

MERIT SYSTEMS PROTECTION BOARD**Agency Information Collection Activities; Proposed Collection**

AGENCY: Merit Systems Protection Board.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*), this notice announces that the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) request for a three-year reinstatement of its expired Generic Clearance Request for Voluntary

Customer Surveys under Executive Order 12862, "Setting Customer Service Standards," has been forwarded to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and comment. The original approval for this information collection was provided by OMB on February 28, 1994, as a three-year generic clearance request for voluntary customer surveys under Executive Order 12862, "Setting Customer Service Standards," and in accord with 44 U.S.C. 3506. Surveys under this approval are assigned OMB Control Number 3124-0012. That approval expired on February 28, 1997. A

limited-term approval from OMB reinstated that authority through April 30, 2001.

In this regard, we are soliciting comments on the public reporting burden. The reporting burden for the collection of information on this form is estimated to vary from 10 minutes to 30 minutes per response, with an average of 15 minutes, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.

Estimated Annual Reporting Burden

| 5 CFR section | Annual number of respondents | Frequency per response | Total annual responses | Hours per response (average) | Total hours |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|-------------|
| 1201, 1208 and 1209 | 2,000 | 1 | 1,500 | .25 | 375 |

Send comments regarding the burden estimate, or any other aspect of the information collection, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to the address shown below. Please refer to OMB Control No. 3124-0012 in any correspondence.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before June 18, 2001.

ADDRESSES: Comments concerning the paperwork burden should be addressed to Mr. John Crum, Merit Systems Protection Board, 1615 M Street, NW., Washington, DC 20419, by e-mail to john.crum@mspb.gov, or by calling (202) 653-8900, and to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Attention: Desk Officer for MSPB, 725—17th Street NW., Washington, DC 20503.

Dated: May 14, 2001.

Robert E. Taylor,
Clerk of the Board.

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MERIT SYSTEMS PROTECTION BOARD**Opportunity To File Amicus Briefs in Cassandra Augustine v. Department of Veterans Affairs, MSPB Docket Number SF-3443-00-0085-I-1**

AGENCY: Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB).

ACTION: The Merit Systems Protection Board is providing interested parties with an Opportunity to submit amicus briefs in the above-referenced appeal. The issues to be addressed in such briefs are set forth in the Board's May 14, 2001, opinion and order, which is

reprinted in its entirety in the summary below.

SUMMARY: The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) petitions for review of the initial decision which found that it violated the appellant's veterans' preference rights. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has intervened in support of DVA's petition for review. For the reasons set forth below, we VACATE the initial decision, REOPEN the record, and ORDER presentation of further argument and evidence. We also invite interested parties to submit briefs amicus curiae on the issues discussed in this decision.

Background

The appellant, a veteran with a 30% service-connected disability, applied for the position of Veterans Service Representative (VSR), GS-996-7, with the DVA. Initial Appeal File (IAF), Tab 8, Subtab 2 at 3, 20, 23. The vacancy announcement listed nine locations, and indicated that there were "[o]ne or more positions at each location." The announcement also stated that the candidates would be "rated" and "rank[ed]" according to how well their knowledge, skills, and abilities "match[ed] * * * the requirements identified for the position." In addition, the announcement indicated that individuals who met one of the following "recruitment categories" could apply: "Outstanding Scholar"; "Veterans Readjustment Act (VRA) eligibles"; "30% or more disabled veterans"; "Preference Eligibles" and veterans honorably discharged after 3 or more years of active military duty; "Chapter 31 veterans"; "Handicapped Eligibles"; and "VA CTAP or

Interagency CTAP Eligibles." The announcement further stated, however, that "first consideration" would be given to "[i]nternal candidates" who applied under DVA's "Merit Promotion" plan. Id., Subtab 1 at 1-3.

DVA, which holds delegated authority from OPM to examine candidates, generated seven certificates, each corresponding to one of the recruitment categories listed in the vacancy announcement. The appellant's name appeared on the 30% or more disabled veteran certificate and the VRA certificate. Although the appellant qualified as a preference eligible pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 2108(3)(C), the agency did not include her name on the certificate of "Preference Eligibles" and veterans honorably discharged after 3 or more years of active military duty. DVA did not rank any of the candidates. Ultimately it filled nine positions, selecting five individuals from the 30% or more disabled veteran certificate, three individuals from the Outstanding Scholar certificate (none of whom were preference eligible), and one individual from the certificate of "Preference Eligibles" and veterans honorably discharged after 3 or more years of active military duty. The record indicates that the individual selected from the final certificate was preference eligible pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 2108(3)(E) as the spouse of a service-connected disabled veteran. Although the initial decision indicates that the agency did not treat this candidate as a preference eligible, IAF, Tab 11 at 4, the certificate on which this candidate's name appeared clearly indicated that she was entitled to 10 veterans preference points, IAF, Tab 8, Subtab 3 at 9. IAF,