THE STATE SENATE
Monday, February 20, 2006

Senate Bill No. 1600

As Amended

SENATE BILL NO. 1600 - By: LASTER of the Senate and SULLIVAN of the House.

An Act relating to Governmental Tort Claims Act; amending 51 O.S. 2001, Section 152, as last amended by Section 19, Chapter 368, O.S.L. 2004 (51 O.S. Supp. 2005, Section 152), which relates to definitions; modifying definition; and providing an effective date.

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

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 51 O.S. 2001, Section 152, as last amended by Section 19, Chapter 368, O.S.L. 2004 (51 O.S. Supp. 2005, Section 152), is amended to read as follows:

Section 152. As used in The Governmental Tort Claims Act:

1. "Action" means a proceeding in a court of competent jurisdiction by which one party brings a suit against another;

2. "Agency" means any board, commission, committee, department or other instrumentality or entity designated to act in behalf of the state or a political subdivision;

3. "Claim" means any written demand presented by a claimant or the claimant's authorized representative in accordance with this act to recover money from the state or political subdivision as compensation for an act or omission of a political subdivision or the state or an employee;

4. "Claimant" means the person or the person's authorized representative who files notice of a claim in accordance with The Governmental Tort Claims Act. Only the following persons and no others may be claimants:

a. any person holding an interest in real or personal property which suffers a loss, provided that the claim of the person shall be aggregated with claims of all other persons holding an interest in the property and the claims of all other persons which are derivative of the loss, and that multiple claimants shall be considered a single claimant,

b. the individual actually involved in the accident or occurrence who suffers a loss, provided that the individual shall aggregate in the claim the losses of all other persons which are derivative of the loss, or

c. in the case of death, an administrator, special administrator or a personal representative who shall aggregate in the claim all losses of all persons which are derivative of the death;

5. "Employee" means any person who is authorized to act in behalf of a political subdivision or the state whether that person is acting on a permanent or temporary basis, with or without being compensated or on a full-time or part-time basis.

a. Employee also includes:

(1) all elected or appointed officers, members of governing bodies and other persons designated to act for an agency or political subdivision, but the term does not mean a person or other legal entity while acting in the capacity of an independent contractor or an employee of an independent contractor,

(2) from September 1, 1991, through June 30, 1996, licensed physicians, licensed osteopathic physicians and certified nurse-midwives providing prenatal, delivery or infant care services to State Department of Health clients pursuant to a contract entered into with the State Department of Health in accordance with paragraph 3 of subsection B of Section 1-106 of Title 63 of the Oklahoma Statutes but only insofar as services authorized by and in conformity with the terms of the contract and the requirements of Section 1-233 of Title 63 of the Oklahoma Statutes, and

(3) any volunteer, full-time or part-time firefighter when performing duties for a fire department

provided for in subparagraph j of paragraph 8 of this section.

b. For the purpose of The Governmental Tort Claims Act, the following are employees of this state, regardless of the place in this state where duties as employees are performed:

(1) physicians acting in an administrative capacity,

(2) resident physicians and resident interns participating in a graduate medical education program of the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center or the College of Osteopathic Medicine of Oklahoma State University,

(3) faculty members and staff of the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center and the College of Osteopathic Medicine of Oklahoma State University, while engaged in teaching duties,

(4) physicians who practice medicine or act in an administrative capacity as an employee of an agency of the State of Oklahoma, and

(5) physicians who provide medical care to inmates pursuant to a contract with the Department of Corrections.

Physician faculty members and staff of the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center and the College of Osteopathic Medicine of Oklahoma State University not acting in an administrative capacity or engaged in teaching duties are not employees or agents of the state.

c. Except as provided in subparagraph (b) of paragraph 5 of this section, in no event shall the state be held liable for the tortious conduct of any physician, resident physician or intern while practicing medicine or providing medical treatment to patients;

6. "Loss" means death or injury to the body or rights of a person or damage to real or personal property or rights therein;

7. "Municipality" means any incorporated city or town, and all institutions, agencies or instrumentalities of a municipality;

8. "Political subdivision" means:

a. a municipality,

b. a school district,

c. a county,

d. a public trust where the sole beneficiary or beneficiaries are a city, town, school district or county. For purposes of The Governmental Tort Claims Act, a public trust shall include a municipal hospital

created pursuant to Section 30-101 et seq. of Title 11 of the Oklahoma Statutes, a county hospital created pursuant to Section 781 et seq. of Title 19 of the Oklahoma Statutes, or is created pursuant to a joint agreement between such governing authorities, that is operated for the public benefit by a public trust created pursuant to Section 176 et seq. of Title 60 of the Oklahoma Statutes and managed by a governing board appointed or elected by the municipality, county, or both, who exercises control of the hospital, subject to the approval of the governing body of the municipality, county, or both,

e. for the purposes of The Governmental Tort Claims Act only, a housing authority created pursuant to the provisions of the Oklahoma Housing Authority Act,

f. for the purposes of The Governmental Tort Claims Act only, corporations organized not for profit pursuant to the provisions of the Oklahoma General Corporation Act for the primary purpose of developing and providing rural water supply and sewage disposal facilities to serve rural residents,

g. for the purposes of The Governmental Tort Claims Act only, districts formed pursuant to the Rural Water, Sewer, Gas and Solid Waste Management Districts Act,

h. for the purposes of The Governmental Tort Claims Act only, master conservancy districts formed pursuant to the Conservancy Act of Oklahoma,

i. for the purposes of The Governmental Tort Claims Act only, a fire protection district created pursuant to the provisions of Section 901.1 et seq. of Title 19 of the Oklahoma Statutes,

j. for the purposes of The Governmental Tort Claims Act only, a benevolent or charitable corporate volunteer or full-time fire department for an unincorporated area created pursuant to the provisions of Section 592 et seq. of Title 18 of the Oklahoma Statutes,

k. for purposes of The Governmental Tort Claims Act only, an Emergency Services Provider rendering services within the boundaries of a Supplemental Emergency Services District pursuant to an existing contract between the Emergency Services Provider and the Oklahoma State Department of Health. Provided, however, that the acquisition of commercial liability insurance covering the activities of such Emergency

Services Provider performed within the State of Oklahoma shall not operate as a waiver of any of the limitations, immunities or defenses provided for political subdivisions pursuant to the terms of The Governmental Tort Claims Act,

l. for purposes of The Governmental Tort Claims Act only, a conservation district created pursuant to the provisions of the Conservation District Act,

m. for purposes of The Governmental Tort Claims Act, districts formed pursuant to the Oklahoma Irrigation District Act,

n. for purposes of The Governmental Tort Claims Act only, any community action agency established pursuant to Sections 5035 through 5040 of Title 74 of the Oklahoma Statutes, ~~and~~

o. for purposes of The Governmental Tort Claims Act only, any organization that is designated as a youth services agency, pursuant to Section 7302-3.6a of Title 10 of the Oklahoma Statutes,

p. for purposes of The Governmental Tort Claims Act only, any child placing agency licensed by this state to place children in foster family homes, **and**

q. for purposes of The Governmental Tort Claims Act only, any authorized member of a judicially monitored drug court program, as defined by Section 471 et seq. of Title 22 of the Oklahoma Statutes,

and all their institutions, instrumentalities or agencies;

9. "Scope of employment" means performance by an employee acting in good faith within the duties of the employee's office or employment or of tasks lawfully assigned by a competent authority including the operation or use of an agency vehicle or equipment with actual or implied consent of the supervisor of the employee, but shall not include corruption or fraud;

10. "State" means the State of Oklahoma or any office, department, agency, authority, commission, board, institution, hospital, college, university, public trust created pursuant to Title 60 of the Oklahoma Statutes of which the State of Oklahoma is the beneficiary, or other instrumentality thereof; and

11. "Tort" means a legal wrong, independent of contract, involving violation of a duty imposed by general law or otherwise, resulting in a loss to any person, association or corporation as the proximate result of an act or omission of a political subdivision or the state or an employee acting within the scope of employment.

SECTION 2. This act shall become effective November 1, 2006.

COMMITTEE REPORT BY: COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY, dated 2-14-06 - DO PASS, As Amended and Coauthored.