



26 | of speed, and

27 |       WHEREAS, Deputy Gracie's police cruiser struck the vehicle  
 28 | in which Hilda Medrano was a passenger on the passenger side  
 29 | door at a speed of 87 miles per hour, killing Hilda Medrano and  
 30 | her cousin and severely injuring a second passenger in that  
 31 | vehicle, and

32 |       WHEREAS, the Florida Highway Patrol's investigation found  
 33 | that Deputy Gracie violated ss. 316.216(3) and 316.126(5),  
 34 | Florida Statutes, and

35 |       WHEREAS, an Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office internal  
 36 | affairs department investigation found that Deputy Gracie's  
 37 | actions were unbecoming of an officer and in violation of four  
 38 | standing operating procedures of the Okeechobee County Sheriff's  
 39 | Office, and

40 |       WHEREAS, at the time of her death, Hilda Medrano was a 21-  
 41 | year-old college student with dreams of becoming an X-ray  
 42 | technician, and

43 |       WHEREAS, Hilda Medrano's parents, Ricardo Medrano-Arzate  
 44 | and Eva Chavez-Medrano, are legal immigrants to the United  
 45 | States who came to this country to work and provide their  
 46 | children with opportunities to achieve the American dream and  
 47 | have resided in the Mexican-American community in Okeechobee for  
 48 | more than 30 years, and

49 |       WHEREAS, Ricardo Medrano-Arzate's and Eva Chavez-Medrano's  
 50 | dreams for their daughter Hilda Medrano were destroyed by the

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51 reckless actions of Deputy Gracie, and

52 WHEREAS, after a 4-day trial, a jury awarded Ricardo  
53 Medrano-Arzate and Eva Chavez-Medrano, as personal  
54 representatives of their daughter Hilda Medrano, \$5 million in  
55 damages, and

56 WHEREAS, based on the jury's apportionment of fault,  
57 finding that Deputy Gracie was 88.5 percent liable for the  
58 collision, the trial court reduced the jury's award to  
59 \$4,425,000, and that decision was affirmed by the Fourth  
60 District Court of Appeal, and

61 WHEREAS, in accordance with the statutory limits of  
62 liability set forth in s. 768.28, Florida Statutes, the  
63 Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office settled the claims of the  
64 other two victims but has not paid any money toward the damages  
65 awarded to Ricardo Medrano-Arzate and Eva Chavez-Medrano, as  
66 personal representatives of Hilda Medrano, NOW, THEREFORE,

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

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

72 Section 2. The Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office is  
73 authorized and directed to appropriate from funds not otherwise  
74 encumbered and to draw a warrant in the sum of \$4,425,000  
75 payable to Ricardo Medrano-Arzate and Eva Chavez-Medrano for

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76 damages awarded in connection with the death of their daughter,  
77 Hilda Medrano.

78 Section 3. The amount paid by the Okeechobee County  
79 Sheriff's Office and awarded under this act is intended to  
80 provide the sole compensation for all present and future claims  
81 arising out of the factual situation described in this act which  
82 resulted in the award of damages to Ricardo Medrano-Arzate and  
83 Eva Chavez-Medrano, as personal representatives of Hilda  
84 Medrano. The total amount paid for attorney fees relating to  
85 this claim may not exceed \$885,000, the total amount paid for  
86 lobbying fees may not exceed \$221,250, and the total amount paid  
87 for costs or other similar expenses may not exceed \$4,030.89.

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