

House Bill No. 765

An act relating to Escambia County; providing for the relief of Bronwen Dodd; authorizing and directing the District School Board of Escambia County to compensate Bronwen Dodd for personal injuries that she suffered due to the negligence of an employee of the school board; providing for attorney's fees and costs; providing an effective date.

WHEREAS, on the afternoon of March 24, 1997, an accident involving an automobile and a school bus occurred at the intersection of Summit Boulevard and Goya Drive in Escambia County, and

WHEREAS, Bronwen Dodd was driving a 1988 Honda eastwardly on Summit Boulevard, and a driver employed by the Escambia County School Board was driving a school bus westwardly on Summit Boulevard, and

WHEREAS, the driver of the school bus had stopped and turned left in order to go south on Goya Drive, and

WHEREAS, as the school bus was turning south onto Goya Drive, it struck Bronwen Dodd's Honda, causing that vehicle to collide with another car that was stopped on Goya Drive, and

WHEREAS, a court subsequently found that the driver of the school bus violated the right-of-way in making the turn, and

WHEREAS, as a result of the accident, Bronwen Dodd suffered severe injuries, including: a closed-head injury (with loss of consciousness); basilar skull, temporal, and sinus fractures; a fractured mandible; cranial nerve injury; significant dental injuries with multiple avulsions of her left incisor, left medial incisor, maxillary teeth, and canines; bilateral pneumothoraces; a punctured lower lip; a lacerated tongue; multiple lacerations to her arm, face, and lower extremities; and optical and auditory damage, and

WHEREAS, those injuries necessitated extensive medical treatment, rehabilitation, and restorative treatments, and

WHEREAS, litigation relating to this accident was begun and, after two unsuccessful attempts at mediation, both parties agreed to participate in binding arbitration, which took place on December 18, 2000, and

WHEREAS, on December 20, 2000, the arbitration panel awarded Bronwen Dodd \$275,000, which did not include any award for past medical expenses, and

WHEREAS, after the arbitrators assessed 20-percent negligence to Bronwen Dodd, her award was reduced to \$220,000, and

WHEREAS, a final judgment in the amount of \$340,999.75 was entered against the Escambia County School Board on May 21, 2001, and

WHEREAS, the Escambia County School Board has paid to Bronwen Dodd the sum of \$100,000, which is the statutory limit pursuant to s. 768.28, Florida Statutes, and Bronwen Dodd is, therefore, petitioning the Legislature for further reimbursement in the amount of \$240,999.75, NOW, THEREFORE,

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

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

Section 2. The District School Board of Escambia County is authorized and directed to appropriate from funds of the school board not otherwise appropriated and to draw a warrant in the amount of \$240,999.75, which amount includes statutory attorney's fees and costs, payable to Bronwen Dodd as compensation for injuries and damages sustained as a result of the negligence of an employee of the school board.

Section 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

Approved by the Governor June 17, 2004.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 17, 2004.