

**The Florida Senate**  
**BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

---

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Governmental Oversight and Accountability

---

BILL: SB 1352

INTRODUCER: Senator Young

SUBJECT: Division of Administrative Hearings

DATE: March 31, 2017

REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Ferrin	Ferrin	GO	<b>Pre-meeting</b>
2.			JU	
3.			AP	

---

**I. Summary:**

SB 1352 changes the employment classification for an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) serving in the Division of Administrative Hearings (DOAH) from Career Service to Select Exempt Service.

The bill also requires the DOAH director to be a full time ALJ appointed by the Governor from a list of individuals nominated by a statewide nominating commission. The bill specifies the composition of the commission and the process by which its members must be appointed. Currently, the DOAH director is appointed by the Governor and Cabinet and confirmed by the Senate.

The bill also establishes a process by which the Governor must appoint or reappoint ALJs and specifies the length of ALJs' terms of office. The bill requires DOAH to maintain the 33 ALJ positions as they exist on June 30, 2017, and allows each currently serving ALJ to continue to serve until June 30, 2018. Each ALJ currently serving may be appointed under the reappointment process.

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2017.

**II. Present Situation:**

**Administrative Law Judges**

Administrative Law Judges (ALJs) preside over disputes arising under the Administrative Procedure Act (APA)<sup>1</sup> and other state laws in which the substantial interests of a person are

---

<sup>1</sup> Chapter 120, F.S.

determined by an agency<sup>2</sup> and which involve a disputed issue of material fact.<sup>3</sup> When a state agency proposes to take some action that is adverse to a person, the affected person is normally entitled to request an administrative hearing to determine the matter.<sup>4</sup>

Each ALJ is employed by the Division of Administrative Hearings (DOAH) and must have been a member of The Florida Bar in good standing for the preceding five years.<sup>5</sup> DOAH is administratively housed under the Department of Management Services (DMS); however, DOAH is not subject to the control, supervision, or direction of DMS. The head of DOAH is a director who also serves as chief ALJ. The director must be appointed by the Administration Commission<sup>6</sup> and confirmed by the Senate. The director and any deputy chief ALJ must possess the same minimum qualifications as the ALJs employed by DOAH.<sup>7</sup>

### Career Service System

Chapter 110, F.S., establishes the state's personnel management system. The system must provide means to recruit, select, train, develop, and maintain an effective and responsible workforce and must include policies and procedures for employee hiring and advancement, training and career development, position classification, salary administration, benefits, discipline, discharge, employee performance evaluations, affirmative action, and other related activities.<sup>8</sup>

DMS is charged with establishing and maintaining a classification and compensation program addressing Career Service, Selected Exempt Service, and Senior Management Service positions.<sup>9</sup> The classification of a position determines the types of benefits assigned to the position and the

---

<sup>2</sup> The term "agency" means the following officers or governmental entities if acting pursuant to powers other than those derived from the Constitution:

(a) The Governor; each state officer and state department, and each departmental unit described in s. 20.04, F.S.; the Board of Governors of the State University System; the Commission on Ethics; the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission; a regional water supply authority; a regional planning agency; a multicounty special district, but only if a majority of its governing board is comprised of nonelected persons; educational units; and each entity described in chs. 163, 373, 380, and 582, F.S., and s. 186.504, F.S.

(b) Each officer and governmental entity in the state having statewide jurisdiction or jurisdiction in more than one county.

(c) Each officer and governmental entity in the state having jurisdiction in one county or less than one county, to the extent they are expressly made subject to this chapter by general or special law or existing judicial decisions.

This definition does not include a municipality or legal entity created solely by a municipality; a legal entity or agency created in whole or in part pursuant to part II of ch. 361, F.S.; a metropolitan planning organization created pursuant to s. 339.175, F.S.; a separate legal or administrative entity created pursuant to s. 339.175, F.S., of which a metropolitan planning organization is a member; an expressway authority pursuant to ch. 348, F.S. or any transportation authority or commission under ch. 343, F.S., or ch. 349, F.S.; or a legal or administrative entity created by an interlocal agreement pursuant to s. 163.01(7), F.S., unless any party to such agreement is otherwise an agency pursuant to this definition. Section 120.52(1), F.S.  
<sup>3</sup> Section 120.57(1), F.S.

<sup>4</sup> DOAH, *Representing Yourself Before the Division of Administrative Hearings*, <https://www.doah.state.fl.us/ALJ/RepYourself.pdf> (last visited March 28, 2017).

<sup>5</sup> Section 120.65(4), F.S.

<sup>6</sup> The Administration Commission is part of the Executive Office of the Governor and is comprised of the Governor and Cabinet. Section 14.202, F.S.

<sup>7</sup> Section 120.65(1), F.S.

<sup>8</sup> Section 110.105(1), F.S.

<sup>9</sup> Section 110.2035(1), F.S.

compensation and collective bargaining status of the position. A position must be classified as Career Service unless it is specifically exempted by statute.<sup>10</sup>

A Career Service employee who has satisfactorily completed at least a one-year probationary period may only be suspended or dismissed for cause. Cause includes poor performance, negligence, inefficiency or inability to perform assigned duties, insubordination, violation of the provisions of law or agency rules, conduct unbecoming a public employee, misconduct, habitual drug abuse, or conviction of any crime.<sup>11</sup> Career Service employees that have completed the probationary period are also entitled to a grievance process<sup>12</sup> and have the right to appeal a suspension, reduction in pay, demotion, involuntary transfer of more than 50 miles by highway, or dismissal.<sup>13</sup>

Selected Exempt Service is a separate system of personnel administration for positions that are exempt from the Career Service System.<sup>14</sup> Employees in the Selected Exempt Service serve at the pleasure of the agency head and are subject to suspension, dismissal, reduction in pay, demotion, transfer, or other personnel action at the discretion of the agency head.<sup>15</sup> The Selected Exempt Service provides greater pay and benefits overall than are provided for Career Service employees, but less pay and benefits overall than are provided for the Senior Management Service.<sup>16</sup>

Current law exempts from the Career Service System all positions that require as a prerequisite to employment the receipt of a Bachelor of Laws or Juris Doctor degree from a law school accredited by the American Bar Association and thereafter membership in The Florida Bar. However, attorneys who serve as ALJs within DOAH are specifically excluded from this exemption; therefore, they are classified as Career Service employees.<sup>17</sup>

### III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

**Section 1** repeals the provision that excludes attorneys who serve as ALJs from the Career Service exemption, thereby classifying ALJs as Select Exempt Service employees.

**Section 2** requires the director of DOAH to be a full-time ALJ employed by DOAH. The bill also removes the requirement for the director to be confirmed by the Senate.

In addition, the bill requires full-time ALJs to be appointed by the Governor and prohibits an ALJ from engaging in the private practice of law during his or her term of office. The Governor must appoint an ALJ from a list of three individuals nominated by a statewide nominating commission created by the bill.

---

<sup>10</sup> Section 110.205(1), F.S.

<sup>11</sup> Section 110.227(1), F.S.

<sup>12</sup> Section 110.227(4), F.S.

<sup>13</sup> Section 110.227(5) and (6), F.S.

<sup>14</sup> Section 110.602, F.S.

<sup>15</sup> Section 110.604, F.S.

<sup>16</sup> See s. 110.603, F.S.

<sup>17</sup> Section 110.205(2)(r), F.S.

The statewide nominating commission must be composed of the following members:

- Three members appointed by the Governor, at least one of whom must be a minority person as defined in s. 288.703, F.S.;
- Two members appointed by the Attorney General;
- Two members appointed by the Chief Financial Officer; and
- Two members appointed by the Commissioner of Agriculture.

Beginning July 1, 2017, the Governor and each member of the Cabinet must appoint one member to serve a two-year term and appoint the remaining members to serve four-year terms. Thereafter, each member must be appointed for a four-year term. If a vacancy occurs on the nominating commission, it must be filled by the original appointing authority for the unexpired balance of the term.

The bill prohibits an attorney who appears before any ALJ more than four times a year from serving on the statewide nominating commission. The bill also requires the meetings and determinations of the nominating commission as to the ALJs to be open to the public.

The bill requires each ALJ to be appointed for a four-year term, but authorizes the Governor to remove an ALJ during their term for cause. Before the expiration of an ALJ's term, the nominating commission must review the ALJ's conduct and determine whether the ALJ's performance is satisfactory. In determining whether an ALJ's performance is satisfactory, the commission must consider the extent to which the ALJ has met the requirements of the APA. The nominating commission must report its findings to the Governor at least six months before the ALJ's term expires. The Governor must review the commission's report and may reappoint the ALJ for an additional four-year term. If the Governor does not reappoint the ALJ, the Governor must inform the nominating commission. The ALJ must continue serving until the Governor appoints a successor. If a vacancy occurs during an ALJ's unexpired term, if the nominating commission does not find the ALJ's performance satisfactory, or if the Governor does not reappoint the ALJ, the Governor must appoint a successor judge for a four-year term in accordance with the process described below.

The Governor must appoint each ALJ by June 30, 2018, for a term beginning on July 1, 2018. For the term beginning on July 1, 2018, ALJs must be appointed in the following manner:

- Eight ALJs appointed to a one-year term;
- Eight ALJs appointed to a two-year term;
- Eight ALJs appointed to a three-year term; and
- Nine ALJs appointed to a four-year term.

Thereafter, each term of office must be four years.

The bill requires DOAH to maintain the 33 ALJ positions in existence as of June 30, 2017, and allows each ALJ to continue to serve until June 30, 2018. The bill specifies that it does not prohibit an ALJ serving before July 1, 2018, from being appointed to serve as an ALJ by the Governor.

**Section 3** provides an effective date of July 1, 2107.

**IV. Constitutional Issues:**

## A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

## B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

## C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

**V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**

## A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

## B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

## C. Government Sector Impact:

The change in the classification of the 33 ALJ positions from Career Service employees to Select Exempt employees will probably have a negative fiscal impact to the state because Select Exempt classification provides greater pay and benefits than Career Service.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

The bill does not address how the statewide nominating commission will be administratively or technically supported, or whether its members will be entitled to per diem or reimbursement for travel expenses.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

This bill substantially amends sections 110.205 and 120.65 of the Florida Statutes.

**IX. Additional Information:**

- A. **Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:**  
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

- B. **Amendments:**

None.

---

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.

---