88R22494 MCK-F

By:  Turner H.B. No. 2927

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to quarantine leave for certain public safety employees.

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

SECTION 1.  Chapter 607, Government Code, is amended by adding Subchapter D to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER D. QUARANTINE LEAVE FOR CERTAIN PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES

Sec. 607.151.  DEFINITIONS. (a) In this subchapter:

(1)  "Detention officer" means an individual employed by the state to ensure the safekeeping of prisoners and the security of a state penal institution in this state.

(2)  "Emergency medical technician" means an individual who is:

(A)  certified as an emergency medical technician under Chapter 773, Health and Safety Code; and

(B)  employed by the state.

(3)  "Firefighter" means a paid employee of the state who:

(A)  holds a position that requires substantial knowledge of firefighting;

(B)  has met the requirements for certification by the Texas Commission on Fire Protection under Chapter 419; and

(C)  performs a function listed in Section 143.003(4)(A), Local Government Code.

(4)  "Health authority" has the meaning assigned by Section 121.021, Health and Safety Code.

(5)  "Ordered to quarantine or isolate" means any circumstance in which a person is not permitted to continue working due to:

(A)  a written or verbal directive by a health authority or the employee's supervisor ordering the person to refrain from reporting to duty after displaying symptoms of a communicable disease; or

(B)  a written or verbal directive by a health authority or the employee's supervisor ordering the person to refrain from reporting to duty after being exposed to a communicable disease that is a presumptive illness under this chapter.

(6)  "Peace officer" means an individual described by Article 2.12, Code of Criminal Procedure, who is elected for, employed by, or appointed by the state.

(b)  Notwithstanding Section 607.001, in this subchapter, "public safety employee" means a detention officer, emergency medical technician, firefighter, or peace officer.

Sec. 607.152.   PAID QUARANTINE LEAVE FOR CERTAIN PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES. (a) A state agency that employs public safety employees shall develop and implement a paid quarantine leave policy for public safety employees who are ordered to quarantine or isolate.

(b)  A paid quarantine leave policy must provide that a public safety employee ordered to quarantine or isolate receive:

(1)  all employment benefits and compensation, including leave accrual, pension benefits, and health benefit plan benefits for the duration of the leave; and

(2)  reimbursement for reasonable costs related to the quarantine, including lodging, medical, and transportation.

(c)  The state agency may not reduce a public safety employee's sick leave balance, vacation leave balance, or other paid leave balance in connection with paid quarantine leave taken in accordance with a policy adopted under this section.

SECTION 2.  Section 180.008(a), Local Government Code, as added by Chapter 685 (H.B. 2073), Acts of the 87th Legislature, Regular Session, 2021, is amended by adding Subdivision (4-a) to read as follows:

(4-a)  "Ordered to quarantine or isolate" means any circumstance in which a person is not permitted to continue working due to:

(A)  a written or verbal directive by a health authority or the employee's supervisor ordering the person to refrain from reporting to duty after displaying symptoms of a communicable disease; or

(B)  a written or verbal directive by a health authority or the employee's supervisor ordering the person to refrain from reporting to duty after being exposed to a communicable disease that is a presumptive illness under this chapter.

SECTION 3.  Section 180.008(b), Local Government Code, as added by Chapter 685 (H.B. 2073), Acts of the 87th Legislature, Regular Session, 2021, is amended to read as follows:

(b)  The governing body of a political subdivision shall develop and implement a paid quarantine leave policy for fire fighters, peace officers, detention officers, and emergency medical technicians who are employed by, appointed by, or elected for the political subdivision and ordered to quarantine or isolate [~~due to a possible or known exposure to a communicable disease while on duty~~].

SECTION 4.  This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2023.