

By Senator Joyner

18-00126-10

201048

1 A bill to be entitled

2 An act for the relief of the victims who were abused
3 while confined to the Florida Reform School for Boys
4 located in Marianna and Okeechobee; providing for an
5 appropriation to compensate them for injuries and
6 damages sustained as result of the abuses perpetrated
7 by the personnel of the reform schools; providing a
8 limitation on the payment of fees and costs; providing
9 an effective date.

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11 WHEREAS, during the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, certain minors
12 were sent to the Florida School for Boys located in Marianna and
13 Okeechobee, Florida, and

14 WHEREAS, some of the boys who were sent to those reform
15 schools were physically and psychologically abused by the
16 personnel operating the reform schools in Marianna and
17 Okeechobee, which included beatings while the boys were forced
18 to lie face down on a blood-stained cot and being struck
19 repeatedly with a leather razor strap, and

20 WHEREAS, at the reform school in Marianna these beatings
21 were inflicted in a building known as the "White House," and

22 WHEREAS, the boys were segregated at the reform schools
23 into white and black areas; however, both races were subjected
24 to beatings in the "White House," and

25 WHEREAS, some boys as young as 10 years of age were
26 severely beaten, requiring that pieces of their cotton underwear
27 be extracted from the boys' flesh, and

28 WHEREAS, other victims needed medical treatment and were
29 left with permanent scars, and

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30 WHEREAS, the personnel of the reform schools who
31 perpetrated such beatings would make monetary bets on which of
32 them could draw blood first from the boys, and

33 WHEREAS, some of the boys were sexually assaulted by the
34 reform schools' personnel, and

35 WHEREAS, after being beaten, some boys were placed in
36 solitary confinement for as many as 30 days in an approximately
37 8-foot-by-8-foot cell having no lights or windows, containing
38 only a bunk with a mattress and no sheets, and a bucket to be
39 used as a toilet, which was known as the "hole," and

40 WHEREAS, similar abuses occurred at the reform schools
41 located in Marianna and Okeechobee and were considered a
42 standard, accepted practice and procedure for administering
43 discipline at the schools, and

44 WHEREAS, the victims have suffered and continue to suffer
45 physical and emotional injuries, and

46 WHEREAS, certain victims have filed a lawsuit in the
47 Pinellas County Circuit Court seeking class-action status,
48 claiming wrongful incarceration, and seeking redress for the
49 abuse and mistreatment they suffered while confined to the
50 Florida School for Boys in Marianna and Okeechobee, and

51 WHEREAS, those victims who have filed the class-action
52 lawsuit are willing to have the court action stayed while the
53 Legislature considers the relief requested in this act, and

54 WHEREAS, favorable consideration of the relief requested in
55 this act would spare the state a significant amount of time and
56 resources, NOW, THEREFORE,

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

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60 Section 1. The sum of \$ _____ is appropriated from the
61 General Revenue Fund to the Department of Juvenile Justice for
62 the relief of the victims who were abused while confined to the
63 Florida Reform School for Boys in Marianna and Okeechobee and
64 sustained injuries and damages as a result of such abuses
65 perpetrated by the personnel of the reform schools.

66 Section 2. The Chief Financial Officer is directed to draw
67 a warrant in favor of the victims who were abused while confined
68 to the Florida Reform School for Boys in Marianna and Okeechobee
69 in the sum of \$ _____ upon funds in the State Treasury, and the
70 Chief Financial Officer is directed to pay the same out of such
71 funds in the State Treasury.

72 Section 3. The Legislature may not be deemed by this act to
73 have waived any defense of sovereign immunity or to have
74 increased the limits of liability on behalf of the state or any
75 person or entity subject to the provisions of s. 768.28, Florida
76 Statutes, or any other law.

77 Section 4. The amount awarded under this act is intended to
78 provide the sole compensation for all present and future claims
79 arising out of the factual situation described in this act which
80 resulted in injuries to the victims who were abused while
81 confined to the Florida Reform School for Boys in Marianna and
82 Okeechobee. The total amount paid for attorney's fees, lobbying
83 fees, costs, and other similar expenses relating to this claim
84 may not exceed 25 percent of the amount awarded under this act.

85 Section 5. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.