

By Senator Montford

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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, 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 collided with the car in which
22 Angela Sanford was traveling and struck the passenger side door
23 at a speed in excess of 40 miles per hour, and

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

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

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

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

40 WHEREAS, as a result of the crash, which left her in a
41 coma, Angela Sanford sustained life-threatening injuries,
42 including a traumatic brain bleed that resulted in permanent
43 cognitive and depressive disorders, a lacerated liver, a
44 ruptured bladder, a cranial nerve injury resulting in permanent
45 double vision, a fractured pelvis requiring hardware insertion,
46 a fractured clavicle requiring hardware insertion, bilateral hip
47 socket fractures requiring hardware insertion, a fractured knee,
48 a fractured shoulder blade, 13 fractured ribs, permanent
49 peroneal nerve palsy known as foot drop, and numerous other
50 injuries which have now left her totally disabled and
51 permanently unable to return to her career as an elementary
52 school teacher, and

53 WHEREAS, following mediation, on April 13, 2015, a final
54 judgment in the amount of \$1.15 million was entered by the trial
55 court in favor of Angela Sanford against Leon County, and

56 WHEREAS, Angela Sanford's medical expenses exceeded
57 \$744,000 at the time of the judgment, 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 \$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.