

House Engrossed

employee merit system; dismissal; appeal

State of Arizona  
House of Representatives  
Fifty-seventh Legislature  
Second Regular Session  
2026

# HOUSE BILL 2681

AN ACT

AMENDING SECTION 11-356, ARIZONA REVISED STATUTES; RELATING TO THE COUNTY  
EMPLOYEE MERIT SYSTEM.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

1 Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Arizona:

2 Section 1. Section 11-356, Arizona Revised Statutes, is amended to  
3 read:

4 11-356. Dismissal, suspension or reduction in rank of  
5 employees; appeals; hearings; applicability

6 A. Any officer or employee in the classified civil service may be  
7 dismissed, suspended or reduced in rank or compensation by the appointing  
8 authority after appointment or promotion is complete only by written  
9 order, stating specifically the reasons for the action. The order shall  
10 be filed in the officer's or employee's official county personnel record  
11 and a copy shall be furnished to the person to be dismissed, suspended or  
12 reduced.

13 B. Within ten ~~calendar~~ BUSINESS days after the order is presented  
14 to the officer or employee, the officer or employee may appeal the order  
15 through the clerk of the commission. On the filing of the appeal, the  
16 clerk of the commission shall immediately transmit the order and appeal to  
17 the commission for a hearing.

18 C. Within twenty calendar days after receiving the order and  
19 appeal, the commission shall set a date for a hearing of the appeal. The  
20 appellant may appear personally, produce evidence and have counsel.

21 D. The commission may appoint a hearing officer to conduct the  
22 hearing and take evidence on behalf of the commission. If a hearing  
23 officer is appointed to conduct the hearing, on conclusion of the hearing  
24 the hearing officer shall submit proposed findings of fact, conclusions of  
25 law and a recommendation to the commission.

26 E. Any appeal of a dismissal, suspension or reduction in rank in  
27 which a single hearing officer has been appointed by the commission to  
28 conduct the appeal hearing shall be open to the public unless the hearing  
29 officer determines that good cause exists to close the hearing.

30 F. In any appeal of a dismissal, suspension or reduction in rank in  
31 which a single hearing officer has been appointed to conduct the appeal  
32 hearing, the officer or employee or the employer may request a change of  
33 hearing officer. On the first request of a party, the commission shall  
34 grant the request. The commission may grant all other requests only on a  
35 showing that a fair and impartial hearing cannot be obtained due to the  
36 prejudice of the assigned hearing officer. The chairperson of the  
37 commission shall decide whether a sufficient showing of prejudice has been  
38 made.

39 G. Following the hearing, or if a hearing officer has been  
40 appointed, following receipt of the hearing officer's proposed findings of  
41 fact, conclusions of law and recommendation, the commission shall either  
42 affirm, modify or revoke the order.

1           H. The findings and decision of the commission shall be final and  
2 shall be subject to administrative review as provided in title 12, chapter  
3 7, article 6.

4           I. This section does not apply to furloughs of classified employees  
5 if the furloughs are undertaken to address budget shortfalls or structural  
6 imbalance.