

HB 6515

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act for the relief of Cathleen Smiley by Brevard
3 County; providing for an appropriation to compensate
4 Cathleen Smiley for personal injuries and damages
5 sustained in an automobile accident caused by a
6 Brevard County employee; providing for payment by
7 Brevard County; providing a limitation on the payment
8 of compensation and attorney fees; providing an
9 effective date.

10
11 WHEREAS, on June 18, 1998, Cathleen Smiley was the driver
12 of her vehicle when it was struck in the rear section by a van
13 driven by Howard Evarts which had been struck in the rear
14 section by a passenger bus owned by the Brevard County Board of
15 County Commissioners, and

16 WHEREAS, the Brevard County employee operating the bus was
17 traveling at approximately 45 miles per hour when the bus hit
18 the vehicle in which Mr. Evarts was traveling, causing Mr.
19 Evarts' vehicle to hit Ms. Smiley's vehicle, and

20 WHEREAS, the vehicles which Ms. Smiley and Mr. Evarts were
21 operating were appropriately stopped in their lane of travel
22 waiting to make a left turn, and

23 WHEREAS, at the time of the accident, Ms. Smiley was
24 without personal resources for medical insurance, other than
25 nominal personal injury protection, to adequately care for the

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26 | injuries she suffered as a result of the accident, and

27 | WHEREAS, Ms. Smiley was knocked unconscious and suffered
28 | permanent injuries to the neck and left shoulder, and

29 | WHEREAS, Christopher Prusinski, D.O., a neurologist in
30 | Brevard County, has opined that Ms. Smiley has reached maximum
31 | medical improvement and has an 8 percent whole body impairment
32 | due to the accident, and

33 | WHEREAS, Dr. Prusinski also has opined that Ms. Smiley will
34 | require extensive future chiropractic care and treatment, and

35 | WHEREAS, since the accident Ms. Smiley has required
36 | continuing care and treatment, and it is anticipated that she
37 | will require ongoing care in the future, including chiropractic
38 | treatment and periodic medical intervention and diagnostic
39 | testing, and

40 | WHEREAS, on January 25, 2016, a consent judgment was
41 | entered after Ms. Smiley and Brevard County agreed to a
42 | stipulated judgment in the amount of \$25,000 in case number 05-
43 | 2000-CA-004291-XXXX-XX, and

44 | WHEREAS, Ms. Smiley is one of five persons who filed
45 | lawsuits related to the accident, and

46 | WHEREAS, at the time Ms. Smiley filed her lawsuit, on or
47 | about February 29, 2000, Brevard County had already paid
48 | property damage, medical, and injury claims totaling \$101,410.
49 | Additionally, the county was evaluating two additional related
50 | personal injury lawsuits, and

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51 WHEREAS, after these property damage, medical, and injury
52 claims were settled, only \$98,590 remained to resolve the other
53 claims filed in connection with the accident, and

54 WHEREAS, Howard and Sharon Evarts and Alan Hammer filed
55 their lawsuits against Brevard County on June 24, 1999, and

56 WHEREAS, consent judgments were entered by the Circuit
57 Court for the 18th Judicial Circuit in Brevard County on
58 November 30, 2000, pursuant to an agreement entered into by
59 plaintiffs Evarts and Hammer and Brevard County for stipulated
60 judgments in case numbers 05-1999-CA-025509-XXXX-XX (Evarts) and
61 05-1999-CA025510-XXXX-XX (Hammer), each in the amount \$125,000,
62 and

63 WHEREAS, Mr. Evarts and Mr. Hammer each received \$49,295
64 out of the remaining balance of \$98,590 of the county's \$200,000
65 sovereign immunity limitation and, pursuant to their settlement
66 agreements with Brevard County, received the balance of their
67 judgments through the claim bill process as articulated in
68 chapter 2003-346, Laws of Florida, and chapter 2003-345, Laws of
69 Florida, respectively, and

70 WHEREAS, Brevard County and Ms. Smiley agreed that she
71 would pursue payment of the stipulated judgment due her in the
72 amount of \$25,000 from the county through the claim bill
73 process, and

74 WHEREAS, Brevard County has agreed that it would not oppose
75 a claim bill being rendered against the county in this matter

76 | and would support same, NOW, THEREFORE,

77 |

78 | Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

79 |

80 | Section 1. The facts stated in the preamble to this act
 81 | are found and declared to be true.

82 | Section 2. Brevard County is authorized and directed to
 83 | appropriate from funds of the county not otherwise appropriated
 84 | and to draw a warrant in the sum of \$25,000 payable to Cathleen
 85 | Smiley to compensate her for personal injuries and damages
 86 | sustained.

87 | Section 3. The amount paid by Brevard County pursuant to
 88 | s. 768.28, Florida Statutes, and the amount awarded under this
 89 | act are intended to provide the sole compensation for all
 90 | present and future claims arising out of the factual situation
 91 | described in this act which resulted in injuries and damages to
 92 | Cathleen Smiley. The total amount paid for attorney fees
 93 | relating to this claim may not exceed 25 percent of the amount
 94 | awarded under this act.

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