

By: Moody

H.B. No. 473

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT
2 relating to the employment of certain peace officers, detention
3 officers, county jailers, or firefighters who are injured in the
4 course and scope of duty.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

6 SECTION 1. Chapter 614, Government Code, is amended by
7 adding Subchapter L to read as follows:

8 SUBCHAPTER L. RESTRICTION ON DISCHARGE AFTER CERTAIN INJURIES

9 Sec. 614.201. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

10 (1) "County jailer" has the meaning assigned by
11 Section 1701.001, Occupations Code.

12 (2) "Detention officer" has the meaning assigned by
13 Section 411.048(a).

14 (3) "Employer" means the governmental entity that
15 employs or appoints a peace officer, detention officer, county
16 jailer, or firefighter or that the officer, jailer, or firefighter
17 is elected to serve.

18 (4) "Firefighter" means a member of a fire department
19 who performs a function listed in Section 143.003(4), Local
20 Government Code, without regard to whether the individual is
21 subject to a civil service system or program.

22 (5) "Maximum medical improvement" has the meaning
23 assigned by Section 401.011(30), Labor Code.

24 (6) "Peace officer" means an individual elected,

1 appointed, or employed to serve as a peace officer for a
2 governmental entity under Article 2.12, Code of Criminal Procedure,
3 or other law.

4 Sec. 614.202. APPLICABILITY. This subchapter does not apply
5 to an employer that is a municipality that has adopted Chapter 143,
6 Local Government Code.

7 Sec. 614.203. RESTRICTION ON DISCHARGE. (a) This section
8 applies to a peace officer, detention officer, county jailer, or
9 firefighter who sustains a compensable injury under Title 5, Labor
10 Code.

11 (b) An employer may not discharge, indefinitely suspend, or
12 terminate from employment a peace officer, detention officer,
13 county jailer, or firefighter described by Subsection (a) based on
14 the person's inability to perform the duties for which the person
15 was elected, appointed, or employed because of the person's injury
16 before the person is certified as having reached maximum medical
17 improvement.

18 Sec. 614.204. REMEDIES; BURDEN OF PROOF. (a) An employer
19 who violates Section 614.203 is liable for reasonable damages
20 incurred by the peace officer, detention officer, county jailer, or
21 firefighter as a result of the violation.

22 (b) A peace officer, detention officer, county jailer, or
23 firefighter discharged, indefinitely suspended, or terminated from
24 employment in violation of Section 614.203 is entitled to
25 reinstatement in the former position of employment.

26 (c) The burden of proof in a proceeding under this section
27 is on the peace officer, detention officer, county jailer, or

1 firefighter.

2 (d) Sovereign immunity to suit and from liability is waived
3 and abolished to the extent of liability created by this section,
4 and a current or former peace officer, detention officer, county
5 jailer, or firefighter may sue an employer for:

6 (1) damages allowed by Subsection (a); and

7 (2) reinstatement authorized under Subsection (b).

8 SECTION 2. This Act applies only to a discharge, indefinite
9 suspension, or termination from employment in violation of Section
10 614.203, Government Code, as added by this Act, that occurs on or
11 after the effective date of this Act. A discharge, indefinite
12 suspension, or termination that occurs before the effective date of
13 this Act is governed by the law in effect on the date the discharge,
14 indefinite suspension, or termination occurred, and the former law
15 is continued in effect for that purpose.

16 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2017.