

1 A bill to be entitled

2 An act for the relief of Wilton Allen Dedge, Walter Dedge
3 and Mary Dedge, parents of Wilton Allen Dedge, and legal
4 counsel representing Wilton Allen Dedge; providing an
5 appropriation to compensate Wilton Allen Dedge for
6 wrongful imprisonment and for being a victim of a
7 miscarriage of justice; providing an appropriation to
8 compensate Walter Dedge and Mary Dedge, parents of Wilton
9 Allen Dedge, for funds expended to provide a defense to
10 the charges against, and to support the efforts to
11 exonerate, Wilton Allen Dedge, and expenses incurred as a
12 result of the wrongful imprisonment of Wilton Allen Dedge;
13 providing an appropriation to compensate legal counsel
14 whose representation resulted in the exoneration of Wilton
15 Allen Dedge and his release from prison; providing an
16 effective date.

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18 WHEREAS, In 1982, Wilton Allen Dedge was convicted in
19 Brevard County, Florida, of sexual battery, aggravated battery,
20 and burglary, and was sentenced to two consecutive life
21 sentences, and

22 WHEREAS, after serving more than 22 years in jail and in
23 prison, during which time he diligently maintained his
24 innocence, Wilton Allen Dedge has been fully exonerated through
25 DNA tests, and

26 WHEREAS, an order of the circuit court, entered on the
27 motion of the state attorney, has judicially established the
28 fact that Wilton Allen Dedge should not have been incarcerated

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29 since he was innocent of the crime for which he was prosecuted,
 30 and

31 WHEREAS, DNA testing of evidence has irrefutably excluded
 32 Wilton Allen Dedge as the person who committed the crime for
 33 which he was convicted, and

34 WHEREAS, the facts demonstrated that the investigation and
 35 prosecution of Wilton Allen Dedge and the failure to release
 36 Wilton Allen Dedge following the first DNA test, or at least to
 37 grant him a new trial, was not reasonable under the
 38 circumstances, and

39 WHEREAS, the Dedge family spent considerable resources in
 40 providing a defense and other efforts that led to the
 41 exoneration of Wilton Allen Dedge, and also expended resources
 42 in supporting their son and visiting him while he was
 43 imprisoned, and

44 WHEREAS, the attorneys who worked for Wilton Allen Dedge's
 45 exoneration and release provided very competent legal services
 46 and are entitled to attorney's fees, and

47 WHEREAS, considering the totality of the circumstances,
 48 equity and justice require that this miscarriage of justice
 49 should be addressed by the Legislature of the State of Florida,
 50 NOW, THEREFORE,

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52 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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54 Section 1. The facts stated in the preamble to this act
 55 are found and declared to be true.

56 Section 2. A sum shall be appropriated from the General
 57 Revenue Fund to Wilton Allen Dedge as compensation for his

58 wrongful imprisonment and for having been the victim of a
59 miscarriage of justice.

60 Section 3. The Chief Financial Officer is directed to draw
61 a warrant in favor of Wilton Allen Dedge upon funds of the State
62 Treasury, and the Chief Financial Officer is directed to pay the
63 same out of such funds in the State Treasury.

64 Section 4. A sum shall be appropriated from the General
65 Revenue Fund to Walter Dedge and Mary Dedge, parents of Wilton
66 Allen Dedge, as compensation for funds expended to provide a
67 defense to the charges against their son, Wilton Allen Dedge,
68 funds expended to support the efforts to exonerate their son,
69 and expenses incurred as a result of his wrongful imprisonment.

70 Section 5. The Chief Financial Officer is directed to draw
71 a warrant in favor of Walter Dedge and Mary Dedge upon funds of
72 the State Treasury, and the Chief Financial Officer is directed
73 to pay the same out of such funds in the State Treasury.

74 Section 6. A sum shall be appropriated from the General
75 Revenue Fund to specified legal counsel representing Wilton
76 Allen Dedge as compensation for their representation which
77 resulted in the exoneration of Wilton Allen Dedge and his
78 release from prison.

79 Section 7. The Chief Financial Officer is directed to draw
80 a warrant in favor of specified legal counsel representing
81 Wilton Allen Dedge upon funds of the State Treasury, and the
82 Chief Financial Officer is directed to pay the same out of such
83 funds in the State Treasury.

84 Section 8. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.