

As Passed by the House

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H. B. No. 233

REPRESENTATIVES Womer Benjamin, Willamowski, Latta, Seitz, Manning,
Salerno, Young

A B I L L

To amend section 2721.16 of the Revised Code to 1
exclude from the prohibition against awarding 2
attorney's fees in declaratory relief claims the 3
award of attorney's fees to a fiduciary, 4
beneficiary, or other interested party to be paid 5
out of trust or estate property in accordance with 6
equitable principles. 7

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

Section 1. That section 2721.16 of the Revised Code be 8
amended to read as follows: 9

Sec. 2721.16. (A)(1) A court of record shall not award 10
attorney's fees to any party on a claim or proceeding for 11
declaratory relief under this chapter unless a any of the 12
following applies: 13

(a) A section of the Revised Code explicitly authorizes a 14
court of record to award attorney's fees on a claim for 15
declaratory relief under this chapter ~~or unless an.~~ 16

(b) An award of attorney's fees is authorized by section 17
2323.51 of the Revised Code, by the Civil Rules, or by an award of 18
punitive or exemplary damages against the party ordered to pay 19

attorney's fees. References 20

(c) Regardless of whether a claim for declaratory relief is 21
granted under this chapter, a court of record awards attorney's 22
fees to a fiduciary, beneficiary, or other interested party, the 23
attorney's fees are to be paid out of trust property, estate 24
property, or other property that is the subject of a fiduciary 25
relationship and that is involved in that claim or proceeding for 26
declaratory relief, and the attorney's fees are awarded in 27
accordance with equitable principles that permit recovery of 28
attorney's fees incurred for services that are beneficial to the 29
trust or estate. 30

(2) References in another section of the Revised Code to an 31
award of costs or expenses incurred in connection with an action 32
or proceeding does not authorize an award of attorney's fees for 33
purposes of ~~this~~ division (A)(1) of this section. 34

(B) Consistent with section 2721.13 of the Revised Code, the 35
provisions of this section are remedial in nature. Notwithstanding 36
any provision of the Revised Code in existence on the day 37
immediately prior to ~~the effective date of this section~~ September 38
24, 1999, notwithstanding any judicial construction prior to ~~the~~ 39
~~effective date of this section~~ September 24, 1999, of a statutory 40
provision of that nature, notwithstanding the holding in any 41
decision of a court of this state, other than a decision based on 42
equitable principles described in division (A)(1)(c) of this 43
section, that authorized an award of attorney's fees to a party to 44
a civil action or proceeding based on common law grounds rather 45
than a statutory authorization of the general assembly, regardless 46
of the date upon which a cause of action accrued that pertains to 47
an action or proceeding in which declaratory relief is sought 48
under this chapter, and regardless of who is the plaintiff or the 49
defendant in an action or proceeding in which declaratory relief 50
is sought under this chapter, division (A) of this section shall 51

apply in connection with both of the following: 52

(1) An action or proceeding that is commenced on or after ~~the~~ 53
~~effective date of this section~~ September 24, 1999, and that seeks 54
declaratory relief under this chapter; 55

(2) An action or proceeding that was commenced prior to ~~the~~ 56
~~effective date of this section~~ September 24, 1999, that is pending 57
in a court of record on that date, and that seeks declaratory 58
relief under this chapter. 59

Section 2. That existing section 2721.16 of the Revised Code 60
is hereby repealed. 61