

FIRST REGULAR SESSION

SENATE BILL NO. 518

92ND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR STEELMAN.

Read 1st time February 18, 2003, and 1,000 copies ordered printed.

TERRY L. SPIELER, Secretary.

1647S.011

AN ACT

To repeal sections 287.610, 621.015, and 622.020, RSMo, and to enact in lieu thereof three new sections relating to administrative hearings.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Missouri, as follows:

Section A. Sections 287.610, 621.015, and 622.020, RSMo, are repealed and three new sections enacted in lieu thereof, to be known as sections 287.610, 621.015, and 622.020, to read as follows:

287.610. 1. The division may appoint such number of administrative law judges as it may find necessary, but not exceeding twenty-five in number beginning January 1, 1999, with one additional appointment authorized as of July 1, 2000, and one additional appointment authorized in each succeeding year thereafter until and including the year 2004, for a maximum of thirty authorized administrative law judges. Appropriations for any additional appointment shall be based upon necessity, measured by the requirements and needs of each division office. Administrative law judges shall be duly licensed lawyers under the laws of this state. Administrative law judges shall not practice law or do law business and shall devote their whole time to the duties of their office. Any administrative law judge may be discharged or removed only by the governor pursuant to an evaluation and recommendation by the administrative law judge review committee, hereinafter referred to as "the committee", of the judge's conduct, performance and productivity.

2. No administrative law judge shall establish, maintain, or contribute to a committee that is regulated by campaign finance disclosure law in chapter 130, RSMo.

3. The division shall require and perform annual evaluations of an administrative law

EXPLANATION—Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in this bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

judge, associate administrative law judge and legal advisor's conduct, performance and productivity based upon written standards established by rule. The division, by rule, shall establish the written standards on or before January 1, 1999.

(1) After an evaluation by the division, any administrative law judge, associate administrative law judge or legal advisor who has received an unsatisfactory evaluation in any of the three categories of conduct, performance or productivity, may appeal the evaluation to the committee.

(2) The division director shall refer an unsatisfactory evaluation of any administrative law judge, associate administrative law judge or legal advisor to the committee.

(3) When a written, signed complaint is made against an administrative law judge, associate administrative law judge or legal advisor, it shall be referred to the director of the division for a determination of merit. When the director finds the complaint has merit, it shall be referred to the committee for investigation and review.

[3.] 4. The administrative law judge review committee shall be composed of one administrative law judge, who shall act as a peer judge on the committee and shall be domiciled in a division office other than that of the judge being reviewed, one employee representative and one employer representative, neither of whom shall have any direct or indirect employment or financial connection with a workers' compensation insurance company, claims adjustment company, health care provider nor be a practicing workers' compensation attorney. The employee representative and employer representative shall have a working knowledge of workers' compensation. The employee and employer representative shall serve for four-year staggered terms and they shall be appointed by the governor. The initial employee representative shall be appointed for a two-year term. The administrative law judge who acts as a peer judge shall be appointed by the chairman of the labor and industrial relations commission and shall not serve on any two consecutive reviews conducted by the committee. Chairmanship of the committee shall rotate between the employee representative and the employer representative every other year. Staffing for the administrative review committee shall be provided, as needed, by the director of the department of labor and industrial relations and shall be funded from the workers' compensation fund. The committee shall conduct a hearing as part of any review of a referral or appeal made according to subsection 2 of this section.

[4.] 5. The committee shall determine within thirty days whether an investigation shall be conducted for a referral made pursuant to subdivision (3) of subsection 2 of this section. The committee shall make a final referral to the governor pursuant to subsection 1 of this section within two hundred seventy days of the receipt of a referral or appeal.

[5.] 6. The administrative law judges appointed by the division shall only have jurisdiction to hear and determine claims upon original hearing and shall have no jurisdiction upon any review hearing, either in the way of an appeal from an original hearing or by way of

reopening any prior award, except to correct a clerical error in an award or settlement if the correction is made by the administrative law judge within twenty days of the original award or settlement. The labor and industrial relations commission may remand any decision of an administrative law judge for a more complete finding of facts. The commission may also correct a clerical error in awards or settlements within thirty days of its final award. With respect to original hearings, the administrative law judges shall have such jurisdiction and powers as are vested in the division of workers' compensation under other sections of this chapter, and wherever in this chapter the word "commission", "commissioners" or "division" is used in respect to any original hearing, those terms shall mean the administrative law judges appointed under this section. When a hearing is necessary upon any claim, the division shall assign an administrative law judge to such hearing. Any administrative law judge shall have power to approve contracts of settlement, as provided by section 287.390, between the parties to any compensation claim or dispute under this chapter pending before the division of workers' compensation. Any award by an administrative law judge upon an original hearing shall have the same force and effect, shall be enforceable in the same manner as provided elsewhere in this chapter for awards by the labor and industrial relations commission, and shall be subject to review as provided by section 287.480.

[6.] 7. Any of the administrative law judges employed pursuant to this section may be assigned on a temporary basis to the branch offices as necessary in order to ensure the proper administration of this chapter.

[7.] 8. All administrative law judges and legal advisors shall be required to participate in, on a continuing basis, specific training that shall pertain to those elements of knowledge and procedure necessary for the efficient and competent performance of the administrative law judges' and legal advisors' required duties and responsibilities. Such training requirements shall be established by the division subject to appropriations and shall include training in medical determinations and records, mediation and legal issues pertaining to workers' compensation adjudication. Such training may be credited toward any continuing legal education requirements.

[8.] 9. No rule or portion of a rule promulgated pursuant to the authority of this section shall become effective unless it has been promulgated pursuant to the provisions of chapter 536, RSMo.

621.015. 1. The "Administrative Hearing Commission" is assigned to the office of administration. It shall consist of no more than three commissioners. The commissioners shall be appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate. The term of each commissioner shall be for six years and until his successor is appointed, qualified and sworn. The commissioners shall be attorneys at law admitted to practice before the supreme court of Missouri, but shall not practice law during their term of office. Each commissioner shall receive annual

compensation of fifty-one thousand dollars plus any salary adjustment provided pursuant to section 105.005, RSMo. Each commissioner shall also be entitled to actual and necessary expenses in the performance of his duties. The office of the administrative hearing commission shall be located in the City of Jefferson and it may employ necessary clerical assistance, compensation and expenses of the commissioners to be paid from appropriations from general revenue made for that purpose.

2. No member of the commission shall establish, maintain, or contribute to a committee that is regulated by campaign finance disclosure law in chapter 130, RSMo.

622.020. 1. Three administrative law judges shall also be appointed for the division. They shall be nominated by the department director and appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate. Each shall be appointed for a term of six years, except of those first appointed, one shall be appointed for a term of four years, and one for a term of two years. Each shall be an attorney-at-law admitted to practice before the supreme court of Missouri, and while serving in this capacity as an administrative law judge shall not otherwise practice law during his term of office. Not more than two of the administrative law judges shall be members of the same political party.

2. Administrative law judges shall be compensated at the same rate as administrative hearing commissioners are compensated, and they shall be reimbursed for actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

3. No administrative law judge shall establish, maintain, or contribute to a committee that is regulated by campaign finance disclosure law in chapter 130, RSMo.

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