

SENATE  
STATE OF MINNESOTA  
EIGHTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

S.F. No. 1298

(SENATE AUTHORS: THOMPSON)

DATE	D-PG	OFFICIAL STATUS
04/26/2011	1409	Introduction and first reading Referred to Judiciary and Public Safety
02/27/2012	3952a	Comm report: To pass as amended and re-refer to State Government Innovation and Veterans
03/23/2012	4940a	Comm report: To pass as amended and re-refer to Finance

A bill for an act  
relating to civil actions; awarding fees and expenses to prevailing parties in  
certain actions involving state agencies; amending Minnesota Statutes 2010,  
sections 15.471, subdivision 6, by adding a subdivision; 15.472.  
BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2010, section 15.471, is amended by adding a  
subdivision to read:  
Subd. 3a. **Demand.** "Demand" means the express demand of the agency that led to  
the civil action or contested case proceeding.

Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2010, section 15.471, subdivision 6, is amended to read:  
Subd. 6. **Party.** (a) Except as modified by paragraph (b), "party" means a person  
named or admitted as a party, or seeking and entitled to be admitted as a party, in a court  
action or contested case proceeding, or a person admitted by an administrative law judge  
for limited purposes, and who is:  
(1) an unincorporated business, partnership, corporation, association, or  
organization, having not more than 500 employees at the time the civil action was filed or  
the contested case proceeding was initiated; and  
(2) an unincorporated business, partnership, corporation, association, or organization  
whose annual revenues did not exceed ~~\$7,000,000~~ \$30,000,000 at the time the civil action  
was filed or the contested case proceeding was initiated.  
(b) "Party" also includes a partner, officer, shareholder, member, or owner of an  
entity described in paragraph (a), clauses (1) and (2).

(c) "Party" does not include a person providing services pursuant to licensure or reimbursement on a cost basis by the Department of Health or the Department of Human Services, when that person is named or admitted or seeking to be admitted as a party in a matter which involves the licensing or reimbursement rates, procedures, or methodology applicable to those services.

Sec. 3. Minnesota Statutes 2010, section 15.472, is amended to read:

**15.472 FEES AND EXPENSES; CIVIL ACTION OR CONTESTED CASE PROCEEDING INVOLVING STATE.**

(a) If a prevailing party other than the state, in a civil action or contested case proceeding other than a tort action, brought by or against the state, shows that the position of the state was not substantially justified, the court or administrative law judge shall award fees and other expenses to the party unless special circumstances make an award unjust.

(b) If, in a civil action or contested case proceeding arising from a state agency action to enforce a party's compliance with a statutory or regulatory requirement, the demand by the agency is substantially in excess of the final decision in the contested case or judicial proceeding and is unreasonable when compared with that decision under the facts and circumstances of the case, the party shall be awarded the fees and other expenses related to defending against the excessive demand, unless the party has committed a willful violation of law or engaged in conduct that unduly and unreasonably protracted the final resolution of the matter in controversy or special circumstances make an award unjust.

~~(b)~~ (c) A party seeking an award of fees and other expenses shall, within 30 days of final judgment in the action, submit to the court or administrative law judge an application of fees and other expenses which shows that the party is a prevailing party and is eligible to receive an award, and the amount sought, including an itemized statement from any attorney or expert witness representing or appearing on behalf of the party stating the actual time expended and the rate at which fees and other expenses were computed. The party shall also allege that the position of the state was not substantially justified.

~~(c)~~ (d) The court or administrative law judge may reduce the amount to be awarded under this section, or deny an award, to the extent that the prevailing party during the proceedings engaged in conduct that unduly and unreasonably protracted the final resolution of the matter in controversy. The decision of an administrative law judge under this section must be made a part of the record containing the final decision of the agency and must include written findings and conclusions.

~~(d)~~ (e) This section does not preclude a party from recovering costs, disbursements, fees, and expenses under other applicable law.

3.1       Sec. 4. CITATION.

3.2               This act may be cited as the "Small Business Bill of Rights - Regulatory Fairness  
3.3 Act."

3.4       Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE; APPLICATION.

3.5               This act is effective August 1, 2012, and applies to administrative proceedings or  
3.6 civil actions commenced on or after that date.