

State will give Hameli his pension

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Deal includes \$150,000 for dropping suit

By **JERRY HAGER**
Staff reporter

WILMINGTON — After more than three years of trying to fire its chief medical examiner who was accused of sexual harassment, the state agreed late Friday to allow him to retire with his pension and pay him \$150,000 to drop his federal lawsuit.

The settlement with Dr. Ali Z. Hameli, 63, removes him from the state's payroll and paves the way for Gov. Carper to appoint someone to the \$115,000-a-year position. Hameli said he feels vindicated.

"In early spring of 1994, the state officials declared World War III on me. I have achieved total victory," Hameli said. "I successfully restored my good name ... I stood my ground, fought and won on every principle."

The settlement was a joint decision between the Attorney General's Office and Carper.

In a statement, Carper said the settlement gets Hameli off the state payroll "and eliminates the expenditure of additional" tax dollars for lengthy court battles.

In 1994, the state alleged Hameli had sexually harassed two of his former administrative secretaries, Florence Ewald and Dawn Brooks, by making inappropriate comments, touching and even kissing one of them.

The state paid the women

\$70,000 each to prevent them from suing.

The state was willing to allow Hameli to retire, but it wanted him to pay the state \$150,000 to indemnify it against the women's claims.

Hameli and the state have been involved in a bitter legal battle since his firing April 6, 1994. Hameli claims that since then, the state has spent more than \$1 million to cover his salary, pension, court costs and the salaries of the state officials working on the case.

The governor's office was unable to confirm Hameli's figure.

When Hameli was fired by Carmen Nazario, secretary of the Department of Health and Social Services, he filed a federal lawsuit. U.S. District Judge Sue L. Robinson ruled the state erred by not giving Hameli a hearing.

She ordered him reinstated but instead, he was suspended with pay.

Hearings were held in November and December 1994, and 18 months later, U.S. Magistrate Mary Pat Trostle ruled in Hameli's favor.

Robinson overturned Trostle, chiding her for getting involved in a state proceeding.

A new hearing was to be held in July, but Hameli balked.

"They were informed a year ago that I would not be attending their kangaroo court," he said.



Dr. Ali Z. Hameli has been on paid leave of absence since April 1994.