

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2nd Session of the 59th Legislature (2024)

SENATE BILL 1941

By: Coleman

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to bail bondsmen; amending 59 O.S. 2021, Section 1327, as last amended by Section 1, Chapter 127, O.S.L. 2023 (59 O.S. Supp. 2023, Section 1327), which relates to surrender of defendant prior to breach; specifying proof needed for payment of expenses; amending 59 O.S. 2021, Section 1332, which relates to forfeiture procedure; providing for conditions of travel expense reimbursement; and providing an effective date.

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

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 59 O.S. 2021, Section 1327, as last amended by Section 1, Chapter 127, O.S.L. 2023 (59 O.S. Supp. 2023, Section 1327), is amended to read as follows:

Section 1327. A. At any time before there has been a breach of the undertaking in any type of bail provided herein, the surety or bondsman or a licensed bail enforcer pursuant to a client contract authorized by the Bail Enforcement and Licensing Act may surrender the defendant, or the defendant may surrender himself or herself, to the official to whose custody the defendant was committed at the time bail was taken, or to the official into whose custody the

1 defendant would have been given had he or she been committed. The
2 defendant may be surrendered without the return of premium for the
3 bond if he or she has been guilty of nonpayment of premium, changes
4 address without notifying his or her bondsman, conceals himself or
5 herself, leaves the jurisdiction of the court without the permission
6 of his or her bondsman, or violates his or her contract with the
7 bondsman in any way that does harm to the bondsman, or the surety,
8 or violates his or her obligation to the court. When a bondsman or
9 surety, or a licensed bail enforcer, surrenders a defendant pursuant
10 to this subsection, the bondsman or surety shall file written
11 notification of the surrender. After surrender, and upon filing of
12 written notification of the surrender with the court clerk, the bond
13 shall be exonerated and the clerk shall enter a minute in the case
14 exonerating the bond.

15 B. 1. If the defendant has been placed in custody of another
16 jurisdiction, the district attorney shall direct a hold order to the
17 official, judge or law enforcement agency where the defendant is in
18 custody. All reasonable expenses accrued in returning the defendant
19 to the original court shall be borne by the bondsman who posted the
20 bond with that court; provided, however, except for instances
21 whereby the defendant is transported by a contracted transport
22 company, reasonable expenses shall mean the actual miles traveled in
23 transporting the defendant at a rate equal to the current Internal
24 Revenue Service standard mileage rate. Upon application, the bond

1 in the original court shall be exonerated when the hold order is
2 placed and upon proof of guarantee of payment of expenses by the
3 bondsman.

4 2. Except as provided for in paragraph 3 of this subsection,
5 the premium for a bail bond shall be considered earned by the
6 bondsman or the insurer, as applicable, when the defendant on the
7 bond is released from custody and is not incarcerated in any
8 capacity. If the bond premium has not been earned pursuant to the
9 terms of this section, the payor of the premium or the depositor of
10 any collateral, as applicable, may request the return of the premium
11 or collateral given to the bondsman for the bond. The bondsman
12 shall return any premium and collateral without delay. If a
13 bondsman returns the premium to the payor pursuant to this section,
14 he or she may charge a usual, customary, and reasonable fee for his
15 or her services provided in the transaction.

16 3. The premium for a bail bond shall be considered earned by
17 the bondsman, regardless of whether the defendant on the bond is
18 released from custody, if the bondsman and the payor of the bond
19 premium have agreed in writing that the purpose of the bond is to
20 secure the transfer of the defendant to another jurisdiction and the
21 defendant is in fact transferred to that jurisdiction.

22 C. If the defendant has been arrested on new charges and is in
23 the custody of the same jurisdiction in which the bondsman or surety
24 has posted an appearance bond or bonds for the defendant, and the

1 bond or bonds have not been exonerated, and certified copies of
2 bonds are not reasonably available, the bondsman or surety may
3 recommit the defendant to be held in custody on the charges for
4 which the bondsman or surety has previously posted appearance bonds
5 thereon, in accordance with the following procedure:

6 1. On a Recommitment of Defendant by Bondsman form approved by
7 the Administrative Office of the Courts, the bondsman or surety
8 shall personally affix his or her signature to an affidavit
9 attesting to the following:

10 a. the defendant is presently in the custody of the
11 jurisdiction in which the bondsman or surety has
12 posted a bond or bonds,

13 b. the case number, if any, assigned to each bond,

14 c. that the bond or bonds have not been exonerated, and

15 d. the specific charges and bond amount or amounts;

16 2. The bondsman or surety shall present the Recommitment of
17 Defendant by Bondsman form to the official in whose custody the
18 defendant is being held, and the official shall detain the defendant
19 in his or her custody, thereon, as upon a commitment, and by a
20 certificate in writing acknowledging the surrender; and

21 3. When a bondsman or surety recommitts a defendant pursuant to
22 this subsection, the bondsman or surety shall file a written
23 notification thereof to the court, and after such notification, the
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1 bond or bonds shall be exonerated, and the clerk shall enter a
2 minute in the case exonerating the bond or bonds.

3 D. 1. When a defendant does appear before the court as
4 required by law and enters a plea of guilty or nolo contendere, is
5 sentenced or a deferred sentence is granted as provided for in
6 Section 991c of Title 22 of the Oklahoma Statutes, or deferred
7 prosecution is granted as provided by law, in such event the
8 undertaking and bondsman and insurer shall be exonerated from
9 further liability.

10 2. A bond posted for a petition for revocation of a suspended
11 sentence, a petition for acceleration of a deferred sentence or any
12 violation of a probationary term shall be exonerated by operation of
13 law when:

- 14 a. the defendant has confessed, stipulated or otherwise
15 agreed to the factual basis of the violation of
16 probation,
- 17 b. the suspended sentence is revoked in whole or part,
- 18 c. the deferred sentence is accelerated in whole or part,
19 or
- 20 d. any additional sanction is imposed by the court.

21 E. The bond shall be exonerated by operation of law in any case
22 in which the defendant has been arrested on new charges or on any
23 warrant in the same jurisdiction in which the bondsman or insurer
24 has posted the appearance bond or bonds for the defendant, and the

1 defendant has been subsequently released on his or her own personal
2 recognizance or a pretrial release has been authorized by the court.

3 F. The bond shall be exonerated by operation of law in any case
4 in which the defendant has been arrested and there is an added
5 charge to a case that would result in a higher fine or longer term
6 of sentence if convicted, or an amendment to a charge that would
7 result in a higher fine or longer term of sentence if convicted;
8 provided, however, any premium paid by the defendant to the bondsman
9 or insurer from the original charge shall be at the same premium
10 rate and shall be credited to the defendant if the same bondsman or
11 insurer posts the appearance bond or bonds on the added or amended
12 charge.

13 G. For purposes of this section, a "usual, customary, and
14 reasonable fee" means a charge to the payor that is based on the
15 amount of time spent by the bondsman or his or her employees
16 researching, drafting, and executing the bail bond. Such fee shall
17 be detailed in a written document provided to the payor.

18 H. The court shall not issue an order modifying the terms of a
19 previously set bond unless the order has also been signed by the
20 bail bondsman, bail bondsman surety, or both acknowledging the
21 changes made to the bond prior to the defendant's release. Failure
22 to provide this notice shall exonerate the bond by operation of law.

23 SECTION 2. AMENDATORY 59 O.S. 2021, Section 1332, is
24 amended to read as follows:
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1 Section 1332. A. If there is a breach of an undertaking, the
2 court before which the cause is pending shall issue, within ten (10)
3 days, an arrest warrant for the defendant and declare the
4 undertaking and any money, property, or securities that have been
5 deposited as bail, forfeited on the day the defendant failed to
6 appear. Within fifteen (15) days from the date of the forfeiture,
7 the order and judgment of forfeiture shall be filed with the clerk
8 of the trial court. Failure to timely issue the arrest warrant or
9 file the order and judgment of forfeiture as provided in this
10 subsection shall exonerate the bond by operation of law. In the
11 event of the forfeiture of a bail bond the clerk of the trial court
12 shall, within thirty (30) days after the order and judgment of
13 forfeiture is filed in the court, by mail with return receipt
14 requested, mail a true and correct copy of the order and judgment of
15 forfeiture to the bondsman, and if applicable, the insurer, whose
16 risk it is, and keep at least one copy of the order and judgment of
17 forfeiture on file; provided, the clerk shall not be required to
18 mail the order and judgment of forfeiture to the bondsman or insurer
19 if, within fifteen (15) days from the date of forfeiture, the
20 defendant is returned to custody, the bond is reinstated by the
21 court with the bondsman's approval, or the order of forfeiture is
22 vacated or set aside by the court. Failure of the clerk of the
23 trial court to comply with the thirty-day notice provision in this
24 subsection shall exonerate the bond by operation of law.

1 B. The order and judgment of forfeiture shall be on forms
2 prescribed by the Administrative Director of the Courts.

3 C. 1. The bail bondsman shall have ninety (90) days from
4 receipt of the order and judgment of forfeiture from the court clerk
5 or mailing of the notice if no receipt is made to return the
6 defendant to custody.

7 2. The bondsman may contract with a licensed bail enforcer
8 pursuant to the Bail Enforcement and Licensing Act to recover and
9 return the defendant to custody within the ninety-day period, or as
10 agreed, or notwithstanding the Bail Enforcement and Licensing Act if
11 the bondsman is duly appointed in this state by an insurer operating
12 in this state, the bondsman may seek the assistance of another
13 licensed bondsman in this state who is appointed by the same
14 insurer.

15 3. When the court record indicates that the defendant is
16 returned to custody in the jurisdiction where forfeiture occurred,
17 within the ninety-day period, the court clerk shall enter minutes
18 vacating the forfeiture and exonerating the bond. If the defendant
19 has been timely returned to custody, but this fact is not reflected
20 by the court record, the court shall vacate the forfeiture and
21 exonerate the bond.

22 4. For the purposes of this section, "return to custody" means:

- 23 a. the return of the defendant to the appropriate
24 Oklahoma law enforcement agency by the bondsman,

- 1 b. an appearance of the defendant in open court in the
2 court where charged,
3 c. arrest or incarceration within this state of the
4 defendant by law enforcement personnel, provided the
5 bondsman has requested that a hold be placed on the
6 defendant in the jurisdiction wherein the forfeiture
7 lies and has guaranteed reasonable travel expenses for
8 the return of the defendant, or
9 d. arrest or incarceration of the defendant in any other
10 jurisdiction, provided the bondsman has requested that
11 a hold be placed on the defendant in the jurisdiction
12 wherein the forfeiture lies and has guaranteed
13 reasonable travel expenses for the return of the
14 defendant.

15 5. In addition to the provisions set forth in paragraphs 3 and
16 4 of this subsection, the bond shall be exonerated by operation of
17 law in any case in which:

- 18 a. the bondsman has requested in writing of the sheriff's
19 department in the county where the forfeiture occurred
20 that the defendant be entered into the computerized
21 records of the National Crime Information Center
22 (NCIC), and the request has not been honored within
23 fourteen (14) business days of the receipt of the
24 written request by the department,

- 1 b. the defendant has been arrested outside of this state
2 and the court record shows the prosecuting attorney
3 has declined to proceed with extradition, or
4 c. the warrant issued by the court has not been entered
5 into an active warrant database available to law
6 enforcement within five (5) business days after its
7 issued date.

8 6. The court may, in its discretion, vacate the order of
9 forfeiture and exonerate the bond where good cause has been shown
10 for:

- 11 a. the defendant's failure to appear, or
12 b. the bondsman's failure to return the defendant to
13 custody within ninety (90) days.

14 7. When a bondsman or insurer ("requester") has guaranteed
15 travel expenses to return a defendant to custody:

- 16 a. the law enforcement agency that placed the hold shall
17 promptly advise the requestor of a hit confirmation,
18 b. prior to transporting the defendant, the law
19 enforcement agency that placed the hold shall provide
20 the requestor a good faith estimate of the reasonable
21 return expenses to return the defendant to custody.
22 The requestor may request to decline to pay travel
23 expenses, and the law enforcement agency may release
24 its hold and the defendant shall not be considered

1 returned to custody. If the law enforcement agency
2 cannot contact the requestor, the requestor's
3 guarantee of travel expenses shall be honored by the
4 requestor, and

5 c. a requestor may request to withdraw their NCIC request
6 anytime prior to a defendant's arrest.

7 D. 1. If, within ninety (90) days from receipt of the order
8 and judgment of forfeiture from the court clerk, or mailing of the
9 notice if no receipt is made, the defendant is not returned to
10 custody, or the forfeiture has not been stayed, the bondsman and, if
11 applicable, the insurer whose risk it is shall deposit cash or other
12 valuable securities in the face amount of the bond with the court
13 clerk ninety-one (91) days from receipt of the order and judgment of
14 forfeiture from the court clerk, or mailing of the notice if no
15 receipt is made; provided, this provision shall not apply if the
16 defendant has been returned to custody within the ninety-day period
17 and the court has failed to vacate the forfeiture pursuant to
18 paragraphs 3 through 6 of subsection C of this section.

19 2. After the order and judgment has been paid within ninety-one
20 (91) days from receipt of the order and judgment of forfeiture from
21 the court clerk, or mailing of the notice if no receipt is made, as
22 required in paragraph 1 of this subsection, the bondsman and, if
23 applicable, the insurer whose risk it is shall have one (1) year
24 from the date payment is due to return the defendant to custody as

1 defined by paragraph 4 of subsection C of this section. In the
2 event the defendant is returned to custody and all expenses for the
3 defendant's return have been ~~paid~~ guaranteed by the bondsman or
4 insurer, the bondsman's or insurer's property shall be returned;
5 provided, the request for remitter be made by motion filed within
6 one (1) year from the date payment is due.

7 3. If the additional cash or securities are not deposited with
8 the court clerk on or before the ninety-first day after the date of
9 service of the order and judgment of forfeiture from the court
10 clerk, or mailing of the notice if no receipt is made, then the
11 court clerk shall notify the Insurance Commissioner by sending a
12 certified copy of the order and judgment of forfeiture and proof
13 that the bondsman and, if applicable, the insurer have been notified
14 by mail with return receipt requested.

15 4. The Insurance Commissioner shall:

- 16 a. in the case of a surety bondsman, immediately cancel
17 the license privilege and authorization of the insurer
18 to do business within the State of Oklahoma and cancel
19 the appointment of all surety bondsman agents of the
20 insurer who are licensed by Section 1301 et seq. of
21 this title, and
22 b. in the case of a professional bondsman, withdraw the
23 face amount of the forfeiture from the deposit
24 provided in Section 1306 of this title. The

1 Commissioner shall then immediately direct the
2 professional bondsman, by mail with return receipt
3 requested, to make additional deposits to bring the
4 original deposit to the required level. Should the
5 professional bondsman, after being notified, fail to
6 make an additional deposit within ten (10) days from
7 the receipt of notice, or mailing of notice if no
8 receipt is made, the license shall be revoked and all
9 sums presently on deposit shall be held by the
10 Commissioner to secure the face amounts of bonds
11 outstanding. Upon release of the bonds, any amount of
12 deposit in excess of the bonds shall be returned to
13 the bondsman; provided, the bail bondsman shall have
14 had notice as required by the court, at the place of
15 the bondsman's business, of the trial or hearing of
16 the defendant named in the bond. The notice shall
17 have been at least ten (10) days before the required
18 appearance of the defendant, unless the appearance is
19 scheduled at the time of execution of the bond.
20 Notwithstanding the foregoing, the bondsman shall be
21 deemed to have had notice of the trial or hearing if
22 the defendant named in the bond shall have been
23 recognized back in open court to appear at a date
24 certain for the trial or hearing.

1 5. If the actions of any bail bondsman force the Insurance
2 Commissioner to withdraw monies, deposited pursuant to Section 1306
3 of this title, to pay past-due executions more than two (2) times in
4 a consecutive twelve-month period, then the license of the
5 professional bondsman shall, in addition to other penalties, be
6 suspended automatically for one (1) year or until a deposit equal to
7 all outstanding forfeitures due is made. The deposit shall be
8 maintained until the Commissioner deems it feasible to reduce the
9 deposit. In no case shall an increased deposit exceed two (2) years
10 unless there is a recurrence of withdrawals as stated herein.

11 E. 1. If the defendant's failure to appear was the result of
12 the defendant's death or of being in the custody of a court other
13 than the court in which the appearance was scheduled, forfeiture
14 shall not lie. Upon proof to the court that the bondsman paid the
15 order and judgment of forfeiture without knowledge that the
16 defendant was deceased or in custody of another court on the day the
17 defendant was due to appear, and all expenses for the defendant's
18 return have been paid by the bondsman, the bondsman's property shall
19 be returned.

20 2. Where the defendant is in the custody of another court, the
21 district attorney or municipal attorney shall direct a hold order to
22 the official, judge, court or law enforcement agent wherein the
23 defendant is in custody; provided, that all expenses accrued as a
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1 result of returning the custody of the defendant shall be borne by
2 the bondsman.

3 F. The district attorney or municipal attorney shall not
4 receive any bonuses or other monies or property for or by reason of
5 services or actions in connection with or collection of bond
6 forfeitures under the provisions of Section 1301 et seq. of this
7 title, except that the court may award a reasonable attorney fee in
8 favor of the prevailing party for legal services in any civil action
9 or proceeding to collect upon a judgment of forfeiture.

10 G. The above procedures shall be subject to the bondsman's
11 rights of appeal. The bondsman or insurer may appeal an order and
12 judgment of forfeiture pursuant to the procedures for appeal set
13 forth in Section 951 et seq. of Title 12 of the Oklahoma Statutes.
14 To stay the execution of the order and judgment of forfeiture, the
15 bondsman or insurer shall comply with the provisions set forth in
16 Section 990.4 of Title 12 of the Oklahoma Statutes.

17 H. For municipal courts of record, the above procedures are
18 criminal in nature and ancillary to the criminal procedures before
19 the trial court and shall be subject to the bondsman's right of
20 appeal. The bondsman or insurer may appeal an order and judgment of
21 forfeiture by the municipal courts of record to the Court of
22 Criminal Appeals.

23 I. Upon a motion to the court, any person executing a bail bond
24 as principal or as surety shall be exonerated after three (3) years
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1 have elapsed from the posting of the bond, unless a judgment has
2 been entered against the surety or the principal for the forfeiture
3 of the bond, or unless the court grants an extension of the three-
4 year time period for good cause shown, upon motion by the
5 prosecuting attorney.

6 SECTION 3. This act shall become effective November 1, 2024.

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