By the Committees on Community Affairs; and Judiciary; and Senator Hays

578-04258-11 2011594c2

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to sovereign immunity; amending s. 768.28, F.S.; requiring that a claim in a wrongful death case be presented to the Department of Financial Services within 2 years after the claim accrues; providing that failure of the Department of Financial Services or the appropriate agency to make final disposition of a claim for wrongful death within 90 days after it is filed is deemed to be a final denial of the claim; tolling the statute of limitations for the period of time taken by the Department of Financial Services or other agency to deny a medical malpractice or wrongful death claim; providing that actions for wrongful death against the state or one of its agencies or subdivisions must be brought within the period applicable to actions brought against other defendants; specifying applicability to workers' compensation claims; providing for the application of the act to causes of action accruing on or after the effective date; providing an effective date.

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Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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Section 1. Paragraphs (a) and (d) of subsection (6) and subsection (14) of section 768.28, Florida Statutes, are amended, and subsection (21) is added to that section, to read:

768.28 Waiver of sovereign immunity in tort actions; recovery limits; limitation on attorney fees; statute of limitations; exclusions; indemnification; risk management

578-04258-11 2011594c2

programs.-

(6) (a) An action may not be instituted on a claim against the state or one of its agencies or subdivisions unless the claimant presents the claim in writing to the appropriate agency, and also, except as to any claim against a municipality or the Florida Space Authority, presents such claim in writing to the Department of Financial Services, within 3 years after such claim accrues and the Department of Financial Services or the appropriate agency denies the claim in writing; except that, if:

- 1. Such claim is for contribution pursuant to s. 768.31, it must be so presented within 6 months after the judgment against the tortfeasor seeking contribution has become final by lapse of time for appeal or after appellate review or, if there is no such judgment, within 6 months after the tortfeasor seeking contribution has either discharged the common liability by payment or agreed, while the action is pending against her or him, to discharge the common liability; or
- 2. Such action is for wrongful death, the claimant must present the claim in writing to the Department of Financial Services within 2 years after the claim accrues.
- (d) For purposes of this section, complete, accurate, and timely compliance with the requirements of paragraph (c) shall occur prior to settlement payment, close of discovery or commencement of trial, whichever is sooner; provided the ability to plead setoff is not precluded by the delay. This setoff shall apply only against that part of the settlement or judgment payable to the claimant, minus claimant's reasonable attorney's fees and costs. Incomplete or inaccurate disclosure of unpaid

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578-04258-11 2011594c2

adjudicated claims due the state, its agency, officer, or subdivision, may be excused by the court upon a showing by the preponderance of the evidence of the claimant's lack of knowledge of an adjudicated claim and reasonable inquiry by, or on behalf of, the claimant to obtain the information from public records. Unless the appropriate agency had actual notice of the information required to be disclosed by paragraph (c) in time to assert a setoff, an unexcused failure to disclose shall, upon hearing and order of court, cause the claimant to be liable for double the original undisclosed judgment and, upon further motion, the court shall enter judgment for the agency in that amount. Except as provided otherwise in this subsection, the failure of the Department of Financial Services or the appropriate agency to make final disposition of a claim within 6 months after it is filed shall be deemed a final denial of the claim for purposes of this section. For purposes of this subsection, in medical malpractice actions and in wrongful death actions, the failure of the Department of Financial Services or the appropriate agency to make final disposition of a claim within 90 days after it is filed shall be deemed a final denial of the claim. The statute of limitations for medical malpractice actions and wrongful death actions is tolled for the period of time taken by the Department of Financial Services or the appropriate agency to deny the claim. The provisions of this subsection do not apply to such claims as may be asserted by counterclaim pursuant to s. 768.14.

(14) Every claim against the state or one of its agencies or subdivisions for damages for a negligent or wrongful act or omission pursuant to this section shall be forever barred unless

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578-04258-11 2011594c2

the civil action is commenced by filing a complaint in the court of appropriate jurisdiction within 4 years after such claim accrues; except that an action for contribution must be commenced within the limitations provided in s. 768.31(4), and an action for damages arising from medical malpractice or wrongful death must be commenced within the limitations for such actions an action in s. 95.11(4).

(21) No provision of this section, or any other provision of state law, waives the immunity of the state or any of its agencies with regard to claims brought under s. 440.205. Claims brought against the state or any of its agencies pursuant to s. 440.205 must be brought in compliance with this section.

Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2011, and applies to causes of action accruing on or after that date.