



(Docket No. 131305)

TAMICA N. RAINEY, Appellee, v. THE RETIREMENT BOARD OF THE POLICEMEN'S ANNUITY AND BENEFIT FUND OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO, Appellant.

*Opinion filed November 20, 2025.*

Justice O'Brien delivered the judgment of the court, with opinion.

This case concerns whether plaintiff, a disabled Chicago police officer who was awarded duty disability benefits, was entitled to attorney fees and costs where she successfully challenged the pension board's termination of her duty disability benefits. Plaintiff injured her neck and shoulder in on-duty car accidents in 2013 and 2015, receiving duty disability benefits in 2017. In 2022, the pension board found her no longer disabled as a result of her duty-related injuries. Plaintiff successfully challenged that decision in the circuit court and was awarded attorney fees and costs, which the appellate court likewise affirmed. The pension board appealed to the supreme court only on the question of the award of attorney fees and costs.

The supreme court affirmed, noting that the statute creates only one process to obtain and continue disability benefits. Plaintiff submitted the same character of evidence to maintain her disability benefits as to start them, and the pension board considered the same question: whether she remained disabled in a way that prevented her from working as a police officer. Because the statute unambiguously allowed the trial court to award attorney fees and costs to an officer who applies for and receives disability benefits for a duty-related injury, it could do so here.