HB 2895

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, February 17, 2010

House Bill No. 2895

HOUSE BILL NO. 2895 - By: WALKER of the House and BINGMAN of the Senate.

An Act relating to circuit engineering districts; amending 51 O.S. 2001, Section 152, as last amended by Section 1, Chapter 315, O.S.L. 2009 (51 O.S. Supp. 2009, Section 152), which relates to The Governmental Tort Claims Act; modifying definition; amending 69 O.S. 2001, Section 687.1, as amended by Section 1, Chapter 113, O.S.L. 2007 (69 O.S. Supp. 2009, Section 687.1), which relates to circuit engineering districts; declaring circuit engineering districts to be political subdivisions of the state; 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 1, Chapter 315, O.S.L. 2009 (51 O.S. Supp. 2009, 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. “Charitable health care provider” means a person who is licensed, certified, or otherwise authorized by the laws of this state to administer health care in the ordinary course of business or the practice of a profession and who provides care to

a medically indigent person, as defined in paragraph 8 of this section, with no expectation of or acceptance of compensation of any kind;

4. "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;

5. "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;

6. "Community health care provider" means:

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a. a health care provider who volunteers services at a community health center that has been deemed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as a federally qualified health center as defined by 42 U.S.C., Section 1396d(l)(2)(B),

b. a health provider who provides services to an organization that has been deemed a federally qualified look-alike community health center, and

c. a health care provider who provides services to a community health center that has made application to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for approval and deeming as a federally qualified look-alike community health center in compliance with federal application guidance, and has received comments from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as to the status of such application with the established intent of resubmitting a modified application, or, if denied, a new application, no later than six (6) months from the date of the official notification from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services requiring resubmission of a new application;

7. "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:

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(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 11 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,

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

(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,

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

(6) any person who is licensed to practice medicine pursuant to Title 59 of the Oklahoma Statutes, who is under an administrative professional services contract with the Oklahoma Health Care Authority under the auspices of the Oklahoma Health Care Authority Chief Medical Officer, and who is limited to performing administrative duties such as professional guidance for medical reviews, reimbursement rates, service utilization, health care delivery and benefit design for the Oklahoma Health Care Authority, only while acting within the scope of such contract,

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(7) licensed medical professionals under contract with city, county, or state entities who provide medical care to inmates or detainees in the custody or control of law enforcement agencies, and

(8) licensed mental health professionals as defined in Sections 1-103 and 5-502 of Title 43A of the Oklahoma Statutes, who are conducting initial examinations of individuals for the purpose of determining whether an individual meets the criteria for emergency detention as part of a contract with the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.

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 this paragraph, 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;

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

9. “Medically indigent” means a person requiring medically necessary hospital or other health care services for the person or the dependents of the person who has no

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public or private third-party coverage, and whose personal resources are insufficient to provide for needed health care;

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

11. "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,

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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,

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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,

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,

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p. for purposes of The Governmental Tort Claims Act only, any judge presiding over a drug court, as defined by Section 471.1 of Title 22 of the Oklahoma Statutes, ~~and~~

q. for purposes of The Governmental Tort Claims Act only, any child-placing agency licensed by this state to place children in foster family homes, <u>and</u>

<u>r. a circuit engineering district created pursuant to Section 687.1 of Title 69 of the Oklahoma Statutes,</u>

and all their institutions, instrumentalities or agencies;

12. "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;

13. "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

14. "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.

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SECTION 2. AMENDATORY 69 O.S. 2001, Section 687.1, as amended by Section 1, Chapter 113, O.S.L. 2007 (69 O.S. Supp. 2009, Section 687.1), is amended to read as follows:

Section 687.1 A. The board of county commissioners of any county in this state may create a circuit engineering district with any other county or counties. The objectives of the circuit engineering district shall be:

1. To allow county governments to make the most efficient use of their powers by enabling them to cooperate with each other and other units of government on a basis of mutual advantage and thereby to provide services and facilities in a manner and pursuant to forms of governmental organization that will accord best with geographic, economic, population and other factors influencing the needs and development of county government;

2. To provide research and research support to county government;

3. To provide assistance to county governments in performing the functions delegated by law including, but not limited to, the operation of road maintenance, construction, inspection, and equipment purchases and management;

4. To conduct public discussion groups, forums, panels, lectures, and other similar programs;

5. To present courses of instruction and education;

6. To obtain, develop and present scientific and all other types of information relative to the operation of the public transportation system in this state;

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7. For long-range planning and growth of the transportation system within the circuit engineering district and other circuit engineering districts within this state; and

8. To provide services to counties in a coordinated manner that will improve the quality of the transportation system and be cost effective.

B. The authority of the circuit engineering district shall be as follows:

1. To comply with and carry out the provisions of the Interlocal Cooperation Act;

2. To advise and assist its members with how to implement and make an effective transportation plan for the best interest of each member of the circuit engineering district;

3. To prepare such programs of research as may be necessary and advisable in carrying out its purposes;

4. To contract for services with persons, firms or units of government to carry out the purposes of the circuit engineering district;

5. To provide periodic reports for the circuit engineering district or for its members as may be required by federal or state legislation or regulations pertaining thereto, and as are within the scope and range of the purpose of the circuit engineering district;

6. To acquire and hold property for its use and to incur expenses to carry out its functions;

7. To receive gifts, contributions and donations to carry out the purposes for which it is formed;

8. To assess its members for the services rendered in carrying out its functions;

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9. To apply for, contract for, administer, receive and expend funds or grants from any participating member, the State of Oklahoma, the federal government, or any other source; and

10. To publish studies in connection with its work which may be of benefit to its members or other agencies within and outside of the circuit engineering district.

C. Circuit engineering districts may, by affirmative vote of their board, determine that the association representing the county commissioners of Oklahoma be designated to negotiate for services, required by law or necessity, on behalf of the circuit engineering districts.

D. The circuit engineering district may, from time to time, as its board of directors deems necessary, cause to be formed legal trusts which shall be formed to promote and develop specific projects. The primary goal of each trust created pursuant to this subsection shall be the economic growth and development within the district. However, the trust shall be limited to functions within the category for which it is specifically organized. The trust shall be totally responsible for its contractual obligations and holdings, holding the circuit engineering district harmless for claims or liabilities created by the trust.

E. The board of directors of the circuit engineering district shall elect a liaison officer. The liaison officer shall be a nonvoting member of each trust formed pursuant to subsection D of this section. The liaison shall be permitted to attend all meetings and enter into all discussions of the trust's board of trustees, and shall report all actions to the board of directors of the circuit engineering district.

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F. The circuit engineering district shall conduct an independent audit upon completion of each fiscal year.

G. The board of directors may employ an attorney to provide legal research, advice and opinions on contracts and other matters which may come before the board of directors.

H. The State Auditor and Inspector shall prescribe the necessary rules, forms and procedures to provide for the efficient and timely means by which the pool purchase of supplies and equipment may be accomplished on behalf of the participating counties. The rules, forms and procedures developed by the State Auditor and Inspector for pool purchasing may be utilized by the Oklahoma Department of Transportation County Advisory Board in coordination with the circuit engineering districts for the purpose of pool purchasing utilizing funds from the County Road Machinery and Equipment Revolving Fund. For the purpose of obtaining access to pricing and bids available on a national level, counties shall be eligible to participate in such pool purchasing in a manner as determined by the State Auditor and Inspector.

I. Circuit engineering districts may participate in the County Road Machinery and Equipment Revolving Fund pursuant to the provisions of Section 302.1 of this title.

J. Circuit engineering districts are authorized to organize a statewide board consisting of the chairpersons duly elected by each of their respective circuit engineering districts. The statewide board organized pursuant to this section shall:

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1. Have the power to conduct business, including the development of policies and procedures, incur expenses, and contract for services so long as such business furthers the provisions of this act;

2. Coordinate activities between circuit engineering districts;

3. Administer the Statewide Circuit Engineering District Revolving Fund, created pursuant to Section 687.2 of this title; and

4. Have authority to promulgate rules to carry out the provisions of this act.

K. A circuit engineering district created pursuant to this section shall be deemed a political subdivision of the state.

SECTION 3. This act shall become effective November 1, 2010.

COMMITTEE REPORT BY: COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT, dated 02-16-10 - DO PASS, As Coauthored.

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