

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2nd Session of the 46th Legislature (1998)

HOUSE CONCURRENT
RESOLUTION NO. 1112

By: Benson of the House

and

Taylor of the Senate

AS INTRODUCED

A Concurrent Resolution relating to the Workers' Compensation Court; creating the Task Force on the Workers' Compensation Court to study the caseload of the court and determine the number of judges necessary to dispose of the cases; providing for membership; providing reimbursement for certain expenses; providing for staffing; and requiring submission of report.

WHEREAS, workers' compensation is a matter of statewide concern;
and

WHEREAS, the Legislature of the State of Oklahoma is committed to conserving the financial resources of this state and limiting growth and decreasing government expenditures wherever possible; and

WHEREAS, there were seven judicial positions in the Workers' Compensation Court when it was created in 1978; and

WHEREAS, two judicial positions were added to the Workers' Compensation Court during the oil-boom days of the 1980s and another judicial position was added during the 1st Regular Session of the 44th Oklahoma Legislature in 1993; and

WHEREAS, the number of claims for compensation by injured workers has decreased 22% since its peak in 1994; and

WHEREAS, the number of weeks that a claimant must wait from the date of request for hearing to the actual date of hearing has decreased from an average of 31 weeks in 1995 to approximately 15 weeks; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature of the State of Oklahoma has passed sweeping reforms in the area of workers' compensation which will result in further decreases in the number of workers' compensation cases.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE 2ND SESSION OF THE 46TH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE, THE SENATE CONCURRING THEREIN:

THAT there is hereby created until February 1, 1999, the Task Force on the Workers' Compensation Court. The Task Force shall be comprised of 16 members. The President Pro Tempore of the Senate shall appoint 7 members of the Senate. The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall appoint 7 members of the House of Representatives. In addition to the appointed members, the Task Force shall be co-chaired by the Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee and the Chair of the House of Representatives Judiciary Committee.

THAT the Task Force shall study the current caseload and the effects of legislative reform on the future caseload of the Workers' Compensation Court and determine the number of judges needed to handle such caseload. In performing its duties, the Task Force shall consider:

1. The number of claims for compensation filed with the Workers' Compensation Court; and
2. The number of weeks a claimant must wait before his or her claim is heard by the Workers' Compensation Court; and
3. The impact of the recently established voluntary mediation program on the Workers' Compensation Court caseload; and

4. The impact of a change in the number of judges currently sitting on the Workers' Compensation Court on the employees and employers of this state.

THAT the members of the Task Force shall be reimbursed for their necessary travel expenses incurred in the performance of their duties in accordance with Section 456 of Title 74 of the Oklahoma Statutes.

THAT staff for the Task Force shall be provided by the House of Representatives and the Senate from their existing staff.

THAT the Task Force shall submit a report to the Legislature making recommendations relating to the number of judges needed to handle the caseload of the Workers' Compensation Court no later than February 1, 1999.

46-2-11784

JAK