

507C.28 Voidable preferences and liens.

1. *a.* A preference is a transfer of the property of an insurer to or for the benefit of a creditor for an antecedent debt made or suffered by the insurer within one year before the filing of a successful petition for liquidation under this chapter, the effect of which transfer may be to enable the creditor to obtain a greater percentage of this debt than another creditor of the same class would receive. If a liquidation order is entered while the insurer is already subject to a rehabilitation order, then the transfers are preferences if made or suffered within one year before the filing of the successful petition for rehabilitation, or within two years before the filing of the successful petition for liquidation, whichever time is shorter.

b. A preference may be avoided by the liquidator if any of the following exist:

(1) The insurer was insolvent at the time of the transfer.

(2) The transfer was made within four months before the filing of the petition.

(3) At the time the transfer was made, the creditor receiving it or to be benefited by the transfer or the creditor's agent acting with reference to the transfer had reasonable cause to believe that the insurer was insolvent or was about to become insolvent.

(4) The creditor receiving the transfer was an officer, or an employee, attorney or other person who was in fact in a position of comparable influence in the insurer to an officer whether or not the person held the position of an officer, or a shareholder directly or indirectly holding more than five per centum of a class of an equity security issued by the insurer, or other person, firm, corporation, association, or aggregation of persons with whom the insurer did not deal at arm's length.

c. Where the preference is voidable, the liquidator may recover the property. If the property has been converted, the liquidator may recover its value from a person who has received or converted the property. However, if a bona fide purchaser or lienor has given less than fair equivalent value, the purchaser or lienor shall have a lien upon the property to the extent of the consideration actually given. Where a preference by way of lien or security interest is voidable, the court may on due notice order the lien or security interest to be preserved for the benefit of the estate, in which event the lien or title shall pass to the liquidator.

2. *a.* A transfer of property other than real property is made when it becomes perfected so that a subsequent lien obtainable by legal or equitable proceedings on a simple contract could not become superior to the rights of the transferee.

b. A transfer of real property is made when it becomes perfected so that a subsequent bona fide purchaser from the insurer could not obtain rights superior to the rights of the transferee.

c. A transfer which creates an equitable lien is not perfected if there are available means by which a legal lien could be created.

d. A transfer not perfected prior to the filing of a petition for liquidation shall be deemed to be made immediately before the filing of the successful petition.

e. This subsection applies whether or not there are or were creditors who might have obtained liens or persons who might have become bona fide purchasers.

3. *a.* A lien obtainable by legal or equitable proceedings upon a simple contract is one arising in the ordinary course of the proceedings upon the entry or docketing of a judgment or decree, or upon attachment, garnishment, execution, or like process, whether before, upon, or after judgment or decree and whether before or upon levy. It does not include liens which under applicable law are given a special priority over other liens which are prior in time.

b. A lien obtainable by legal or equitable proceedings could become superior to the rights of a transferee, or a purchaser could obtain rights superior to the rights of a transferee within the meaning of subsection 2, if such consequences would follow only from the lien or purchase itself, or from the lien or purchase followed by a step wholly within the control of the respective lienholder or purchaser, with or without the aid of ministerial action by public officials. However, a lien could not become superior and a purchase could not create superior rights for the purpose of subsection 2 through an act subsequent to the obtaining of a lien or subsequent to a purchase which requires the agreement or concurrence of any third party or which requires further judicial action or ruling.

4. A transfer of property for or on account of a new and contemporaneous consideration,

which is under subsection 2 made or suffered after the transfer because of delay in perfecting it, does not become a transfer for or on account of an antecedent debt if any acts required by the applicable law to be performed in order to perfect the transfer as against liens or bona fide purchasers' rights are performed within twenty-one days or any period expressly allowed by the law, whichever is less. A transfer to secure a future loan, if a loan is actually made, or a transfer which becomes security for a future loan, shall have the same effect as a transfer for or on account of a new and contemporaneous consideration.

5. If a lien voidable under subsection 1, paragraph "b" has been dissolved by the furnishing of a bond or other obligation, the surety on which has been indemnified directly or indirectly by the transfer of or the creation of a lien upon property of an insurer before the filing of a petition under this chapter which results in a liquidation order, the indemnifying transfer or lien is also voidable.

6. The property affected by a lien voidable under subsections 1 and 5 is discharged from the lien. The property and any of the indemnifying property transferred to or for the benefit of a surety shall pass to the liquidator. However, the court may on due notice order a lien to be preserved for the benefit of the estate and the court may direct that the conveyance be executed to evidence the title of the liquidator.

7. The court shall have summary jurisdiction of a proceeding by the liquidator to hear and determine the rights of parties under this section. Reasonable notice of hearing in the proceeding shall be given to all parties in interest, including the obligee of a releasing bond or other like obligation. Where an order is entered for the recovery of indemnifying property in kind or for the avoidance of an indemnifying lien, upon application of any party in interest, the court shall in the same proceeding ascertain the value of the property or lien. If the value is less than the amount for which the property is indemnity or than the amount of the lien, the transferee or lienholder may elect to retain the property or lien upon payment of its value, as ascertained by the court, to the liquidator within time as the court shall fix.

8. The liability of a surety under a releasing bond or other like obligation shall be discharged to the extent of the value of the indemnifying property recovered or the indemnifying lien nullified and avoided by the liquidator. Where the property is retained under subsection 7, the liability of the surety shall be discharged to the extent of the amount paid to the liquidator.

9. If a creditor has been preferred for property which becomes a part of the insurer's estate, and afterward in good faith gives the insurer further credit without security of any kind, the amount of the new credit remaining unpaid at the time of the petition may be set off against the preference which would otherwise be recoverable from the creditor.

10. If within four months before the filing of a successful petition for liquidation under this chapter, or at any time in contemplation of a proceeding to liquidate an insurer directly or indirectly, pays money or transfers property to an attorney for services rendered or to be rendered, the transaction may be examined by the court on its own motion or shall be examined by the court on petition of the liquidator. The payment or transfer shall be held valid only to the extent of a reasonable amount to be determined by the court. The excess may be recovered by the liquidator for the benefit of the estate. However, where the attorney is in a position of influence in the insurer or an affiliate, payment of any money or the transfer of any property to the attorney for services rendered or to be rendered shall be governed by the provision of subsection 1, paragraph "b", subparagraph (4).

11. a. An officer, manager, employee, shareholder, member, subscriber, attorney, or any other person acting on behalf of the insurer who knowingly participates in giving any preference when the person has reasonable cause to believe the insurer is or is about to become insolvent at the time of the preference is personally liable to the liquidator for the amount of the preference. There is an inference that reasonable cause exists if the transfer was made within four months before the date of filing of this successful petition for liquidation.

b. A person receiving property from the insurer or the benefit thereof as a preference voidable under subsection 1 is personally liable for the property and shall account to the liquidator.

c. This subsection shall not prejudice any other claim by the liquidator against any person.

84 Acts, ch 1175, §28

Referred to in §507C.21, 507C.26, 507C.28A, 507C.35