

HB 6517

2026

1 A bill to be entitled

2 An act for the relief of Heriberto A. Sanchez-Mayen by
3 the City of St. Petersburg; providing for an
4 appropriation to compensate Mr. Sanchez-Mayen for
5 injuries sustained as a result of the negligence of
6 the City of St. Petersburg; providing a limitation on
7 compensation and the payment of attorney fees;
8 providing an effective date.

9
10 WHEREAS, on June 8, 2023, Heriberto A. Sanchez-Mayen, a
11 resident of St. Petersburg, Florida, was found asleep on a piece
12 of cardboard just after 10 a.m. in a daytime-only designated
13 park by a St. Petersburg police officer, and

14 WHEREAS, although Mr. Sanchez-Mayen was lawfully present on
15 the property at this time of day, a St. Petersburg police
16 officer arrested him for trespassing and called the prisoner
17 transport van, and

18 WHEREAS, the transport officer handcuffed Mr. Sanchez-Mayen
19 and attached a metal belly chain, which restricted the use of
20 his arms, and placed him unsecured, without a seatbelt or other
21 stationary tethering, on a metal bench in the back of a metal
22 transport van, and

23 WHEREAS, while en route to the Pinellas County Jail, the
24 transport officer, who had not engaged the van's interior video
25 camera showing Mr. Sanchez-Mayen, stopped short for a red light,

HB 6517

2026

26 causing Mr. Sanchez-Mayen, who had no ability to brace or
27 protect himself because he was restrained, to be thrown head
28 first from the back of the van into the bulkhead, where he laid
29 motionless. This was ultimately captured on the van's interior
30 video camera, and

31 WHEREAS, instead of immediately seeking medical treatment
32 for Mr. Sanchez-Mayen, the transport officer continued to drive
33 to the jail where, upon arrival, Mr. Sanchez-Mayen was still
34 motionless and unresponsive on the metal floor of the van, and

35 WHEREAS, the transport officer proceeded to remove Mr.
36 Sanchez-Mayen's body from the van by dragging him by his feet,
37 causing his head to strike the rear bumper, the rear door, and
38 the cement floor, and

39 WHEREAS, Mr. Sanchez-Mayen was taken to a local hospital
40 for approximately 12 hours before being transported to Tampa
41 General Hospital, where doctors determined that Mr. Sanchez-
42 Mayen had sustained catastrophic injuries, including a closed
43 displaced fracture of the third cervical vertebra, a closed
44 odontoid fracture, dissection of the descending thoracic aorta,
45 and spinal cord compression, which ultimately led to amputation
46 of both of his legs above the knees, rendering him an incomplete
47 quadriplegic, and

48 WHEREAS, as a result of the injuries sustained during
49 transport, Mr. Sanchez-Mayen requires supervised medical care,
50 home health care, and other services and support for the rest of

HB 6517

2026

his life, and

WHEREAS, on March 18, 2024, Mr. Sanchez-Mayen brought suit against the City of St. Petersburg and two individual St. Petersburg police officers in the United States District Court for the Middle District of Florida, Tampa Division, under case number 8:24-CV-00690-WFJ-TGW, and

WHEREAS, on March 12, 2025, Mr. Sanchez-Mayen and the City of St. Petersburg entered into a settlement agreement for \$2.5 million, and

WHEREAS, in accordance with s. 768.28, Florida Statutes, the City of St. Petersburg paid \$200,000 to the trust account of Mr. Sanchez-Mayen's lawyer, and

WHEREAS, Mr. Sanchez-Mayen remains liable for both Florida and Pennsylvania Medicaid liens, and

WHEREAS, the settlement agreement provides for the entry of a consent judgment for the remaining amount of \$2.3 million and cooperation by the City of St. Petersburg in not opposing this claim bill, 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 City of St. Petersburg is directed to draw a warrant in the sum of \$2.3 million payable to Heriberto A.

HB 6517

2026

76 Sanchez-Mayen as compensation for injuries and damages
77 sustained.

78 **Section 3.** The amount paid by the City of St. Petersburg
79 pursuant to s. 768.28, Florida Statutes, and the amount awarded
80 under this act are intended to provide the sole compensation for
81 all present and future claims arising out of the factual
82 situation described in this act which resulted in injuries and
83 damages to Heriberto A. Sanchez-Mayen. The total amount paid for
84 attorney fees relating to this claim may not exceed 25 percent
85 of the total amount awarded under this act.

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