

SENATE BILL No. 431

AN ACT concerning the probate code; relating to the increase in allowances for spouses and minor children; amending K.S.A. 59-403, 59-6a215 and 59-2287 and K.S.A. 2007 Supp. 59-1507b and repealing the existing sections.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Kansas:

Section 1. K.S.A. 59-403 is hereby amended to read as follows: 59-403. When a resident of the state dies, testate or intestate, the surviving spouse shall be allowed, for the benefit of such spouse and the decedent's minor children during the period of their minority, from the personal or real property of which the decedent was possessed or to which the decedent was entitled at the time of death, the following:

(a) The wearing apparel, family library, pictures, musical instruments, furniture and household goods, utensils and implements used in the home, one automobile, and provisions and fuel on hand necessary for the support of the spouse and minor children for one year.

(b) A reasonable allowance of not more than ~~\$35,000~~ \$50,000 in money or other personal or real property at its appraised value in full or part payment thereof, with the exact amount of such allowance to be determined and ordered by the court, after taking into account the condition of the estate of the decedent.

The property shall not be liable for the payment of any of decedent's debts or other demands against the decedent's estate, except liens thereon existing at the time of the decedent's death. If there are no minor children, the property shall belong to the spouse; if there are minor children and no spouse, it shall belong to the minor children. The selection shall be made by the spouse, if living, otherwise by the guardian of the minor children. In case any of the decedent's minor children are not living with the surviving spouse, the court may make such division as the court deems equitable.

Sec. 2. K.S.A. 59-6a215 is hereby amended to read as follows: 59-6a215. A surviving spouse is entitled to the homestead, or in lieu thereof the surviving spouse may elect to receive a homestead allowance of ~~\$35,000~~ \$50,000. The homestead or homestead allowance is exempt from and has priority over all demands against the estate. The homestead or homestead allowance is in addition to any share passing to the surviving spouse by way of elective share.

Sec. 3. K.S.A. 2007 Supp. 59-1507b is hereby amended to read as follows: 59-1507b. When a resident of the state dies, whether testate or intestate, if the total assets of the estate of the decedent subject to probate do not exceed ~~\$20,000~~ \$40,000 in value, any personal property of whatever nature transferable to the decedent's estate by any entity or person shall be transferred to the successor or successors of the decedent, if entitled thereto by will or by intestate succession, without having been granted letters of administration or letters testamentary, upon such successor's or successors' furnishing the entity or person with an affidavit showing entitlement thereto. Transfer of such personal property to the successor or successors shall be deemed to be a transfer to the personal representative of the decedent, and the receipt of the successor or successors shall constitute a full discharge and release from any further claim for such transfer to the same extent as if the transfer had been made to an executor or administrator of the decedent's estate. The affidavit required herein shall be deemed sufficient if in substantial compliance with the form set forth by the judicial council.

Sec. 4. K.S.A. 59-2287 is hereby amended to read as follows: 59-2287. (a) The district court, in its discretion, may refuse to grant letters in the following cases:

(1) When the value of real or personal property owned by the decedent is not greater in amount than is allowed by law as exempt property and the allowance to the surviving spouse or minor children under K.S.A. 59-403 and amendments thereto.

(2) When the real and personal estate of the decedent does not exceed ~~\$35,000~~ \$50,000 and the estate is not subject to allowances pursuant to K.S.A. 59-403 and amendments thereto or such allowances are waived, any heir, devisee, legatee, creditor or other interested person may petition for refusal of letters by giving bond in the sum of not less than the value of the estate. Such bond shall be approved by the district court and conditioned upon the creditor's or heir's assuming the obligation to pay, so far as the assets of the estate will permit, the debts of the decedent in

the order of their preference, and to distribute the balance, if any, to the persons entitled thereto under the law, except that real estate sold in accordance with this section shall be deemed to have marketable title as ordered by the court, and no creditor, heir or other person shall be deemed to have an interest after passage of six months following the date of death.

(b) Proof may be allowed by or on behalf of the surviving spouse or minor children before the district court of the value and nature of the estate. If the court is satisfied that no estate will be left after allowing to the surviving spouse or minor children their exempt property and statutory allowances, or that the real and personal estate does not exceed ~~\$35,000~~ \$50,000 when the petition is filed by a creditor or heir, the court may order that no letters of administration shall be issued on the estate, unless, upon the petition of other creditors, heirs or parties interested, the existence of other or further property is shown.

(c) When a petition is filed under this section by a surviving spouse or minor children, notice of the proceeding shall be given pursuant to K.S.A. 59-2222 and amendments thereto.

(d) Whenever it appears to the court that further proceedings in the administration of an estate pursuant to this section are unnecessary, and after payment of Kansas inheritance taxes, if any, for decedents dying before July 1, 1998, the court shall enter an order terminating the administration of such estate. Such order shall be made without notice, unless the court otherwise orders, and it shall be to the effect that, unless further estate of the decedent be discovered, all further settlements and other proceedings concerning the estate be dispensed with and that the surviving spouse and minor children are relieved of any further obligations with respect to the estate. If further estate of the decedent is discovered and administration is had on it, such administration shall not abrogate or invalidate or otherwise affect any right, title or interest in property transferred or vested pursuant to this section unless the court, for good cause shown, otherwise determines and orders.

(e) Any will filed pursuant to this section within a period of six months after the death of the testator may be admitted to probate after such six-month period.

Sec. 5. K.S.A. 59-403, 59-6a215 and 59-2287 and K.S.A. 2007 Supp. 59-1507b are hereby repealed.

Sec. 6. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its publication in the statute book.

I hereby certify that the above BILL originated in the SENATE, and passed that body

President of the Senate.

Secretary of the Senate.

Passed the HOUSE _____

Speaker of the House.

Chief Clerk of the House.

APPROVED _____

Governor.