

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.

24  
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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

9                   (1) Reckless driving or reckless endangerment.

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

11                  (3) Passing a stopped school bus.

12                  (4) Following too closely.

13                  (5) Disregarding traffic control devices.

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

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