

*This opinion is nonprecedential except as provided by
Minn. R. Civ. App. P. 136.01, subd. 1(c).*

**STATE OF MINNESOTA
IN COURT OF APPEALS
A24-0292**

Naomi Campbell,
Relator,

vs.

Minnesota Adult and Teen Challenge,
Respondent,

Department of Employment and Economic Development,
Respondent.

**Filed November 12, 2024
Affirmed
Worke, Judge**

Department of Employment and Economic Development
File No. 50035187-2

Naomi Campbell, St. Louis Park, Minnesota (pro se relator)

Scott D. Blake, Felhaber Larson, Minneapolis, Minnesota (for respondent employer)

Keri Phillips, Katrina Gulstad, Department of Employment and Economic Development,
St. Paul, Minnesota (for respondent department)

Considered and decided by Larson, Presiding Judge; Worke, Judge; and Bjorkman,
Judge.

NONPRECEDENTIAL OPINION

WORKE, Judge

Relator challenges a decision by an unemployment-law judge (ULJ) to deny her unemployment benefits. Because the record supports the ULJ's conclusion that relator quit without a good reason caused by the employer, we affirm.

FACTS

Respondent-employer Minnesota Adult and Teen Challenge (Teen Challenge) provides support to people recovering from drug addiction. Relator Naomi Campbell worked part-time for Teen Challenge from June to September 2023. Her job involved providing direct support to clients, such as taking them to classes and appointments. According to an offer letter that Campbell signed, her base pay was \$17 per hour, and she was entitled to an additional \$4 per hour for night shifts and an additional \$2 per hour for weekend shifts.

After Campbell quit her job in September 2023, respondent Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) denied her unemployment benefits, reasoning that she quit "because [her] pay was too low or the benefits were insufficient" and Teen Challenge "did not violate any agreement with or obligation to [Campbell] regarding pay or benefits."

Campbell appealed, and a ULJ held a hearing. At the hearing, Campbell testified that during her job interview, Teen Challenge promised her \$800 per pay period after taxes and other deductions, although she could not recall who specifically made that promise. Nevertheless, consistent with her offer letter, Campbell understood from her interview that

her base pay would be \$17 per hour, and that she would receive an extra \$4 per hour for certain shifts. Once Campbell began employment, some of her paychecks were smaller than she expected. Campbell discussed her paychecks with a payroll specialist, who “kept referring [Campbell] back to [her supervisor].” Campbell’s supervisor told her that her paychecks “added up,” but Campbell “didn’t understand it.” Eventually, Campbell told Teen Challenge that she was quitting because she was not making enough money, and based on her interview, she expected to make more money.

A benefits specialist with Teen Challenge also testified. The benefits specialist confirmed that Campbell raised concerns about her pay with her supervisor and a payroll specialist. According to the benefits specialist, the payroll specialist concluded that the hours Campbell worked “seemed to match up with what she was being paid.”

Following the hearing, the ULJ filed an order concluding that “[t]he preponderance of the evidence shows that Campbell quit for reasons other than a good reason caused by [Teen Challenge]” because Teen Challenge “offered certain pay rates based on the shifts that Campbell worked” and because she “received accurate pay based on the pay schedule contained within her offer letter.” The ULJ relied on the testimony from the benefits specialist, Campbell’s offer letter, and payroll information. The ULJ found that the evidence discredited Campbell’s testimony about not being paid correctly.

Campbell requested reconsideration, arguing that Teen Challenge “offered [her] one salary, and after four pay periods it was not the pay that was expected or offered.” In February 2024, a ULJ denied the request, reasoning that the prior decision “made credibility determinations based upon the parties’ testimony and the documents,” and

Campbell did not provide any information or arguments that would have likely changed the outcome.

This certiorari appeal followed.

DECISION

Campbell challenges the ULJ's decision that she is ineligible for unemployment benefits. In reviewing a ULJ decision, we may remand for further proceedings, or "reverse or modify the decision if the substantial rights of the petitioner may have been prejudiced because the findings, inferences, conclusion, or decision," among other potential issues, were "unsupported by substantial evidence in view of the hearing record as submitted." Minn. Stat. § 268.105, subd. 7(d) (2022). "[A] substantial-evidence analysis requires us to determine whether the agency has adequately explained how it derived its conclusion and whether that conclusion is reasonable on the basis of the record." *In re NorthMet Project Permit to Mine Application*, 959 N.W.2d 731, 749 (Minn. 2021) (quotation omitted).

The ULJ decided that Campbell was ineligible for unemployment benefits because she quit her employment without a good reason caused by her employer. Generally, when an employee quits employment, she is ineligible for unemployment benefits. Minn. Stat. § 268.095, subd. 1 (2022). However, exceptions exist. *Id.* Among those exceptions is an employee quitting "because of a good reason caused by the employer." *Id.*, subd. 1(1). A good reason caused by the employer is one "(1) that is directly related to the employment and for which the employer is responsible; (2) that is adverse to the worker; and (3) that would compel an average, reasonable worker to quit and become unemployed rather than remaining in the employment." *Id.*, subd. 3(a) (2022).

Whether “an employee quit without good reason attributable to the employer is a legal conclusion” reviewed de novo. *Thao v. Command Ctr., Inc.*, 824 N.W.2d 1, 4 (Minn. App. 2012). However, we review the “ULJ’s factual findings in the light most favorable to the decision and will not disturb them when they are supported by substantial evidence.” *Id.* In doing so, we defer to the ULJ’s credibility determinations. *Haugen v. Superior Dev., Inc.*, 819 N.W.2d 715, 722-23 (Minn. App. 2012). “When the credibility of a witness . . . has a significant effect on the outcome of a decision, the [ULJ] must set out the reason for crediting or discrediting that testimony.” Minn. Stat. § 268.105, subd. 1a(a) (2022).

Campbell argues that she had good reason to quit because her pay was not as promised in the interview. However, the ULJ did not find that Teen Challenge reneged on any promises to grant Campbell certain pay. *See Ryks v. Nieuwsma Livestock Equip.*, 410 N.W.2d 380, 382-83 (Minn. App. 1987) (concluding that an employee did not quit for good reason where the evidence did not support his argument that the employer breached an agreement for a specific commission rate). Instead, the ULJ reviewed the pay rates in Campbell’s offer letter and found, based on evidence about her work schedule and compensation, that her paychecks “were correct” and that her testimony to the contrary lacked credibility. Based on its findings, the ULJ concluded that “Campbell quit for reasons other than a good reason caused by [Teen Challenge].” Because the ULJ explained how it reached its conclusion, and that conclusion is reasonable based on the record, we disagree with Campbell that the ULJ’s conclusion is not supported by substantial evidence. Therefore, we affirm.

Affirmed.