

(5) Preliminary hearing cases of suspensions pending appeal under § 33 of this article.

(c) (1) IN ALL DECISIONS ISSUED BY THE OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS UNDER SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION, THE FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW OF THE OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS SHALL BE FINAL EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION.

(2) A PARTY MAY APPEAL A DECISION BY THE OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS TO THE SECRETARY FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF REVIEWING THE SEVERITY OF THE PUNISHMENT OR DISCIPLINE IMPOSED ON THE EMPLOYEE.

(3) IN ANY CASES APPEALED TO THE SECRETARY UNDER PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION, THE SECRETARY MAY DESIGNATE A DEPUTY SECRETARY, AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY, OR SOME OTHER OFFICIAL WHOSE DUTIES ARE UNRELATED TO THE HEARINGS PROCESS TO APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE THE PUNISHMENT OR DISCIPLINE IMPOSED, OR REMAND THE CASE TO THE OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS FOR FURTHER FINDINGS OF FACT OR CONCLUSIONS OF LAW.

[In cases requiring the Secretary's approval or consent, the Secretary may designate either the Deputy Secretary, an assistant secretary, or another official whose duties and responsibilities are unrelated to the hearing process to approve proposed decisions of the following:

- (1) Demotion appeals under § 31 of this article;
- (2) Proposed decisions of removal appeals of promotional probationary employees under § 33 of this article;
- (3) Proposed decisions of removal cases under § 33 of this article or Article 29, § 11-109(b) of the Code;
- (4) Proposed decisions of unsatisfactory work appeals under § 34 of this article;
- (5) Proposed decisions of suspension appeals under §§ 30 and 36 of this article;
- (6) Proposed decisions of preliminary hearing cases of suspensions pending appeal under § 33 of this article; and
- (7) Proposed]

(D) THE OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS SHALL ISSUE THE FINAL DECISION ON PROPOSED decisions of outside arbitrators under § 54(a) of this article.