

By the Committee on Fiscal Policy; and Senator Montford

594-03753-16

201622c1

1 A bill to be entitled

2 An act for the relief of Angela Sanford by Leon
3 County; providing for an appropriation to compensate
4 her for injuries and damages sustained as a result of
5 the negligence of an employee of Leon County;
6 providing that certain payments and the appropriation
7 satisfy all present and future claims related to the
8 negligent act; providing a limitation on the payment
9 of compensation, fees, and costs; providing an
10 effective date.

11
12 WHEREAS, on September 5, 2013, Angela Sanford was a belted
13 front-seat passenger in a car that was traveling on a green
14 light through the intersection of West Tharpe Street and North
15 Martin Luther King, Jr., Boulevard in Tallahassee, Florida, and

16 WHEREAS, at the same time, a Leon County ambulance operated
17 by Leon County employee Benjamin Hunter entered the intersection
18 despite a red light displayed on the traffic signal, which was
19 clearly visible the entire time Mr. Hunter approached the
20 intersection, and

21 WHEREAS, the ambulance broadsided the passenger side of the
22 car in which Angela Sanford was traveling and struck the
23 passenger side door at a speed in excess of 40 miles per hour,
24 and

25 WHEREAS, Mr. Hunter failed to operate his ambulance in a
26 reasonably safe manner and conducted himself in direct violation
27 of the Leon County Emergency Medical Services Standard Operating
28 Guidelines, which specifically requires all emergency vehicles
29 to come to a full and complete stop at a red light, and

30 WHEREAS, although Mr. Hunter later claimed that the light
31 was yellow, the video from the ambulance's onboard camera
32 clearly showed that the light was red for the entire 8 seconds

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33 of the video, and

34 WHEREAS, the investigation conducted by the Leon County
35 Sheriff's Office concluded that Mr. Hunter was the sole person
36 at fault in the accident, and

37 WHEREAS, Mr. Hunter also admitted, and the evidence showed,
38 that fences, trees, and buildings at the corner of the
39 intersection blocked the other driver's view of the ambulance as
40 it approached the intersection, and

41 WHEREAS, as a result of the crash, Angela Sanford sustained
42 life-threatening injuries that left her in a coma, including a
43 traumatic brain bleed that resulted in permanent cognitive and
44 depressive disorders, a lacerated liver, a ruptured bladder, a
45 cranial nerve injury resulting in permanent double vision, a
46 fractured pelvis requiring hardware insertion, a fractured
47 clavicle requiring hardware insertion, bilateral hip socket
48 fractures requiring hardware insertion, a fractured knee, a
49 fractured shoulder blade, thirteen fractured ribs, permanent
50 peroneal nerve palsy known as foot drop, and numerous other
51 injuries that have now left her totally disabled and unable to
52 ever return to her career as an elementary school teacher, and

53 WHEREAS, Angela Sanford's medical expenses at the time of
54 judgment exceeded \$744,000, and

55 WHEREAS, on April 13, 2015, a final judgment in the amount
56 of \$1.15 million was entered by the trial court for Angela
57 Sanford against Leon County, and

58 WHEREAS, Leon County carried liability insurance with
59 OneBeacon Insurance Group, Ltd., a Bermuda-domiciled company,
60 which will pay 100 percent of any appropriation up to the policy
61 limit of \$3 million, and

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62 WHEREAS, Leon County has already paid out \$300,000 to other
63 persons injured in this accident in satisfaction of sovereign
64 immunity limits set forth in s. 768.28, Florida Statutes, NOW,
65 THEREFORE,

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

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

71 Section 2. Leon County is authorized and directed to
72 appropriate from funds of the county not otherwise appropriated,
73 or from the county's liability insurance coverage, and to draw a
74 warrant in the sum of \$1.15 million, payable to Angela Sanford
75 as compensation for injuries and damages sustained.

76 Section 3. The amount paid by Leon County pursuant to s.
77 768.28, Florida Statutes, and the amount awarded under this act
78 are intended to provide the sole compensation for all present
79 and future claims arising out of the factual situation described
80 in this act which resulted in injuries and damages to Angela
81 Sanford. The total amount paid for attorney fees, lobbying fees,
82 costs, and similar expenses relating to this claim may not
83 exceed 25 percent of the total amount awarded under this act.

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