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GENERAL COUNSEL
OCT 4 2000
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE

Before the State of South Carolina
Department of Insurance

In the matter of:	)	File Number 104624
	)	
Steven E. Mason	)	
	)	Consent Order
1231 Richland Avenue W	)	Imposing Administrative Penalty
Aiken, South Carolina 29801	)	
	)	

This matter comes before me pursuant to an agreement entered into between the State of South Carolina Department of Insurance and Steven Mason, a licensed South Carolina resident insurance agent.

Steven Mason admits, and I hereby find as fact, that he failed to timely pay the continuing education fee (the CE fee) required by of S.C. Code Ann. § 38-43-106(D) (Supp.1999). This act can ultimately lead to the revocation of Mason's license to transact the business of insurance as an agent in South Carolina following a public hearing at the Administrative Law Judge Division pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 38-43-130 (Supp.1999).

Prior to the initiation of any administrative proceedings by the Department against him, Mason and the Department agreed to submit the entire matter to me, along with their specific recommendation, for my summary decision, rather than to proceed toward a formal public hearing. The consensual recommendation was that, in lieu of the Department seeking to revoke Mason's insurance agent's license, he would waive his right to a public hearing and immediately pay the CE fee and an administrative fine in the total amount of $250.

Section 38-43-106(D) of the South Carolina Code makes insurance agents "responsible for payment to the continuing education administrator of a reasonable annual fee for operation of the continuing education program." Section § 38-43-130 states, in pertinent part, that the Director of Insurance may revoke an agent's license "when it appears that an agent...has violated this title or any regulation promulgated by the Department, or has willfully deceived or dealt unjustly with the citizens of this State."

After a thorough review of the record, carefully considering the recommendation of the parties, and pursuant to my findings of fact, I hereby conclude as a matter of law, that Mason has violated S.C. Code Ann. § 38-43-106(D) (Supp. 1999) and that I can now revoke his resident insurance agent's license. However, under the discretionary authority provided to me within S.C. Code Ann. § 38-43-130 and 25A SC Code Ann. Reg. 69-50 §VIII (Supp. 1999), I hereby impose against Mason an administrative fine in the total amount of $250. Mason must pay the required CE fee and that fine within ten days of the date of my signature upon this consent order. If he does not timely pay that total fine amount, or if he does not provide proof of his having timely paid the CE fee, his resident agent's license will be revoked without any further disciplinary proceedings.

SM Steven Mason

The parties have reached this agreement in consideration of the Department having never taken any administrative disciplinary action against Mason on this issue before and of his assurance that in the future he will comply with the state's insurance laws, particularly that of timely paying the CE fee. The parties expressly agree and understand Mason's payment of the agreed-upon penalty constitutes full accord and satisfaction of this matter.

By his signature upon this consent order, Mason acknowledges that he understands this administrative order is a public record subject to the disclosure requirements of the State of South Carolina's *Freedom of Information Act*, S.C. Code Ann. §§ 30-4-10, *et seq*. (1991 and Supp. 1999). Nothing contained within this administrative order should be construed to limit, or to deprive any person of, any private right of action under the law. Nothing contained within this administrative order should be construed to limit, in any manner, the criminal jurisdiction of any law enforcement officer or judicial officer. Nothing contained within this administrative order should be construed to limit the statutory duty, pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 38-3-110 (Supp. 1999), of the Director of Insurance, exercised either directly or through the Department of Insurance, to "report to the Attorney General or other appropriate law enforcement officials criminal violations of the laws relative to the business of insurance or the provisions of this title which he considers necessary to report."

It is, therefore, ordered that Steven Mason shall, within ten days of the date of my signature on this consent order, pay through the Department an administrative fine in the total amount of $250, pay to the CE Administrator the CE fee required, and provide the Department proof of his payment by that date.

It is further ordered that a copy of this consent order be immediately transmitted to the National Association of Insurance Commissioners for distribution to its member states and a copy be placed in Mason's licensing file.

This consent order becomes effective as of the date of my signature below.

Ernst N. Csiszar
Director

Date 10/10, 2000, at
Columbia, South Carolina

I CONSENT: _____
STEVEN ~~David L~~. Mason
1231 Richland Avenue W
Aiken, South Carolina 29801
Dated this 2 day of Oct, 2000