

By: Representative Watson

To: Insurance

HOUSE BILL NO. 725

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 71-3-51, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
2 PROVIDE THAT DECISIONS MADE BY THE WORKERS' COMPENSATION
3 COMMISSION MAY BE APPEALED DIRECTLY TO THE COURT OF APPEALS; TO
4 AMEND SECTION 9-4-3, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, IN CONFORMITY
5 THERETO; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

7 **SECTION 1.** Section 71-3-51, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
8 amended as follows:

9 71-3-51. The final award of the commission shall be
10 conclusive and binding unless either party to the controversy
11 shall, within thirty (30) days from the date of its filing in the
12 office of the commission and notification to the parties, appeal
13 therefrom to the Court of Appeals.

14 Such appeal may be taken by filing notice of appeal with the
15 commission, whereupon the commission shall under its certificate
16 transmit to the Court of Appeals all documents and papers on file
17 in the matter, together with a transcript of the evidence, the
18 findings, and award, which shall thereupon become the record of
19 the cause. Appeals shall be considered only upon the record as
20 made before the commission. The Court of Appeals shall always be
21 deemed open for hearing of such appeals * * *. The Court of
22 Appeals shall review all questions of law and of fact. If no
23 prejudicial error be found, the matter shall be affirmed and
24 remanded to the commission for enforcement. If prejudicial error
25 be found, the same shall be reversed and the Court of Appeals
26 shall enter such judgment or award as the commission should have
27 entered. Appeals may be taken from the Court of Appeals to the
28 Supreme Court in the manner as now required by law. An appeal

29 from the commission to the Court of Appeals shall not act as a
30 supersedeas unless the court to which such appeal is directed
31 shall so direct, and then upon such terms as such court shall
32 direct.

33 No controversy shall be heard by the commission or an award
34 of compensation made therein while the same matter is pending
35 either before a federal court or in any court in this state.

36 Any award of compensation made by the Court of Appeals and
37 appealed to the Supreme Court shall bear the same interest and
38 penalties as do other judgments awarded in the Court of Appeals.

39 This section shall stand repealed on July 1, 2007.

40 **SECTION 2.** Section 9-4-3, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
41 amended as follows:

42 9-4-3. (1) The Court of Appeals shall have the power to
43 determine or otherwise dispose of any appeal or other proceeding
44 assigned to it by the Supreme Court.

45 Except for appeals of decisions of the Workers' Compensation
46 Commission, the jurisdiction of the Court of Appeals is limited to
47 those matters which have been assigned to it by the Supreme Court.

48 The Supreme Court shall prescribe rules for the assignment of
49 matters to the Court of Appeals. These rules may provide for the
50 selective assignment of individual cases and may provide for the
51 assignment of cases according to subject matter or other general
52 criteria. However, the Supreme Court shall retain appeals in
53 cases imposing the death penalty, or cases involving utility
54 rates, annexations, bond issues, election contests, or a statute
55 held unconstitutional by the lower court.

56 (2) Decisions of the Court of Appeals are final and are not
57 subject to review by the Supreme Court, except by writ of
58 certiorari. The Supreme Court may grant certiorari review only by
59 the affirmative vote of four (4) of its members. At any time
60 before final decision by the Court of Appeals, the Supreme Court

61 may, by order, transfer to the Supreme Court any case pending
62 before the Court of Appeals.

63 (3) The Court of Appeals shall have jurisdiction to issue
64 writs of habeas corpus, mandamus, quo warranto, certiorari,
65 prohibition or any other process when this may be necessary in any
66 case assigned to it by the Supreme Court.

67 (4) The Court of Appeals shall issue a decision in every
68 case heard before the Court of Appeals within two hundred seventy
69 (270) days after the final briefs have been filed with the court.

70 (5) The Supreme Court shall issue a decision in every case
71 within its original jurisdiction, including all direct and
72 post-conviction collateral relief appeals or applications in cases
73 imposing the death penalty, within two hundred seventy (270) days
74 after the final briefs have been filed with the court. The
75 Supreme Court shall issue a decision in every case received on
76 certiorari from the Court of Appeals within one hundred eighty
77 (180) days after the final briefs have been filed with the court.

78 (6) This section shall stand repealed on July 1, 2007.

79 **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
80 and after July 1, 2005.