ENROLLED SENATE
BILL NO. 323

By: Muegge of the Senate

and

Lindley of the House

An Act relating to state employees; amending 74 O.S. 1991, Section 840.7d, as renumbered by Section 54, Chapter 242, O.S.L. 1994, and as last amended by Section 6, Chapter 320, O.S.L. 1996 (74 O.S. Supp. 1998, Section 840-2.23), which relates to the state leave sharing program; authorizing donating employees terminating their employment with the state to donate the remainder of their sick leave; providing an effective date; and declaring an emergency.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 74 O.S. 1991, Section 840.7d, as renumbered by Section 54, Chapter 242, O.S.L. 1994, and as last amended by Section 6, Chapter 320, O.S.L. 1996 (74 O.S. Supp. 1998, Section 840-2.23), is amended to read as follows:

Section 840-2.23 A. There is hereby created the state leave sharing program. The purpose of the state leave sharing program is to permit state employees to donate annual or sick leave to a fellow state employee who is eligible for and requires family leave, or who is suffering from or has a relative or household member suffering from an extraordinary or severe illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition which has caused or is likely to cause the employee to take leave without pay or terminate employment.

B. As used in this section:

1. "Relative of the employee" shall be limited to the spouse, child, stepchild, grandchild, grandparent, stepparent, or parent of the employee;

2. "Household members" means those persons who reside in the same home, who have reciprocal duties to and do provide financial support for one another. This term shall include foster children and legal wards even if they do not live in the household. The term does not include persons sharing the same general house, when the living style is primarily that of a dormitory or commune;

3. "Severe" or "extraordinary" means serious, extreme or life threatening; and

4. "State employee" means a permanent classified employee or a regular unclassified employee with over six (6) months continuous service with the state. It does not include classified employees in probationary status or unclassified employees on temporary or other limited term appointments.

C. An employee may be eligible to receive shared leave pursuant to the following conditions:

1. The chief administrative officer of the employee determines that the employee meets the criteria described in this section; and

2. The employee has abided by state policies regarding the use of leave.

D. An employee may donate annual or sick leave to another employee only pursuant to the following conditions:

1. a. The receiving employee has exhausted, or will exhaust, all annual leave and sick leave due to an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition, which is of an extraordinary or severe nature, and involves the employee, a relative of the employee or household member,

b. The condition has caused, or is likely to cause, the employee to go on leave without pay or terminate employment, and

c. The chief administrative officer of the employee permits the leave to be donated to an eligible employee;

2. The donating employee may donate any amount of annual or sick leave provided the donation does not cause the annual leave balance of the employee to fall below eighty (80) hours and provided the donation does not cause the sick leave balance of the employee to fall below eighty (80) hours; and

3. Employees may not donate excess annual or sick leave that the donor would not be able to otherwise take; provided, however, a donating employee may donate any amount of unused sick leave which the employee has retained at the time of the termination of such employee's employment with the state.

E. The chief administrative officer of the employee shall determine the amount of donated leave an employee may receive and may only authorize an employee to use up to a maximum of two hundred sixty-one (261) days of donated leave during total state employment.

F. The chief administrative officer of the employee shall require the employee to submit, prior to approval or disapproval, a medical certificate from a licensed physician or health care practitioner verifying the need for the leave and expected duration of the condition.

G. Donated annual or sick leave is transferable between employees in different state entities with the agreement of both chief administrative officers of the entities.

H. The receiving employee shall be paid his or her regular rate of pay; therefore, one hour of donated leave may cover more or less than one hour of the salary of the recipient. The calculation of the leave value of the recipient shall be in accordance with Office of Personnel Management policies, regulations, and procedures. The dollar value of the leave is converted from the donor to the recipient. The leave received will be designated as donated leave and be maintained separately from all other leave balances.

I. Any donated leave may only be used by the recipient for the purposes specified in this section.

J. All forms of paid leave available for use by the recipient must be used prior to using donated leave.

K. Any donated leave not used by the recipient during each occurrence as determined by the chief administrative officer of the employee shall be returned to the donor. The donated leave remaining will be divided among the donors on a prorated basis based on the original donated value and returned at its original donor value and reinstated to the original leave balance of each donor.

L. All donated leave must be given voluntarily. No employee shall be coerced, threatened, intimidated, or financially induced into donating annual or sick leave for purposes of the leave sharing program.

SECTION 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 1999.

SECTION 3. It being immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is hereby declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

Passed the Senate the 3rd day of March, 1999.

_____
President of the Senate

Passed the House of Representatives the 29th day of March, 1999.

_____
Speaker of the House of Representatives