

Senate Bill 14 Favorable
Ransom Watkins & Alfred Chestnut
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
February 4, 2021

Our names are Ransom Watkins and Alfred Chestnut, and along with our friend Andrew Stewart, we were wrongly convicted of murder at age 16. After spending 36 years in prison, we were finally exonerated on November 29, 2019 by the Baltimore City State's Attorney Marilyn Mosby.

We are grateful that the state of Maryland awarded us compensation last year. But other exonerees who have been excluded, and those who come after us, deserve fair compensation. Passing Senate Bill 14 is the right thing to do for the wrongfully convicted.

There is no amount of money can give us back the years that were taken away. It is a challenge to reenter a world that has changed so much from the one we left behind as teenagers.

However, being compensated has helped us adjust to our new lives. We can pay our bills without constantly worrying about financial survival. We've both gotten our own homes and can help our families. The things we have dreamed about for so long—starting a business, working as a field tech—are possible because of compensation.

We were fortunate to have people who helped us, and now we have to pay it forward. When the state wrongfully convicts someone, it should take responsibility to make things right.

Please support Senate Bill 14 to fix the compensation law for other innocent Marylanders.