

ENROLLED

CS/HB 6507

2017 Legislature

1  
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

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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

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

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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

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,

66

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

68

69 Section 1. The facts stated in the preamble to this act  
 70 are 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.

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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. Of the amount awarded under this act, the total amount  
82 paid for attorney fees may not exceed \$230,000, the total amount  
83 paid for lobbying fees may not exceed \$57,500, and the total  
84 amount paid for costs and other similar expenses relating to  
85 this claim may not exceed \$30,000.

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