

HB 6503

2025

1 A bill to be entitled

2 An act for the relief of Mande Penney-Lemmon by
3 Sarasota County; providing for an appropriation to
4 compensate her for injuries sustained as a result of
5 the negligence of Sarasota County through its
6 employee; providing a limitation on compensation and
7 the payment of attorney fees; providing an effective
8 date.

9
10 WHEREAS, on or about October 1, 2018, Mande Penney-Lemmon
11 was lawfully driving over the Venice Avenue Bridge in Venice and
12 came to a complete stop when traffic stalled in front of her
13 vehicle at or near the intersection of East Venice Avenue and
14 Tamiami Trail North, and

15 WHEREAS, at the same time, Jill Parnell, an employee of
16 Sarasota County, who was acting within the course and scope of
17 her official duties as a supervisor for Sarasota County Parks,
18 Recreation and Natural Resources, was driving over the same
19 bridge in a motor vehicle owned by Sarasota County, and

20 WHEREAS, it was a clear and sunny day, and there were no
21 visual obstructions as Ms. Parnell was driving, and

22 WHEREAS, Ms. Parnell admitted that she was wearing
23 headphones at the time and did not notice that traffic had come
24 to a stop ahead of her, and

25 WHEREAS, Ms. Parnell's vehicle collided directly into the
26 back of Ms. Penney-Lemmon's vehicle, the impact of which caused
27 Ms. Penney-Lemmon's vehicle to hit the vehicle stopped in front
28 of her, and

29 WHEREAS, due to the impacts involving both the rear and
30 front of Ms. Penney-Lemmon's vehicle which were caused by Ms.
31 Parnell's negligent driving, Ms. Penney-Lemmon suffered
32 significant physical and neurological injuries, including, but
33 not limited to, discogenic injuries to her neck, disc herniation
34 in her lower back, a type II SLAP tear in her left shoulder, and
35 bilateral temporomandibular joint dysfunction, all of which have
36 required medical intervention and have had a negative impact on
37 her quality of life, and

38 WHEREAS, Ms. Penney-Lemmon was subsequently diagnosed with
39 a traumatic brain injury as a result of the accident which will
40 limit her ability to function normally for the remainder of her
41 life, and

42 WHEREAS, Ms. Penney-Lemmon continues to suffer from chronic
43 headaches and anxiety and depression related to the accident,
44 and

45 WHEREAS, Ms. Penney-Lemmon brought a civil action against
46 Sarasota County in the Twelfth Judicial Circuit in and for
47 Sarasota County, case number 2022-CA-2865, for the negligent
48 acts of its employee Ms. Parnell, which resulted in injuries to
49 Ms. Penney-Lemmon, and

50 WHEREAS, the jury found that negligence on the part of
 51 Sarasota County, through the actions of its employee Ms.
 52 Parnell, was the cause of the injuries and damages to Ms.
 53 Penney-Lemmon and issued a verdict in her favor in the amount of
 54 \$2,491,364.63, plus interest at the rate of 9.34 percent per
 55 annum, or 0.000255191 percent per day, for past and future
 56 damages, and

57 WHEREAS, Sarasota County has paid the statutory limit of
 58 \$200,000 in damages under s. 768.28, Florida Statutes, and

59 WHEREAS, this claim bill is for recovery of the excess
 60 judgment in favor of Ms. Penney-Lemmon, in the amount of
 61 \$2,291,364.63, NOW, THEREFORE,

62

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

64

65 **Section 1.** The facts stated in the preamble to this act
 66 are found and declared to be true.

67 **Section 2.** Sarasota County is authorized and directed to
 68 appropriate from funds not otherwise encumbered and to draw a
 69 warrant in the amount of \$2,291,364.63, payable to Mande Penney-
 70 Lemmon as compensation for injuries and damages sustained.

71 **Section 3.** The amount paid by Sarasota County pursuant to
 72 s. 768.28, Florida Statutes, and the amount awarded under this
 73 act are intended to provide the sole compensation for all
 74 present and future claims arising out of the factual situation

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75 | described in this act which resulted in injuries and damages to
76 | Mande Penney-Lemmon. The total amount paid for attorney fees
77 | relating to this claim may not exceed 25 percent of the total
78 | amount awarded under this act.

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