

By Representative Lee

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to Martin County; providing for
3 the relief of Margaret B. Helm for injuries and
4 damages sustained as a result of the negligence
5 of the Martin County Volunteer Fire Department;
6 providing an effective date.
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8 WHEREAS, on March 21, 1999, Veronica Pochopin was
9 driving at or near County Road 707 (Dixie Highway) at Jenson
10 Beach in Martin County, Florida, when an intoxicated bicyclist
11 rode into the path of her motor vehicle and was struck by Mrs.
12 Pochopin, and
13 WHEREAS, Margaret B. Helm, a passing motorist, stopped
14 to assist Mrs. Pochopin, and
15 WHEREAS, Margaret B. Helm, Veronica Pochopin, and Mrs.
16 Pochopin's husband, who was a passenger in the vehicle, were
17 sitting behind the damaged vehicle while Margaret B. Helm was
18 attempting to care for Mrs. Pochopin, and
19 WHEREAS, while Martin County volunteer firefighters
20 were attempting to extricate the body of the intoxicated
21 bicyclist from the front seat of the damaged vehicle, where it
22 had landed after coming through the windshield, the vehicle
23 went into reverse, running over Margaret B. Helm, and
24 WHEREAS, as a result of this incident, Margaret B. Helm
25 is now a paraplegic and is expected to remain so for the rest
26 of her life, and
27 WHEREAS, Margaret B. Helm and Martin County have
28 entered into a settlement agreement that requires Martin
29 County to pay, pursuant to a claim bill enacted by the
30 Legislature, the sum of \$2,250,000, with \$500,000 of this sum
31 to be paid in the form of an annuity, and

1 WHEREAS, the payment will not involve any tax increase
2 in Martin County for the sole purpose of paying the amounts
3 agreed to in the settlement agreement, NOW, THEREFORE,

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

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7 Section 1. The facts stated in the preamble of this
8 act are found and declared to be true.

9 Section 2. The Board of County Commissioners of Martin
10 County is authorized and directed to compensate Margaret B.
11 Helm in the amount of \$2,250,000, consisting of \$500,000 for
12 the purchase of an annuity by the Board of County
13 Commissioners of Martin County for the benefit of Margaret B.
14 Helm and a lump-sum payment payable to Margaret B. Helm in the
15 amount of \$1,750,000, from funds of the county not otherwise
16 appropriated, as compensation for injuries and damages
17 sustained.

18 Section 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a
19 law.