

STORAGE NAME: h0225a.cla
DATE: February 14 2002

Florida House of Representatives
Committee on Claims
Summary Claim Bill Report

Bill #: HB 225
Sponsor: Representative Gannon
Companion Bill: SB 46 by Senator Pruitt
Special Master: L. Michael Billmeier, Jr.

A. Basic Information:

1. **Claimants:** Sharon Dixon and Victor Dixon, Sr.
2. **Respondent:** School Board of Indian River County
3. **Amount Requested:** \$1,224,393.90
4. **Type of Claim:** Settlement of a wrongful death action after a jury verdict.
5. **Respondent's Position:** The School Board supports the passage of a claim bill in the amount of \$1,224,393.90.
6. **Collateral Sources:** Sharon Dixon and Victor Dixon, Sr. were paid \$35,000 pursuant to insurance policies.
7. **Prior Legislative History:** None

B. Procedural Summary: The claimants obtained a jury verdict against the School Board for \$2.5 million in July, 2000. The court awarded \$1.5 million to Sharon Dixon and \$1 million to Victor Dixon, Sr. The School Board paid \$275,606.10 to the claimants in November, 2000. In April, 2001, the parties reached a settlement agreement where the School Board agreed to pay \$1.5 million less the amounts already paid and support the passage of a claim bill. The claimants are no longer married but have agreed that the funds paid from a claim bill will be split between them in the same proportion as the jury verdict (60% to Sharon Dixon; 40% to Victor Dixon, Sr.).

C. Facts of Case: On January 25, 1999, a school bus operated by an employee of the Indian River County School Board failed to stop at a stop sign and collided with another vehicle. Victor Dixon, Jr., an eight year-old passenger on the school bus, was killed in the accident. The School Board did not contest liability and the trial raised only issues relating to damages. The claimants, Victor Dixon, Jr.'s parents, have suffered great emotional distress over the loss of their son. Claimant Sharon Dixon presented evidence that her optic neuritis and high blood pressure were aggravated by the stress caused by the death of her son. Claimant Victor Dixon, Sr., presented evidence of the anguish caused by the death of his son.

SM: _____ SD: _____ Date: _____
L. Michael Billmeier, Jr. Stephanie O. Birtman