

SECOND REGULAR SESSION
HOUSE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR
SENATE BILL NO. 807
92ND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Reported from the Committee on Judiciary May 6, 2004, with recommendation that the House Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 807 Do Pass.

STEPHEN S. DAVIS, Chief Clerk

3142L.02C

AN ACT

To amend chapter 537, RSMo, by adding thereto one new section relating to civil actions.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the state of Missouri, as follows:

Section A. Chapter 537, RSMo, is amended by adding thereto one new section, to be known as section 537.800, to read as follows:

537.800. 1. Any action seeking money damages against a person for conduct or speech undertaken or made in connection with a public hearing or public meeting, in a quasi-judicial proceeding before a tribunal or decision-making body of the state or any political subdivision of the state is subject to a special motion to dismiss, motion for judgment on the pleadings, or motion for summary judgment that shall be considered by the court on a priority or expedited basis to ensure the early consideration of the issues raised by the motion and to prevent the unnecessary expense of litigation. Upon the filing of any special motion described in this subsection, all discovery shall be suspended pending a decision on the motion by the court and the exhaustion of all appeals regarding the special motion.

2. If the rights afforded by this section are raised as an affirmative defense and if a court grants a motion to dismiss, a motion for judgment on the pleadings or a motion for summary judgment filed within ninety days of the filing of the moving party's answer, the court shall award reasonable attorney fees and costs incurred by the moving party in defending the action. If the court finds that a special motion to dismiss or motion for summary judgment is frivolous or solely intended to cause unnecessary delay, the court shall award costs and reasonable attorney fees to the party prevailing on the motion.

3. As used in this section, a "public meeting in a quasi-judicial proceeding" means

19 **and includes any meeting established and held by a state or local governmental entity,**
20 **including without limitations, meetings or presentations before state, county, city, town or**
21 **village councils, planning commissions, review boards or commissions.**

22 **4. Nothing in this section limits or prohibits the exercise of a right or remedy of a**
23 **party granted pursuant to another constitutional, statutory, common law or administrative**
24 **provision, including civil actions for defamation.**

25 **5. If any provision of this section or the application of any provision of this section**
26 **to a person or circumstance is held invalid, the invalidity shall not affect other provisions**
27 **or applications of this section that can be given effect without the invalid provision or**
28 **application, and to this end the provisions of this section are severable.**

29 **6. The provisions of this section shall apply to all causes of actions.**