

**OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL MASTER**

**Gemmell v. Hawkins – C. A. No. 16-350 WES**

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**Report (#9) to the Court**

This Report is filed pursuant to Section IV.A.4 of the Order Appointing Special Master.

The critical event of the last month was the deployment of the worker inbox upgrade, which had been postponed from target dates in May and June. I am pleased to report that this significant upgrade was deployed on July 21/22 and is working as planned. As reported previously, the expectation is that this upgrade will allow DHS to achieve and maintain the 96% timeliness standard for SNAP applications set forth in the consent Agreement. At this point it is too early to tell if this expectation will be met, but the signs are positive. August will be the first full month with the upgrade in place and we should know the impact at that point.

The new inbox will increase the efficiency of the processing of applications and, among other things, will allow supervisors to quickly spot applications that are nearing the processing deadline so they may be worked. In addition, DHS now has implemented a process of “auto indexing” that will allow for same day scanning, indexing and registration of all applications; has implemented a procedure for more quickly scheduling appointments; and is screening for expedited SNAP applications. The new inbox also has allowed DHS supervisors to identify some previously unknown causes of untimeliness of SNAP applications that now have been remedied. All of these steps should improve timeliness.

The timeliness percentages for June were 90.9 % for 30-day SNAP applications and 92% for expedited SNAP applications. These percentages are not materially different from those in May and were achieved despite a computer system problem in early June that delayed the processing of some applications.

DHS has continued to work with the business design consultant to reduce wait times in Providence and the field offices, and a time study has revealed that the department has made progress in reducing wait times for customers served in its lobbies. Also, DHS, as previously reported, has added additional personnel in the call center with the result that call times are improving. In another month, DHS should have data to quantify this improvement.

In summary, DHS, together with Deloitte, has made significant strides toward compliance with the consent Agreement.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Deming E. Sherman

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Special Master

August 1, 2018

cc Counsel of Record (by email)