

By Senator Margolis

35-87-07

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to the Department of  
3           Transportation; providing an appropriation to  
4           compensate the estate of Dr. Sherrill Lynn  
5           Aversa for the death of Dr. Sherrill Lynn  
6           Aversa, which was the result of negligence by  
7           an employee of the department; providing for  
8           attorney's fees and costs; providing an  
9           effective date.  
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11           WHEREAS, on June 21, 1999, an employee of the  
12 Department of Transportation was driving a departmental truck  
13 northbound on Interstate 75 in Hillsborough County, Florida,  
14 and  
15           WHEREAS, on that same day, Dr. Sherrill Lynn Aversa,  
16 having completed an interview with the University of South  
17 Florida Medical School, was traveling south on Interstate 75,  
18 and  
19           WHEREAS, by departmental policy, employees of the  
20 department are required to ensure that all items used by the  
21 department and stored on the truck are appropriately secured  
22 to the truck, and  
23           WHEREAS, one such item used by the department and  
24 stored on the truck was a 12-foot extension ladder stored on  
25 the top of the truck, and  
26           WHEREAS, the department's employee failed to ensure  
27 that the ladder was secured to the truck before leaving the  
28 department's maintenance yard, and  
29           WHEREAS, thereafter, while the employee traveled  
30 northbound on Interstate 75, the extension ladder flew from  
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1 the roof of the truck into the northbound traffic following  
2 the department's truck, and

3 WHEREAS, the driver to the rear of the department's  
4 truck swerved to avoid hitting the extension ladder which came  
5 directly at the driver in her lane of Interstate 75, and

6 WHEREAS, as a result of the swerving movements, the  
7 driver of the car behind the department's truck lost control  
8 of her vehicle, veered to the left, crossed the Interstate 75  
9 median, and struck Dr. Aversa's vehicle, killing Dr. Aversa  
10 instantly, and

11 WHEREAS, as a result of these events, the estate of Dr.  
12 Aversa brought suit against the Department of Transportation  
13 for the negligence causing the death of Dr. Aversa, and

14 WHEREAS, after 3 years of litigation, the department  
15 admitted liability for the accident and agreed to settle the  
16 case, and

17 WHEREAS, the parties agreed to a consent judgment  
18 solely against the department, with no comparative negligence  
19 finding against any other party, in the amount of \$797,500,  
20 and

21 WHEREAS, the Department of Transportation has paid  
22 \$100,000 to the estate of Dr. Sherrill Lynn Aversa under the  
23 statutory limits of liability set forth in s. 768.28, Florida  
24 Statutes, NOW, THEREFORE,

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

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

30 Section 2. The sum of \$697,500 is appropriated from  
31 the General Revenue Fund to the Department of Transportation,

1 which amount includes attorney's fees and costs, as  
2 compensation to the estate of Dr. Sherrill Lynn Aversa for the  
3 death of Dr. Aversa.

4 Section 3. The Chief Financial Officer is directed to  
5 draw a warrant in favor of the estate of Dr. Sherrill Lynn  
6 Aversa in the sum of \$697,500 upon funds of the Department of  
7 Transportation not otherwise encumbered, and the Chief  
8 Financial Officer is directed to pay the same out of such  
9 funds in the State Treasury.

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

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14 SENATE SUMMARY

15 Appropriates funds to the estate of Dr. Sherrill Lynn  
16 Aversa as compensation for the death of Dr. Aversa, which  
17 was caused by the negligence of an employee of the  
18 Department of Transportation.  
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