

1                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act for the relief of Justin Williamson by the St.  
3           Johns County School District; providing an  
4           appropriation to compensate him for injuries and  
5           damages sustained as a result of the negligence of the  
6           St. Johns County School District; providing a  
7           limitation on the payment of attorney fees; providing  
8           an effective date.

9  
10           WHEREAS, on the morning of September 9, 2014, Justin  
11           Williamson, along with his passenger, Amber Middleton, was  
12           driving toward Palatka on State Road 207, and

13           WHEREAS, a St. Johns County school bus, operated by Linda  
14           Fox in the scope of her employment with the St. Johns County  
15           School District, was traveling on Armstrong Road and crossed  
16           State Road 207 into Mr. Williamson's lane of travel, and

17           WHEREAS, the bus struck the driver's side of Mr.  
18           Williamson's vehicle, crushing it and trapping a critically  
19           injured Mr. Williamson inside, and

20           WHEREAS, Mr. Williamson's injuries from the crash included  
21           damage to his spleen and hematoma, abrasions on multiple sites,  
22           three shattered teeth in the left side of his mouth, a  
23           dislocated left radial head, a fracture of his left humerus, a  
24           left femur fracture, as well as other injuries as reflected in  
25           the medical evidence introduced at trial, and

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26 WHEREAS, Mr. Williamson was airlifted to Halifax Health  
27 Medical Center, where he spent days recovering, and then was  
28 transferred to Brooks Rehabilitation for weeks of  
29 rehabilitation, and

30 WHEREAS, for 185 days, Mr. Williamson was either bedridden  
31 or relegated to a wheelchair, could not perform basic everyday  
32 tasks without help from his wife and others, and had trouble  
33 sleeping for more than 1 hour at a time, and

34 WHEREAS, Mr. Williamson still experiences significant pain,  
35 walks with a limp, continues to have trouble sleeping, and has  
36 serious mobility issues, and

37 WHEREAS, as a result of the crash, Mr. Williamson is no  
38 longer able to pursue hobbies he undertook before the incident,  
39 such as rock climbing, instructing and practicing taekwondo, and  
40 generally enjoying an athletic lifestyle, and

41 WHEREAS, as the operator of a school bus, Ms. Fox had the  
42 duty to drive the bus in a safe manner and in accordance with  
43 state law, but failed to do so, and

44 WHEREAS, as a result of the collision, Ms. Fox was cited  
45 for failing to yield the right-of-way, and

46 WHEREAS, in February 2018, Mr. Williamson sued the St.  
47 Johns County School District, and during the subsequent trial  
48 doctors involved with his case testified that Mr. Williamson  
49 sustained severe injuries as a result of the crash, will  
50 continue to need medical care, and will never regain the level

51 of physical well-being he experienced before the incident, and  
 52 WHEREAS, experts who testified at the trial estimated that  
 53 Mr. Williamson's future care will cost \$527,405.16 and that his  
 54 inability to work will result in the loss of between \$513,000  
 55 and \$822,800 in wages over his lifetime, and

56 WHEREAS, Judge Michael Traynor of the Seventh Judicial  
 57 Circuit found the St. Johns County School District liable for  
 58 the injuries and damages suffered by Mr. Williamson, and

59 WHEREAS, the trial court ordered the St. Johns County  
 60 School District to pay a final judgment of \$1,955,161.93 to Mr.  
 61 Williamson, and

62 WHEREAS, the St. Johns County School District has paid none  
 63 of the statutory limit of \$200,000 pursuant to s. 768.28,  
 64 Florida Statutes, applicable at the time the claim arose, to Mr.  
 65 Williamson as compensation for the injuries and damages incurred  
 66 as a result of the crash, and

67 WHEREAS, the full amount of the \$1,955,161.93 final  
 68 judgment remains unpaid, NOW, THEREFORE,

69  
 70 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

71  
 72 Section 1. The facts stated in the preamble to this act  
 73 are found and declared to be true.

74 Section 2. The St. Johns County School District is  
 75 authorized and directed to appropriate from funds not otherwise

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76 | encumbered and to draw a warrant payable to Justin Williamson in  
77 | the sum of \$1,955,161.93 as compensation for injuries and  
78 | damages he sustained.

79 |       Section 3. The amount awarded under this act is intended  
80 | to provide the sole compensation for all present and future  
81 | claims arising out of the factual situation described in this  
82 | act which resulted in injuries and damages to Justin Williamson.  
83 | The total amount paid for attorney fees relating to this claim  
84 | may not exceed 25 percent of the amount awarded under this act.

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