

By Representative Healey

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act for the relief of Laura D. Strazza;
3 providing an appropriation to compensate her
4 for injuries sustained in a motor vehicle crash
5 resulting from negligence on the part of the
6 Department of Agriculture and Consumer
7 Services; providing an effective date.
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9 WHEREAS, on April 25, 1996, Laura D. Strazza was riding
10 as a passenger in a motor vehicle on U.S. Highway 1 in Juno
11 Beach, Palm Beach County, Florida, and
12 WHEREAS, an employee of the Florida Department of
13 Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Forestry, was
14 operating, on and next to that highway, a large transport
15 truck that collided with the motor vehicle in which Laura D.
16 Strazza was a passenger, and
17 WHEREAS, as a consequence of this collision, Laura D.
18 Strazza sustained multiple grievous injuries such that she has
19 been unable to work, has undergone surgical procedures, and
20 needs to undergo future surgical procedures, and
21 WHEREAS, Laura D. Strazza, a single woman, brought a
22 legal action against the Department of Agriculture and
23 Consumer Services, and
24 WHEREAS, on July 13, 1999, a jury rendered a verdict in
25 favor of Laura D. Strazza, finding that the Department of
26 Agriculture and Consumer Services was partly negligent in
27 causing a motor-vehicle crash between the vehicle in which Ms.
28 Strazza was a passenger and the transport truck of the
29 Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and
30 WHEREAS, the jury awarded damages in the amount of
31 \$1,464,000, which, after consideration of collateral sources

1 and comparative negligence of the driver of the vehicle in
2 which Ms. Strazza was a passenger, was reduced to
3 approximately \$1,071,550, and

4 WHEREAS, after the Department of Agriculture and
5 Consumer Services pays Laura Strazza \$100,000, which is the
6 maximum amount allowable under section 768.28, Florida
7 Statutes, the remainder owed under the judgment will be
8 approximately \$971,550, NOW, THEREFORE,

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10 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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12 Section 1. The facts stated in the preamble to this
13 act are found and declared to be true.

14 Section 2. The Executive Office of the Governor is
15 directed to transfer existing spending authority from
16 unappropriated trust fund balances in the Department of
17 Agriculture and Consumer Services in the amount of \$971,550 to
18 a new category titled "Relief - Laura D. Strazza" as relief
19 for injuries and damages sustained as a result of the
20 negligence of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer
21 Services.

22 Section 3. The Comptroller is directed to draw his
23 warrant in favor of Laura D. Strazza in the sum of \$971,550
24 upon funds of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer
25 Services in the State Treasury and the State Treasurer is
26 directed to pay the same out of such funds in the State
27 Treasury.

28 Section 4. This act shall take effect upon becoming a
29 law.

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HOUSE SUMMARY

Provides an appropriation to compensate Laura D. Strazza for injuries and damages sustained as a result of the negligence of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.