An Act

ENROLLED SENATE
BILL NO. 877

By: Simpson, Dossett and Pittman of the Senate

and

Roberts (Dustin) and Kannady of the House

An Act relating to the Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs; amending 74 O.S. 2011, Section 18c, as amended by Section 695, Chapter 304, O.S.L. 2012 (74 O.S. Supp. 2015, Section 18c), which relates to employment of attorneys; expanding certain exception until certain time; and declaring an emergency.

SUBJECT: Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs

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

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 74 O.S. 2011, Section 18c, as amended by Section 695, Chapter 304, O.S.L. 2012 (74 O.S. Supp. 2015, Section 18c), is amended to read as follows:

Section 18c. A. 1. Except as otherwise provided by this subsection, no state officer, board or commission shall have authority to employ or appoint attorneys to advise or represent said officer, board or commission in any matter.

2. The provisions of this subsection shall not apply to the Corporation Commission, the Council on Law Enforcement Education and Training, the Consumer Credit Commission, the Board of Managers of the State Insurance Fund, the Oklahoma Tax Commission, the Commissioners of the Land Office, the Oklahoma Public Welfare Commission also known as the Commission for Human Services, the State Board of Corrections, the Oklahoma Health Care Authority, the Department of Public Safety, the Oklahoma State Bureau of Narcotics

and Dangerous Drugs Control, the Alcoholic Beverage Laws Enforcement Commission, the Transportation Commission, the Oklahoma Energy Resources Board, the Oklahoma Merit Protection Commission, the Office of Management and Enterprise Services, the Oklahoma Water Resources Board, the Department of Labor, the Department of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry, the Northeast Oklahoma Public Facilities Authority, the Oklahoma Firefighters Pension and Retirement System, the Oklahoma Public Employees Retirement System, the Uniform Retirement System for Justices and Judges, the Oklahoma Conservation Commission, the Office of Juvenile Affairs, ~~and~~ the State Board of Pharmacy, and until January 1, 2022, the Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs.

3. The provisions of paragraph 2 of this subsection shall not be construed to authorize the Office of Juvenile Affairs to employ any attorneys that are not specifically authorized by law.

4. All the legal duties of such officer, board or commission shall devolve upon and are hereby vested in the Attorney General; provided that:

a. the Governor shall have authority to employ special counsel to protect the rights or interest of the state as provided in Section 6 of this title, and

b. liquidation agents of banks shall have the authority to employ local counsel, with the consent of the Bank Commissioner and the Attorney General and the approval of the district court.

B. At the request of any state officer, board or commission, except the Corporation Commission, the Board of Managers of the CompSource Oklahoma, Oklahoma Tax Commission and the Commissioners of the Land Office, the Grand River Dam Authority, the Oklahoma State Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs Control, the Alcoholic Beverage Laws Enforcement Commission, the Oklahoma Firefighters Pension and Retirement System, the Oklahoma Public Employees Retirement System, the Uniform Retirement System for Justices and Judges and the Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commission, the Attorney General shall defend any action in which they may be sued in their official capacity. At the request of any such state officer, board or commission, the Attorney General shall have

authority to institute suits in the name of the State of Oklahoma on their relation, if after investigation the Attorney General is convinced there is sufficient legal merit to justify the action.

C. Any officer, board, or commission which has the authority to employ or appoint attorneys may request that the Attorney General defend any action arising pursuant to the provisions of The Governmental Tort Claims Act.

D. Nothing in this section shall be construed to repeal or affect the provisions of the statutes of this state pertaining to attorneys and legal advisors of the several commissions and departments of state specified in subsection B of this section, and all acts and parts of acts pertaining thereto shall be and remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 2. 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, 2016.

Presiding Officer of the Senate

Passed the House of Representatives the 4th day of April, 2016.

Presiding Officer of the House of Representatives

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Received by the Office of the Governor this 5th day of April, 2016, at 3:30 o'clock P M.

By: Audrey Rockwell

Approved by the Governor of the State of Oklahoma this 11th day of April, 2016, at 4:31 o'clock P M.

Governor of the State of Oklahoma

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Received by the Office of the Secretary of State this 11th day of April, 2016, at 5:05 o'clock P. M.

By: Chris Benge