

HB 195

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1 A bill to be entitled

2 An act for the relief of Laura D. Strazza; providing an
3 appropriation to compensate her for injuries she sustained
4 as a result of the negligence of an employee of the
5 Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services; providing
6 an effective date.

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8 WHEREAS, on April 25, 1996, Laura D. Strazza was riding as
9 a passenger in a motor vehicle on U.S. 1 in Juno Beach, Palm
10 Beach County, and

11 WHEREAS, an employee of the Department of Agriculture and
12 Consumer Services, Division of Forestry, was operating, on and
13 next to that highway, a large transport truck that collided with
14 the motor vehicle in which Laura D. Strazza was a passenger, and

15 WHEREAS, as a consequence of this motor vehicle crash,
16 Laura D. Strazza sustained multiple grievous injuries such that
17 she has been unable to work, has undergone surgical procedures,
18 and needs to undergo future surgical procedures, and

19 WHEREAS, a legal action was brought by Laura Strazza, a
20 single woman, against the Department of Agriculture and Consumer
21 Services, and

22 WHEREAS, on July 13, 1999, a jury rendered a verdict in
23 favor of Laura D. Strazza, finding that the Department of
24 Agriculture and Consumer Services was partly negligent in
25 causing a motor vehicle crash between the vehicle in which Ms.
26 Strazza was riding as a passenger and the department's transport
27 truck, and

28 WHEREAS, the jury rendered damages in the amount of

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29 \$1,464,000, and, after reduction for collateral sources and
30 comparative negligence of the driver of the vehicle in which Ms.
31 Strazza was riding, a Final Judgment in the amount of \$944,829
32 and a Cost Judgment in the amount of \$32,490.62, both bearing
33 interest at the statutory rate of 10 percent per year, were
34 entered against the Department of Agriculture and Consumer
35 Services, and

36 WHEREAS, the Department of Agriculture and Consumer
37 Services has paid Laura Strazza \$100,000, the maximum amount
38 allowable under section 768.28, Florida Statutes, and the
39 remainder owed under the judgment will be \$877,319.62, plus
40 \$5,002.60 in additional costs, for a total amount of
41 \$882,322.22, NOW, THEREFORE,

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

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

47 Section 2. There is appropriated from the General Revenue
48 Fund to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services the
49 sum of \$882,322.22 for the relief of Laura D. Strazza for
50 injuries and damages sustained by her.

51 Section 3. The Chief Financial Officer is directed to draw
52 a warrant in favor of Laura D. Strazza in the amount of
53 \$882,322.22, upon funds of the Department of Agriculture and
54 Consumer Services in the State Treasury, and the Chief Financial
55 Officer is directed to pay the same out of such funds in the
56 State Treasury.

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