

**Representative David L. Hogue** proposes to substitute the following bill:

**AMENDMENTS TO ATTORNEY LIEN LAW**

2001 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

**Sponsor: David L. Hogue**

**This act modifies the statute relating to attorney's liens. It repeals the original statute and replaces it with provisions allowing for an attorney's lien on work performed, clarifies the circumstances under which it can be filed, specifies what the lien may be applied to, and provides for enforcement of the lien.**

This act affects sections of Utah Code Annotated 1953 as follows:

REPEALS AND REENACTS:

**78-51-41**, as last amended by Chapter 100, Laws of Utah 1989

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*

Section 1. Section **78-51-41** is repealed and reenacted to read:

**78-51-41. Compensation -- Attorney's lien.**

(1) The compensation of an attorney is governed by agreement between the attorney and a client, express or implied, which is not restrained by law.

(2) An attorney shall have a lien for the balance of compensation due from a client on any moneys or property owned by the client that is the subject of or connected with work performed for the client, including, but not limited to:

(a) any real or personal property that is the subject of or connected with the work performed for the client;

(b) any funds held by the attorney for the client, including any amounts paid as a retainer to the attorney by the client; and

(c) any settlement, verdict, report, decision, or judgment in the client's favor in any matter or action in which the attorney assisted, including any proceeds derived from the matter or action,



26 whether or not the attorney is employed by the client at the time the settlement, verdict report,  
27 decision, or judgment is obtained.

28 (3) An attorney's lien commences at the time of employment of the attorney by the client.

29 (4) An attorney may enforce a lien under this section by moving to intervene in a pending  
30 legal action in which the attorney has assisted or performed work, or by filing a separate legal  
31 action. An attorney may not move to intervene in an action or file a separate legal action to  
32 enforce a lien before 30 days has expired after a demand for payment has been made and not been  
33 complied with.

34 (5) An attorney may file a notice of lien in a pending legal action in which the attorney has  
35 assisted or performed work for which the attorney has a lien under this section. In addition, an  
36 attorney may file a notice of lien with the county recorder of the county in which real property that  
37 is subject to a lien under this section is located. A notice of lien shall include the following:

38 (a) the name, address, and telephone number of the attorney claiming the lien;

39 (b) the name of the client who is the owner of the property subject to the lien;

40 (c) a verification that the property is the subject of or connected with work performed by  
41 the attorney for the client and that a demand for payment of amounts owed to the attorney for such  
42 work has been made and not been paid within 30 days of such demand;

43 (d) the date the attorney first provided services to the client;

44 (e) a description of the property, sufficient for identification; and

45 (f) the signature of the lien claimant and an acknowledgment or certificate as required  
46 under Title 57, Chapter 3, Recording of Documents.

47 (6) Within 30 days after filing the notice of lien, the attorney shall deliver or mail by  
48 certified mail to the client a copy of the notice of lien.

49 (7) Any person who takes an interest in any property, other than real property, that is  
50 subject to an attorney's lien with actual or constructive knowledge of the attorney's lien, takes their  
51 interest subject to the attorney's lien. An attorney's lien on real property has as its priority the date  
52 and time when a notice of lien is filed with the county recorder of the county in which real property  
53 that is subject to a lien under this section is located.

54 (8) This section does not alter or diminish in any way an attorney's common law retaining  
55 lien rights.

56 (9) This section does not authorize an attorney to have a lien in the representation of a

57 client in a criminal matter or domestic relations matter where a divorce has not been secured  
58 unless:

59 (a) the criminal matter has been concluded or the domestic relations matter has been  
60 concluded by the securing of a divorce or the attorney/client relationship has terminated; and

61 (b) the client has failed to fulfill their financial obligation to the attorney.

62 **Section 2. Coordination clause.**

63 If this bill and S.B. 13, Repeal of Attorneys and Counselors Provisions, both pass, it is the  
64 intent of the Legislature that the Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel in preparing  
65 the database for publication, shall renumber Section 78-51-41 in this bill to Section 38-2-7 as  
66 provided in S.B. 13.