

HOUSE BILL No. 2579

AN ACT concerning civil actions and civil procedure; relating to wrongful conviction and imprisonment; compensation; tuition assistance; state health care benefits program; contact with jurors, procedures and limitations; code of civil procedure; amending K.S.A. 2017 Supp. 75-6117 and 75-6501 and repealing the existing sections.

WHEREAS, The Legislature intends by enactment of the provisions of this act that those innocent persons who can demonstrate by a preponderance of evidence that they were mistakenly convicted and imprisoned be able to recover damages against the State; and

WHEREAS, The Legislature finds and declares that innocent persons who have been convicted of crimes and subsequently imprisoned have been frustrated in seeking legal redress and that such persons should have an available avenue of redress to seek compensation for damages.

Now, therefore:

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Kansas:

New Section 1. (a) As used in this section, “claimant” means a person convicted and subsequently imprisoned for one or more crimes that such person did not commit.

(b) Notwithstanding the provisions of any other law, a claimant may bring an action in the district court seeking damages from the state pursuant to this section.

(c) (1) The claimant shall establish the following by a preponderance of evidence:

(A) The claimant was convicted of a felony crime and subsequently imprisoned;

(B) the claimant’s judgment of conviction was reversed or vacated and either the charges were dismissed or on retrial the claimant was found to be not guilty;

(C) the claimant did not commit the crime or crimes for which the claimant was convicted and was not an accessory or accomplice to the acts that were the basis of the conviction and resulted in a reversal or vacation of the judgment of conviction, dismissal of the charges or finding of not guilty on retrial; and

(D) the claimant did not commit or suborn perjury, fabricate evidence, or by the claimant’s own conduct cause or bring about the conviction. Neither a confession nor admission later found to be false or a guilty plea shall constitute committing or suborning perjury, fabricating evidence or causing or bringing about the conviction under this subsection.

(2) The court, in exercising its discretion as permitted by law regarding the weight and admissibility of evidence submitted pursuant to this section, may, in the interest of justice, give due consideration to difficulties of proof caused by the passage of time, the death or unavailability of witnesses, the destruction of evidence or other factors not caused by such persons or those acting on their behalf.

(d) (1) The suit, accompanied by a statement of the facts concerning the claim for damages, verified in the manner provided for the verification of complaints in the rules of civil procedure, shall be brought by the claimant within a period of two years after the: (A) Dismissal of the criminal charges against the claimant or finding of not guilty on retrial; or (B) grant of a pardon to the claimant.

(2) A claimant convicted, imprisoned and released from custody before July 1, 2018, must commence an action under this section no later than July 1, 2020.

(3) All pleadings shall be captioned, “In the matter of the wrongful conviction of _____.”

(4) Any claim filed pursuant to this section shall be served on the attorney general in accordance with the code of civil procedure.

(5) The suit for a claim filed pursuant to this section shall be tried by the court, and no request for a jury trial may be made pursuant to K.S.A. 60-238, and amendments thereto.

(e) (1) Damages awarded under this section shall be:

(A) \$65,000 for each year of imprisonment, except as provided in subsection(e)(2); and

(B) not less than \$25,000 for each additional year served on parole or postrelease supervision or each additional year the claimant was required to register as an offender under the Kansas offender registration act, whichever is greater.

(2) A claimant shall not receive compensation for any period of in-

carceration during which the claimant was concurrently serving a sentence for a conviction of another crime for which such claimant was lawfully incarcerated.

(3) (A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the court shall order that the award be paid as a combination of an initial payment not to exceed \$100,000 or 25% of the award, whichever is greater, and the remainder as an annuity not to exceed \$80,000 per year. The claimant shall designate a beneficiary or beneficiaries for the annuity by filing such designation with the court.

(B) The court may order that the award be paid in one lump sum if the court finds that it is in the best interests of the claimant.

(4) In addition to the damages awarded pursuant to subsection (e)(1), the claimant:

(A) Shall be entitled to receive reasonable attorney fees and costs incurred in the action brought pursuant to this section not to exceed a total of \$25,000, unless a greater reasonable total is authorized by the court upon a finding of good cause shown;

(B) may also be awarded other non-monetary relief as sought in the complaint including, but not limited to, counseling, housing assistance and personal financial literacy assistance, as appropriate;

(C) shall be entitled to receive tuition assistance pursuant to section 2, and amendments thereto; and

(D) shall be entitled to participate in the state health care benefits program pursuant to K.S.A. 75-6501, and amendments thereto.

(f) (1) If, at the time of the judgment entry referred to in subsection (e), the claimant has won a monetary award against the state or any political subdivision thereof in a civil action related to the same subject, or has entered into a settlement agreement with the state or any political subdivision thereof related to the same subject, the amount of the award in the action or the amount received in the settlement agreement, less any sums paid to attorneys or for costs in litigating the other civil action or obtaining the settlement agreement, shall be deducted from the sum of money to which the claimant is entitled under this section. The court shall include in the judgment entry an award to the state of any amount deducted pursuant to this subsection.

(2) If subsection (f)(1) does not apply and if, after the time of the judgment entry referred to in subsection (e), the claimant wins a monetary award against the state or any political subdivision thereof in a civil action related to the same subject, or enters into a settlement agreement with the state or any political subdivision thereof related to the same subject, the claimant shall reimburse the state for the sum of money paid under the judgment entry referred to in subsection (e), less any sums paid to attorneys or for costs in litigating the other civil action or obtaining the settlement agreement. A reimbursement required under this subsection shall not exceed the amount of the monetary award the claimant wins for damages in the other civil action or the amount received in the settlement agreement.

(g) If the court finds that the claimant is entitled to a judgment, it shall enter a certificate of innocence finding that the claimant was innocent of all crimes for which the claimant was mistakenly convicted. The clerk of the court shall send a certified copy of the certificate of innocence and the judgment entry to the attorney general for payment pursuant to K.S.A. 75-6117, and amendments thereto.

(h) (1) Upon entry of a certificate of innocence, the court shall order the associated convictions and arrest records expunged and purged from all applicable state and federal systems pursuant to this subsection. The court shall enter the expungement order regardless of whether the claimant has prior criminal convictions.

(2) The order of expungement shall state the:

(A) Claimant's full name;

(B) claimant's full name at the time of arrest and conviction, if different than the claimant's current name;

(C) claimant's sex, race and date of birth;

(D) crime for which the claimant was arrested and convicted;

(E) date of the claimant's arrest and date of the claimant's conviction;

and

(F) identity of the arresting law enforcement authority and identity of the convicting court.

(3) The order of expungement shall also direct the Kansas bureau of investigation to purge the conviction and arrest information from the criminal justice information system central repository and all applicable state and federal databases. The clerk of the court shall send a certified copy of the order to the Kansas bureau of investigation, which shall carry out the order and shall notify the federal bureau of investigation, the secretary of corrections and any other criminal justice agency that may have a record of the conviction and arrest. The Kansas bureau of investigation shall provide confirmation of such action to the court.

(4) If a certificate of innocence and an order of expungement are entered pursuant to this section, the claimant shall be treated as not having been arrested or convicted of the crime.

(i) Upon entry of a certificate of innocence, the court shall order the expungement and destruction of the associated biological samples authorized by and given to the Kansas bureau of investigation in accordance with K.S.A. 21-2511, and amendments thereto. The order shall state the information required to be stated in a petition to expunge and destroy the samples and profile record pursuant to K.S.A. 21-2511, and amendments thereto, and shall direct the Kansas bureau of investigation to expunge and destroy such samples and profile record. The clerk of the court shall send a certified copy of the order to the Kansas bureau of investigation, which shall carry out the order and provide confirmation of such action to the court. Nothing in this subsection shall require the Kansas bureau of investigation to expunge and destroy any samples or profile record associated with the claimant that was submitted pursuant to K.S.A. 21-2511(a), and amendments thereto, related to any offense other than the offense for which the court has entered a certificate of innocence.

(j) The decision to grant or deny a certificate of innocence shall not have a res judicata effect on any other proceedings.

(k) Nothing in this section shall preclude the department of corrections from providing reentry services to a claimant that are provided to other persons, including, but not limited to, financial assistance, housing assistance, mentoring and counseling. Such services shall be provided while an action under this section is pending and after any judgment is entered, as appropriate for such claimant.

(l) The decision of the district court may be appealed directly to the supreme court pursuant to the code of civil procedure.

New Sec. 2. (a) Any individual awarded tuition assistance pursuant to section 1, and amendments thereto, shall receive a waiver of tuition and required fees for attendance at a postsecondary educational institution for up to 130 credit hours. Such individual may attend a postsecondary educational institution either full or part time.

(b) (1) Subject to appropriations, the state board of regents may make expenditures to reimburse each individual awarded tuition assistance pursuant to section 1, and amendments thereto, who is enrolled in a postsecondary educational institution for additional fees, including, but not limited to, fees for room and board, technical equipment and course-required books.

(2) No postsecondary educational institution shall delay enrollment of an individual who is awarded tuition assistance pursuant to section 1, and amendments thereto, because appropriations are not available for any additional fees provided to such individual.

(c) To remain eligible for the tuition and fees waiver under this section, an individual shall remain in good standing at the postsecondary educational institution where the individual is enrolled.

(d) Individuals shall provide a written or electronic copy of the court order awarding relief in the form of tuition assistance to the postsecondary educational institution or the state board of regents.

(e) The state board of regents shall adopt rules and regulations to administer the provisions of this section.

(f) As used in this section, “postsecondary educational institution” means any state educational institution as defined in K.S.A. 76-711, and amendments thereto, municipal university, community college, technical college or institute of technology in Kansas.

Sec. 3. K.S.A. 2017 Supp. 75-6117 is hereby amended to read as follows: 75-6117. (a) There is hereby established in the state treasury the tort claims fund which shall be administered by the attorney general. All

expenditures from such fund shall be made upon warrants of the director of accounts and reports pursuant to vouchers approved by the attorney general or by a designee of the attorney general.

(b) (1) Moneys in the tort claims fund shall be used only for the purpose of paying ~~(1)~~: (A) Compromises, settlements and final judgments arising from claims against the state or an employee of the state under the Kansas tort claims act or under the civil rights laws of the United States or of the state of Kansas ~~and (2)~~; (B) costs of defending the state or an employee of the state in any actions or proceedings on those claims; and (C) judgments arising from claims pursuant to section 1, and amendments thereto, including, but not limited to, premiums under the state health care benefits program.

(2) Payment of a judgment arising from a claim pursuant to section 1, and amendments thereto, shall be subject to review by the state finance council. The attorney general shall notify the state finance council of the need for such review and ensure that payment of the judgment occurs without unnecessary delay.

(3) Payment of a compromise or settlement shall be subject to approval by the state finance council as provided in K.S.A. 75-6106, and amendments thereto.

(4) Payment of a final judgment shall be made from the fund if there has been a determination of any appeal taken from the judgment or, if no appeal is taken, if the time for appeal has expired.

(5) No payment shall be made from the fund to satisfy a compromise, settlement or final judgment when there exists insurance coverage obtained therefor, except that payment shall be made from the fund to satisfy a compromise settlement or final judgment for claims against the state or an employee of the state in any actions or proceedings arising from rendering or failure to render professional services by: (A) A charitable health care provider as defined by K.S.A. 75-6102, and amendments thereto; (B) a local health department as defined by K.S.A. 65-241, and amendments thereto, or an employee thereof; or (C) an indigent health care clinic as defined by K.S.A. 75-6115, and amendments thereto, or an employee thereof, even if there exists insurance coverage obtained therefor.

(c) Upon certification by the attorney general to the director of accounts and reports that the unencumbered balance in the tort claims fund is insufficient to pay an amount for which the fund is liable, the director of accounts and reports shall transfer an amount equal to the insufficiency from the state general fund to the tort claims fund.

(d) When payment is made from the Kansas tort claims fund on behalf of the university of Kansas hospital authority, the authority shall transfer to the tort claims fund an amount equal to the payment made by the tort claims fund on behalf of the authority.

(e) This section shall be part of and supplemental to the Kansas tort claims act.

Sec. 4. K.S.A. 2017 Supp. 75-6501 is hereby amended to read as follows: 75-6501. (a) Within the limits of appropriations made or available therefor and subject to the provisions of appropriation acts relating thereto, the Kansas state employees health care commission shall develop and provide for the implementation and administration of a state health care benefits program.

(b) (1) Subject to the provisions of paragraph (2), the state health care benefits program may provide benefits for persons qualified to participate in the program for hospitalization, medical services, surgical services, nonmedical remedial care and treatment rendered in accordance with a religious method of healing and other health services. The program may include such provisions as are established by the Kansas state employees health care commission, including, but not limited to, qualifications for benefits, services covered, schedules and graduation of benefits, conversion privileges, deductible amounts, limitations on eligibility for benefits by reason of termination of employment or other change of status, leaves of absence, military service or other interruptions in service and other reasonable provisions as may be established by the commission.

(2) The state health care benefits program shall provide the benefits and services required by K.S.A. 2017 Supp. 75-6524, and amendments thereto.

(c) The Kansas state employees health care commission shall designate by rules and regulations those persons who are qualified to participate in the state health care benefits program, including active and retired public officers and employees and their dependents as defined by rules and regulations of the commission. Such rules and regulations shall not apply to students attending a state educational institution as defined in K.S.A. 76-711, and amendments thereto, who are covered by insurance contracts entered into by the board of regents pursuant to K.S.A. 75-4101, and amendments thereto. In designating persons qualified to participate in the state health care benefits program, the commission may establish such conditions, restrictions, limitations and exclusions as the commission deems reasonable. Such conditions, restrictions, limitations and exclusions shall include the conditions contained in ~~subsection (d) of~~ K.S.A. 75-6506(d), and amendments thereto. Each person who was formerly elected or appointed and qualified to an elective state office and who was covered immediately preceding the date such person ceased to hold such office by the provisions of group health insurance or a health maintenance organization plan under the law in effect prior to August 1, 1984, or the state health care benefits program in effect after that date, shall continue to be qualified to participate in the state health care benefits program and shall pay the cost of participation in the program as established and in accordance with the procedures prescribed by the commission if such person chooses to participate therein.

(d) (1) Commencing with the 2009 plan year that begins January 1, 2009, if a state employee elects the high deductible health plan and health savings account, the state's employer contribution shall equal the state's contribution to any other health benefit plan offered by the state. The cost savings to the state for the high deductible health plan shall be deposited monthly into the employee's health savings account up to the maximum annual amount allowed pursuant to ~~subsection (d) of~~ 26 U.S.C. § 223(d), as amended, for as long as the employee participates in the high deductible plan.

(2) If the employee had not previously participated in the state health benefits plan, the employer shall calculate the average savings to the employer of the high deductible plan compared to the other available plans and contribute that amount monthly to the employee's health savings account up to the maximum annual amount allowed pursuant to ~~subsection (d) of~~ 26 U.S.C. § 223(d), as amended.

(3) The employer shall allow additional voluntary contributions by the employee to their health savings account by payroll deduction up to the maximum annual amount allowed pursuant to ~~subsection (d) of~~ 26 U.S.C. § 223(d), as amended.

(e) The commission shall have no authority to assess charges for employer contributions under the student health care benefits component of the state health care benefits program for persons who are covered by insurance contracts entered into by the board of regents pursuant to K.S.A. 75-4101, and amendments thereto.

(f) Nothing in this act shall be construed to permit the Kansas state employees health care commission to discontinue the student health care benefits component of the state health care benefits program until the state board of regents has contracts in effect that provide student coverage pursuant to the authority granted therefor in K.S.A. 75-4101, and amendments thereto.

(g) (1) *On and after July 1, 2018, the commission shall designate claimants, as defined in section 1, and amendments thereto, as qualified to participate in the state health care benefits program. The commission shall implement this subsection in accordance with applicable federal law, including, but not limited to, the employee retirement income security act of 1974 and any regulations issued by the United States department of the treasury.*

(2) *A claimant shall have 31 calendar days from the date of judgment entered pursuant to section 1, and amendments thereto, to complete or decline enrollment in the state health care benefits program. A claimant shall be qualified to participate in the state health care benefits program for the remainder of the plan year when judgment is entered pursuant to section 1, and amendments thereto, and for the next ensuing plan year. A claimant shall not be qualified to elect a high-deductible health plan and health savings account under the state health care benefits program.*

(3) *Costs of premiums under the state health care benefits program for a claimant shall be paid from the tort claims fund established by K.S.A. 75-6117, and amendments thereto, and shall not be charged to the claimant. A claimant shall be responsible to pay any applicable copayments, deductibles and other related costs under the state health care benefits program.*

(4) *A claimant may elect to include the claimant's dependents under the state health care benefits program. For any covered dependents, the claimant shall be responsible to pay the costs of premiums, copayments, deductibles and other related costs under the state health care benefits program.*

(5) *The secretary of health and environment or the secretary's designee shall provide assistance to a claimant to obtain and maintain coverage under the state health care benefits program pursuant to this subsection, including: Enrollment; maintenance of related records; and other assistance as may be required or incidental to implement this subsection.*

New Sec. 5. (a) On completion of a jury trial in a civil action and before the jury is discharged, the judge shall inform the jurors that they have an absolute right to discuss or not to discuss the deliberations or verdict with anyone except as provided in subsections (f) and (g). The judge shall also inform the jurors of the provisions set forth in subsections (b), (c), (d) and (e).

(b) Immediately following the discharge of the jury in a civil action, the defendant, or the defendant's attorney or representative, or the plaintiff, or the plaintiff's attorney or representative, may discuss the jury deliberations or verdict with a member of the jury only if the juror consents to the discussion.

(c) If a discussion of the jury deliberations or verdict with a member of the jury occurs at any time other than immediately following the discharge of the jury, prior to discussing the jury deliberations or verdict with a member of a jury, the defendant, or the defendant's attorney or representative, or the plaintiff, or the plaintiff's attorney or representative, shall inform the juror of the identity of the case, the party in the case that the person represents, the subject of the interview, the absolute right of the juror to discuss or not discuss the deliberations or verdict in the case with the person and the juror's right to review and have a copy of any declaration filed with the court.

(d) Any unreasonable contact with a juror by the defendant, or the defendant's attorney or representative, or by the plaintiff, or the plaintiff's attorney or representative, without the juror's consent shall be immediately reported to the trial court.

(e) Any violation of this section shall be considered a violation of a lawful court order and may be punished as contempt of court.

(f) Nothing in this section shall prohibit a law enforcement officer from discussing the deliberations or verdict with a member of the jury for the purpose of investigating an allegation of criminal conduct.

(g) Nothing in this section shall prohibit the court or a judge from discussing the deliberations or verdict with a member of the jury for any lawful purpose.

(h) This section shall be part of and supplemental to the code of civil procedure.

Sec. 6. K.S.A. 2017 Supp. 75-6117 and 75-6501 are hereby repealed.

Sec. 7. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its publication in the statute book.

I hereby certify that the above BILL originated in the HOUSE, and was adopted by that body

HOUSE adopted
Conference Committee Report _____

Speaker of the House.

Chief Clerk of the House.

Passed the SENATE
as amended _____

SENATE adopted
Conference Committee Report _____

President of the Senate.

Secretary of the Senate.

APPROVED _____

Governor.