

**Maryland Restorative Justice Initiative**  
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Grassroots Criminal Justice

Advocates Network

MSBA Correctional Reform  
Section

The Justice Policy Institute

The Sentencing Project

**Senate Bill 797**

**Favorable**

**Compensation to Individual Erroneously Convicted, Sentenced, and Confined, or Whose Conviction or Adjudication Is Reversed**

Chairman Smith and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

The Maryland Restorative Justice Initiative supports Senate Bill 797. As the director of MRJI, and a member of the Task Force that studied this issue the need to pass this legislation is still urgent. The Task Force did an excellent evaluation of the compensation procedure, and provided excellent guidance to compensate Erroneously Convicted individuals, but the legislation did not pass.

The Board of Public Works did develop a method to compensate five individuals last year I was one of those individuals. However, I was released in 2006, completely exonerated in 2014, yet only began being compensated in 2019. It should not have taken that long to correct a miscarriage of justice, this is why passage of SB-797 is so important.

Each individual experience trauma differently, so it is difficult to fathom what they are dealing with, that is unless you have had a similar experience. You will never be able to make them whole again, because they will never be the same, the best you can hope is that they learn to live with what has happened to them.

What this body can do is pass this legislation so that those individuals who has been **erroneously Convicted, can be compensated in a timely manner.**

**I therefore encourage you to vote Favorable for Senate Bill 797**

*Sincerely,*

*Walter Lomax*, Executive Director  
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