

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
 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, Florida, 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 broadsided the passenger's side of  
 22          the car in which Angela Sanford was traveling and struck the  
 23          passenger side door at a speed in excess of 40 miles per hour,  
 24          and

25           WHEREAS, Mr. Hunter failed to operate his ambulance in a  
 26          reasonably safe manner and conducted himself in direct violation

HB 3511

2016

27 of the Leon County Emergency Medical Services Standard Operating  
28 Guideline, which specifically requires all emergency vehicles to  
29 come to a full and complete stop at a red light, and

30 WHEREAS, although Mr. Hunter later claimed that the light  
31 was yellow, the video from the ambulance's onboard camera  
32 clearly showed that the light was red for the entire 8 seconds  
33 of the video, and

34 WHEREAS, the investigation conducted by the Leon County  
35 Sheriff's Office concluded that Mr. Hunter was the sole person  
36 at fault in the accident, and

37 WHEREAS, Mr. Hunter also admitted, and the evidence showed,  
38 that fences, trees, and buildings at the corner of the  
39 intersection blocked the other driver's view of the ambulance as  
40 it approached the intersection, and

41 WHEREAS, as a result of the crash, Angela Sanford sustained  
42 life-threatening injuries that left her in a coma, including a  
43 traumatic brain bleed that resulted in permanent cognitive and  
44 depressive disorders, a lacerated liver, a ruptured bladder, a  
45 cranial nerve injury resulting in permanent double vision, a  
46 fractured pelvis requiring hardware insertion, a fractured  
47 clavicle requiring hardware insertion, bilateral hip socket  
48 fractures requiring hardware insertion, a fractured knee, a  
49 fractured shoulder blade, eleven fractured ribs, permanent  
50 peroneal nerve palsy known as foot drop, and numerous other  
51 injuries that have now left her totally disabled and unable to  
52 ever return to her career as an elementary school teacher, and

Page 2 of 4

CODING: Words ~~stricken~~ are deletions; words underlined are additions.

hb3511-00

53 WHEREAS, Angela Sanford's medical expenses at the time of  
 54 judgment exceeded \$744,000, and

55 WHEREAS, on April 13, 2015, a final judgment in the amount  
 56 of \$1.15 million was entered by the trial court for Angela  
 57 Sanford against Leon County, 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 out \$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.

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

HB 3511

2016

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. The total amount paid for attorney fees, lobbying fees,  
82 costs, and similar expenses relating to this claim may not  
83 exceed 25 percent of the total amount awarded under this act.

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