**Fair Compensation for Florida Exonerees: How You Can Help**

**Getting Started**

* **[Sign up](http://www.innocenceproject.org/florida-action/) for Florida compensation** [**action alerts**](http://www.innocenceproject.org/florida-action/)to connect directly with your state lawmakers by phone, Twitter and email.
* **Find your state senator** [**here**](http://www.flsenate.gov/Senators/Find) **and state representative** [here](https://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Representatives/myrepresentative.aspx). The links will give you their phone numbers and email addresses.

**Florida Statehouse 101**

* **Process:** The Florida state legislature is composed of the state Senate and House of Representatives.
	1. Bill Introduced: Lawmaker files bill and it receives a number.
	2. Committees: The Florida State Senate and House are organized into committees that focus on specific issue areas. Committees hold public hearings and vote on bills. In Florida bills are typically assigned to multiple committees.
	3. Full House/Senate Vote: If a bill passes all assigned committees, it must be approved by the full House of Representatives and Senate before going to the governor for approval or veto.
* **Key Committees**. It’s helpful to know if your state senator or representative is on one of the 6 committees that will be voting on exoneree compensation legislation. Find out by clicking on the links. Senate: 1) [Criminal Justice](http://www.flsenate.gov/Committees/Show/CJ), 2) [Appropriations Subcommittee on Criminal Justice](http://www.flsenate.gov/Committees/Show/ACJ) and 3) [Appropriations](http://www.flsenate.gov/Committees/Show/AP); House: 1) [Criminal Justice](https://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Committees/committeesdetail.aspx?SessionId=89&CommitteeId=3023), 2) [Appropriations](https://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Committees/committeesdetail.aspx?SessionId=89&CommitteeId=2991), 3) [Judiciary](https://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Committees/committeesdetail.aspx?SessionId=89&CommitteeId=2998).
* **Interim hearings**: The Florida legislature is scheduled to reconvene on March 2, 2021. However, committees can hold hearings and vote on bills before the full legislature is in session.
* **The real work happens BEFORE legislative session**: The real work of educating lawmakers and building momentum for a successful bill happens before session. The coming months are the ideal time to contact your lawmakers.

**Effectively Communicating with Lawmakers**

* **Personalized communications**—**phones & in-person meetings—have the most impact** *(during COVID-19 pandemic in-person meetings may not be possible)***.** Generic mass emails with the same cut and pasted text have the lowest impact. Lawmakers and staff assume their constituents really care about an issue if they take the time to engage in personalized outreach.
* **Keep the message clear & concise:** The most important message to lawmakers and their staff is: *I live in your district, and fixing the exoneree compensation law is important to me. Will you support legislation to improve compensation for the wrongfully convicted?”* Adding your own story about what inspired you to act. Did you hearing an exoneree speak? Read about their story in the newspaper?

***\*\*NOTE: Bill numbers will be assigned when the legislative session begins in 2021. During the session lawmakers/staff may ask for a bill number, but prior to session you can refer to the issue of “exoneree compensation.”***

* **Power in numbers**. The more that lawmakers hear about an issue, the more likely they are to act. Remind your lawmaker a few times before and during session that you care about fixing the exoneree compensation law. Amplify your impact by asking family, friends, and local civic groups to contact their state lawmakers in support of fixing Florida’s exoneree compensation law. Sign up for [**action alerts**](http://www.innocenceproject.org/florida-action/)to let other Floridians know what they can do to help.