

By the Committee on Judiciary; and Senator Montford

590-01955-17

201742c1

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 attorney fees; providing an effective date.

10  
11 WHEREAS, on September 5, 2013, Angela Sanford was a belted,  
12 front-seat passenger in a car that was traveling on a green  
13 light through the intersection of West Tharpe Street and North  
14 Martin Luther King, Jr., Boulevard in Tallahassee, and

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

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

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

28 WHEREAS, although Mr. Hunter later claimed that the light  
29 was yellow, the video from the ambulance's onboard camera

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30 clearly showed that the light was red for the entire 8 seconds  
31 of the video, and

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

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

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

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

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

57 WHEREAS, Leon County carried liability insurance with  
58 OneBeacon Insurance Group, Ltd., a Bermuda-domiciled company,

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59 which will pay 100 percent of any appropriation up to the policy  
60 limit of \$3 million, and

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

65  
66 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

67  
68 Section 1. The facts stated in the preamble to this act are  
69 found and declared to be true.

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

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

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