

SENATE BILL 1823

By Johnson

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 14,
relative to COVID-19.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 14, Chapter 6, is amended by adding the following as a new section:

(a) An employer that requires a person to provide proof of vaccination or requires an individual receive the COVID-19 vaccine must grant the person an exemption to the policy if:

(1) The person provides a valid reason for a medical exemption supported by a statement that has been signed and dated by a licensed healthcare provider; or

(2) The person states that the person has a religious belief which prevents the person from complying with the policy.

(b) An employer described in subsection (a) shall not:

(1) Take longer than two (2) business days to grant or deny the person's request for an exemption;

(2) Deny a request for an exemption without a written statement explaining why the request was denied;

(3) Discharge, threaten to discharge, or reduce the compensation of a person who requests and is granted an exemption; or

(4) For an exemption based on religious belief pursuant to subdivision (a)(2), require the person to provide further proof beyond the person's initial statement to be granted an exemption.

(c) A violation of this section is punishable by a civil penalty of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000).

(d) The attorney general and reporter shall establish a process by which reports of violations of this section may be reported. The attorney general and reporter may institute a proceeding involving alleged violations of this section by bringing an action in the Davidson County chancery court or the chancery court in the county where the employer is located.

(e) Notwithstanding § 14-6-102, an employer is not exempt from the requirements of this section.

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 14, Chapter 4, is amended by adding the following as a new section:

Notwithstanding title 63 or title 68 to the contrary, a licensed healthcare provider who provides a person with a signed statement that states the person should be exempted from a mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policy and specifies the recognized clinical reasons for the exemption, is:

- (1) Acting within the provider's authorized scope of practice;
- (2) Immune from civil liability; and
- (3) Immune from disciplinary action by a health-related board.

SECTION 3. This act takes effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.