

By Representative Fields

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to the City of Belle Glade;
3 providing for the relief of Willie Police, III,
4 Cora Donaldson, Willie Police, Sr., and the
5 Estate of Willie Police, Jr.; authorizing and
6 directing the City of Belle Glade to compensate
7 them for injuries suffered as a result of the
8 death of Willie Police, Jr., due to the
9 negligence of employees of the city; providing
10 an effective date.

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12 WHEREAS, on February 13, 1993, Willie Police, Jr., who
13 was 17 years of age, and a friend attended a dance that was
14 being held at the Civic Center in Belle Glade, and

15 WHEREAS, while the two friends were standing in the
16 parking lot after the dance, a disturbance began as a result
17 of which both Willie Police and his friend were shot, and
18 Willie died at the scene, and

19 WHEREAS, the group that sponsored the dance allegedly
20 did not have permission to use the civic center and had broken
21 into the center that night and held the party without the
22 permission of the city, and

23 WHEREAS, 1 week before the dance, the group had passed
24 out flyers inviting the public to the event, and

25 WHEREAS, police were called to the scene because of the
26 noise created by the party, and, although police officers did
27 respond to the call and go to the party, they did not check to
28 see whether the group was legitimately using the civic center
29 and they did not speak to any person in charge, nor did they
30 check to see whether there was any security provided for the
31 party, and

1 WHEREAS, at a jury trial held in Palm Beach County in
2 April 1997, the testimony of city officials and the police
3 revealed that any time a party is held at the civic center
4 security is to be provided by either the city or the person
5 who gives the party, and

6 WHEREAS, the testimony further showed that such a party
7 is always recorded on the books of the city, and the city then
8 informs the police department of the party, and

9 WHEREAS, the Belle Glade Police Department never
10 checked with the city nor with anyone else about this party,
11 even after noise complaints were registered, and, if they had
12 checked, they would have shut down the party because it was
13 not a scheduled event and there was no security, and

14 WHEREAS, the jury in this case issued a comparative
15 negligence verdict, finding the negligence of the City of
16 Belle Glade 95 percent responsible for the death of Willie
17 Police, Jr., and Willie Police, Jr., 5 percent responsible for
18 his own death, and assessed \$481,648.10 in total damages, and

19 WHEREAS, in 1999, the Fourth District Court of Appeal
20 upheld the judgment of the circuit court in denying the city's
21 directed verdict motion and held that the verdicts reached in
22 the case were not excessive, and

23 WHEREAS, the case was appealed to the Florida Supreme
24 court, which declined to accept jurisdiction, and

25 WHEREAS, at the time of his death, Willie Police, Jr.,
26 was the father of a 3-year-old son, Willie Police, III, who
27 has been deprived of the support and companionship of his
28 father, and

29 WHEREAS, Willie Police, Jr.'s, parents, Cora Donaldson
30 and Willie Police, Sr., have been deprived of the services and
31 companionship of their son, NOW, THEREFORE,

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

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

Section 2. The City of Belle Glade is authorized and directed to compensate Willie Police, III, Cora Donaldson, Willie Police, Sr., and the Estate of Willie Police, Jr., out of funds of the city not otherwise appropriated, in the amount of \$381,649.10 for injuries and damages sustained as a result of the death of Willie Police, Jr.

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