

1 SB338
2 136628-2
3 By Senator Keahey
4 RFD: Judiciary
5 First Read: 16-FEB-12

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8 SYNOPSIS: This bill would be known as the TJ Atchison
9 Spinal Cord Injury Research Act.

10 This bill would provide Legislative
11 findings.

12 This bill would create the Spinal Cord
13 Injury Research Program to promote spinal cord
14 research in Alabama with a focus on discovering a
15 cure for spinal cord injuries.

16 This bill would appoint the director within
17 the Department of Physical Medicine and
18 Rehabilitation at the University of Alabama at
19 Birmingham to be responsible for administering and
20 awarding grants for spinal cord injury research.

21 This bill would provide funding for the
22 program by imposing additional fees for certain
23 traffic offenses.

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25 A BILL

26 TO BE ENTITLED

27 AN ACT

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2 To create the Spinal Cord and Injury Research
3 Program; to administer and award funds for spinal cord injury
4 research; and to provide funding for the program by imposing
5 additional fees for certain traffic offenses.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

7 Section 1. This act shall be known and may be cited
8 as the TJ Atchison Spinal Cord Injury Research Act.

9 Section 2. (a) The Legislature finds and declares
10 all of the following:

11 (1) Spinal cord injury is a condition that leaves
12 individuals paralyzed and afflicts 250,000 Americans.

13 (2) In Alabama, approximately 4,708 people are
14 living with a spinal cord injury and approximately 235 new
15 spinal cord injury cases occur every year.

16 (3) Spinal cord injury has serious physical,
17 emotional, financial, and social consequences for its victims
18 and their families.

19 (4) In Alabama, the cost of care for spinal cord
20 injuries is approximately five hundred fifteen million dollars
21 (\$515,000,000) per year and the cost to Alabama in Medicaid
22 and indigent care is approximately one hundred forty-three
23 million dollars (\$143,000,000) per year.

24 (5) There is no established treatment that can cure
25 spinal cord injury.

26 (6) If cures are found for spinal cord injuries the
27 incidence of quadriplegia will be greatly reduced.

(7) Cures for spinal cord injuries are on the threshold of being discovered.

(b) (1) Research is the primary hope for victims and their families.

(2) Research in spinal cord injury has produced experimental results that are of potential value in facilitating or effecting a restoration of function in damaged spinal cords.

(c) Despite the need to make progress toward treatments or cures for spinal cord injury, there is a lack of sufficient resources in Alabama's postsecondary educational institutions to sustain recent scientific progress with respect to this condition. It is the intent of the Legislature to encourage and support research that has as one of its goals the discovery of methods to restore spinal cord function in humans with spinal cord injury.

Section 3. (a) There is established the Spinal Cord Injury Research Fund. All receipts and monies collected under this act shall be deposited in the fund and appropriated to the University of Alabama at Birmingham for the purposes of this act.

(b) The fund shall consist of money generated from certain traffic violations collected by the Department of Public Safety. In addition, the fund may consist of private donations from any source, including federal, state, and other public and private grants.

(c) Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, money remaining in the fund at the end of a fiscal year shall not revert to the General Fund.

(d) The fund established pursuant to this act shall be expended by the University of Alabama at Birmingham for the award of grants to perform spinal cord injury research projects.

Section 4. (a) There is created within the University of Alabama at Birmingham the Spinal Cord Injury Research Program, hereafter referred to as the program.

(b) (1) The program shall be administered by the research director within the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

(2) The program shall be administered according to the guidelines of the University of Alabama at Birmingham's Spinal Cord Injury Model System.

(c) The program shall promote spinal cord research in Alabama with a focus on discovering a cure for spinal cord injuries.

(d) The University of Alabama at Birmingham may establish scientific guidelines and rules necessary for the implementation of this act.

Section 5. (a) The Department of Public Safety shall charge the following additional fees for the traffic offenses listed in this section. The monies generated from the following fees shall be deposited in the Spinal Cord Injury Research Fund:

(1) Ten dollars (\$10) for a driving under the influence charge or conviction.

(2) Five dollars (\$5) for an aggravated moving traffic violation.

(3) One dollar (\$1) for all other traffic moving traffic violations.

(b) As used in this section, aggravated moving traffic violations shall include the following:

(1) Reckless driving or reckless endangerment.

(2) Failure to yield the right-of-way.

(3) Passing a stopped school bus.

(4) Following too closely.

(5) Disregarding traffic control devices.

Section 6. This act shall remain in effect until January 1, 2017, unless prior to that date it is extended by Legislative Act.

Section 7. This act shall become effective on the first day of the third month following its passage and approval by the Governor, or its otherwise becoming law.