established by clear and convincing evidence that Stephanie Bale violated SDCL § 58-33-66.
5. The Division established by clear and convincing evidence that the South Dakota Non-Resident Insurance Producer License of Stephanie Bale is subject to revocation pursuant to SDCL § 58-33-167(2) and (9).
6. Any additional Conclusions of Law included in the Reasoning section of this decision are incorporated herein by reference.
7. To the extent any of the foregoing are improperly designated and are instead findings of fact, they are hereby redesignated and incorporated herein as Findings of Fact.

Based on the above Findings of Fact, Reasoning, and Conclusions of Law, the Hearing Examiner enters the following:

PROPOSED DECISION

The South Dakota Non-Resident Insurance Producer License Stephanie Bale of should be revoked.

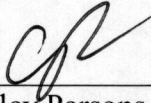
Dated this 28 day of June, 2019.



Ryan Darling, Hearing Examiner
Office of Hearing Examiners
523 East Capitol
Pierre, SD 57501

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify on June 28, 2019, at Pierre, South Dakota, a true and correct copy of this Proposed Decision was mailed to each of the parties below.



Ashley Parsons
Office of Hearing Examiners

Stephanie Bale
1 Willow St., Apt. 7
Lockport, NY 14094-4872

Homesite Insurance Co. of the Midwest
Rebecca Buchanan-Mackie
One Federal Street, Suite 400
Boston, MA 02110

Homesite Insurance Company
One Federal Street, Suite 400
Boston, MA 02110

Lisa M. Harmon
Division of Insurance
124 S. Euclid Ave., 2nd Floor
Pierre, SD 57501