



by Bill Reed

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## Parents' decision: 'Take her leg off, or she would die'

Weeks after a school bus ran over 17-year-old Ashley Zauflik outside Pennsbury High School, mangling her body, her parents faced a daunting decision: "Take her leg off, or she would die," Marguerite Zauflik testified Friday in Bucks County Court.

"It was excruciating. It was the worse day ever of my life," Marguerite Zauflik told the jury of eight women and four men. "Would she be upset with me, mad at me? I had to do it – it was either that or die."

When the girl awakened from a month-long, medically induced coma, surgeons told her they had amputated her left leg six inches above the knee. "She looked up at me, stared at me," Marguerite Zauflik recalled. "I'm sorry, I'm sorry. It was the only thing I could do to save you."

Nearly five years after the accident, Ashley Zauflik is suing the district for at least \$3 million in damages – about \$5.7 million with inflation – plus compensation for pain and suffering. The district, which denied liability until Monday, has offered a total of \$500,000 to her and seven other students whose injuries were not nearly as serious.

The district's offer is based on a state cap on financial liability. But the district is not prevented from paying above the cap, Zauflik's lawyer, [Tom Kline](#) said outside the courtroom. And no matter how the jury finds next week, the case is probably headed to the state Supreme Court, which has not reviewed the cap since 1986, he said.

"This case will show what the community thinks it [the accident] is worth," Kline said.

The district's lawyer, David Cohen, declined to comment on the case.

Testimony ended Friday, and closing arguments are scheduled for Monday morning.

