

By Senator Atwater

25-77-07

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A bill to be entitled

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 WHEREAS, the jury rendered damages in the amount of
2 \$1,464,000, and, after reduction for collateral sources and
3 comparative negligence of the driver of the vehicle in which
4 Ms. Strazza was riding, a Final Judgment in the amount of
5 \$944,829 and a Cost Judgment in the amount of \$32,490.62, both
6 bearing interest at the statutory rate of 10 percent per year,
7 were entered against the Department of Agriculture and
8 Consumer Services, and

9 WHEREAS, the Department of Agriculture and Consumer
10 Services has paid Laura Strazza \$100,000, the maximum amount
11 allowable under section 768.28, Florida Statutes, and the
12 remainder owed under the judgment will be \$877,319.62, plus
13 \$5,002.60 in additional costs, for a total amount of
14 \$882,322.22, NOW, THEREFORE,

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

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

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

24 Section 3. The Chief Financial Officer is directed to
25 draw a warrant in favor of Laura D. Strazza in the amount of
26 \$882,322.22, upon funds of the Department of Agriculture and
27 Consumer Services in the State Treasury, and the Chief
28 Financial Officer is directed to pay the same out of such
29 funds in the State Treasury.

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

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SENATE SUMMARY

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