By Senator Joyner

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A bill to be entitled

An act relating to compensation for wrongful incarceration; amending s. 961.02, F.S.; defining the term "actual innocence" for purposes of the Victims of Wrongful Incarceration Compensation Act; redefining the term "wrongfully incarcerated person," to conform; amending s. 961.03, F.S.; requiring that a petition for compensation describe the existence of clear and convincing evidence of actual innocence; requiring the petitioner to submit fingerprints for criminal history records checks; providing that a failure to submit fingerprints within the prescribed timeframe does not warrant denial of compensation under the act; providing procedures for taking and submitting fingerprints; requiring that the results of the criminal history records checks be submitted to the clerk of the court; providing for use of the results by the court; requiring that the Department of Law Enforcement pay for the criminal history records checks; amending s. 961.05, F.S.; eliminating the requirement that a wrongfully incarcerated person provide certain court records and documentation from the Department of Corrections along with an application for compensation; requiring the Department of Legal Affairs to request certain records from the clerk of the court and the Department of Corrections; amending s. 961.06, F.S.; providing for compensation of reasonable attorney's fees and expenses, up to \$50,000, incurred for pursuing compensation for

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wrongful incarceration; directing the Chief Financial Officer to remit payment of attorney's fees directly to the attorney; precluding the attorney from receipt of additional fees from the wrongfully incarcerated person; requiring the Chief Financial Officer to draw a warrant to an insurance company or other financial institution authorized to issue annuity contracts to purchase an annuity selected by the wrongfully incarcerated person; authorizing the Chief Financial Officer to execute all necessary agreements to implement compensation and to maximize the benefit to the wrongfully incarcerated person; requiring that the wrongfully incarcerated person sign a waiver before the Department of Legal Affairs approves the application; precluding submission of an application for compensation if the wrongfully incarcerated person has received a prior favorable judgment from a civil action arising out of the wrongful incarceration; providing an effective date.

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

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Section 1. Section 961.02, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

961.02 Definitions.—As used in ss. 961.01-961.07, the term:

- (1) "Act" means the Victims of Wrongful Incarceration Compensation Act.
- (2) "Actual innocence" means that a person did not commit the act or the offense that served as the basis for the

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conviction and incarceration for which the person seeks compensation, and that the person did not aid, abet, or act as an accomplice to a person who committed the act or offense.

- (3) (2) "Department" means the Department of Legal Affairs.
- $\underline{\text{(4)}}$ "Division" means the Division of Administrative Hearings.
- (5) (4) "Wrongfully incarcerated person" means a person whose felony conviction and sentence have been vacated by a court of competent jurisdiction and, with respect to whom pursuant to the requirements of s. 961.03, the original sentencing court has issued its order finding that the person has proven actual innocence by clear and convincing evidence neither committed the act nor the offense that served as the basis for the conviction and incarceration and that the person did not aid, abet, or act as an accomplice or accessory to a person who committed the act or offense.
- (6) (5) "Eligible for compensation" means a person meets the definition of "wrongfully incarcerated person" and is not disqualified from seeking compensation under the criteria prescribed in s. 961.04.
- $\underline{(7)}$ "Entitled to compensation" means a person meets the definition of "eligible for compensation" and satisfies the application requirements prescribed in s. 961.05, and may receive compensation pursuant to s. 961.06.
- Section 2. Section 961.03, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:
- 961.03 Determination of status as a wrongfully incarcerated person; determination of eligibility for compensation.—
 - (1) (a) In order to meet the definition of a "wrongfully

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incarcerated person" and "eligible for compensation," upon entry of an order, based upon exonerating evidence, vacating a conviction and sentence, a person must set forth the claim of wrongful incarceration under oath and with particularity by filing a petition with the original sentencing court, with a copy of the petition and proper notice to the prosecuting authority in the underlying felony for which the person was incarcerated. At a minimum, the petition must:

- 1. State that <u>clear and convincing</u> verifiable and substantial evidence of actual innocence exists and state with particularity the nature and significance of the verifiable and substantial evidence of actual innocence; and
- 2. State that the person is not disqualified, under the provisions of s. 961.04, from seeking compensation under this act.
- (b) The person must file the petition with the court:

 1. within 90 days after the order vacating a conviction and sentence becomes final if the person's conviction and sentence is vacated on or after July 1, 2008.
- 2. By July 1, 2010, if the person's conviction and sentence was vacated by an order that became final prior to July 1, 2008.
- (c) 1. Within 30 days after filing the petition, the petitioner must submit fingerprints for a state and national criminal history records check. Failure to satisfy this subparagraph within the prescribed timeframe is not grounds for denial of compensation under this act.
- 2. The clerk of the court shall inform the petitioner of the process for having his or her fingerprints taken and submitted and provide information concerning law enforcement

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agencies or service providers that are authorized to submit
fingerprints electronically to the Department of Law
Enforcement.

- 3. The petitioner's fingerprints must be taken in a manner approved by the Department of Law Enforcement and shall be submitted electronically to the Department of Law Enforcement for state processing for a criminal history records check. The Department of Law Enforcement shall submit the fingerprints to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for national processing. The Department of Law Enforcement shall submit the results of the state and national records checks to the clerk of the court. The court shall consider the results in evaluating whether the petitioner is eligible for compensation under s. 961.04.
- 4. The petitioner may not be charged for the cost of conducting the state and national criminal history records checks required under this paragraph. The cost of state and national processing shall be borne by the Department of Law Enforcement.
- (2) The prosecuting authority must respond to the petition within 30 days. The prosecuting authority may respond:
- (a) By certifying to the court that, based upon the petition and verifiable and substantial evidence of actual innocence, no further criminal proceedings in the case at bar can or will be initiated by the prosecuting authority, and that the prosecuting authority does not contest no questions of fact remain as to the petitioner's claim of actual innocence wrongful incarceration, and that the petitioner is not ineligible from seeking compensation under the provisions of s. 961.04; or
 - (b) By certifying to the court that questions of fact

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remain as to the petitioner's claim of actual innocence, and that the prosecuting authority contests contesting the nature, significance, or effect of the evidence of actual innocence, the facts related to the petitioner's alleged wrongful incarceration, or whether the petitioner is ineligible from seeking compensation under the provisions of s. 961.04.

- (3) If the prosecuting authority certifies to the court that it does not contest the petitioner's claim of actual innocence, and the court finds that the petitioner has proven actual innocence by clear and convincing evidence and is eligible for compensation under s. 961.04 responds as set forth in paragraph (2)(a), the original sentencing court, based upon the evidence of actual innocence, the prosecuting authority's certification, and upon the court's finding that the petitioner has presented clear and convincing evidence that the petitioner committed neither the act nor the offense that served as the basis for the conviction and incarceration, and that the petitioner did not aid, abet, or act as an accomplice to a person who committed the act or offense, the original sentencing court shall certify to the department that the petitioner is a wrongfully incarcerated person who is eligible for compensation as defined by this act. Based upon the prosecuting authority's certification, the court shall also certify to the department that the petitioner is eligible for compensation under the provisions of s. 961.04.
- (4) (a) If the prosecuting authority <u>contests the</u>

 <u>petitioner's claim of actual innocence responds as set forth in</u>

 paragraph (2)(b), the original sentencing court shall make a

 determination from the pleadings and supporting documentation

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whether, by a preponderance of the evidence, the petitioner is
eligible ineligible for compensation under the provisions of s.
961.04, regardless of his or her claim of wrongful
incarceration. If the court finds the petitioner ineligible
under the provisions of s. 961.04, it must shall dismiss the
petition.

- (b) If the court determines that the petitioner is eligible under s. 961.04 prosecuting authority responds as set forth in paragraph (2) (b), and the court determines that the petitioner is eligible under the provisions of s. 961.04, but the prosecuting authority contests the nature, significance, or effect of the evidence of actual innocence, or the facts related to the petitioner's alleged wrongful incarceration, the court shall set forth its findings and transfer the petition by electronic means through the division's website to the division for findings of fact and a recommended determination of whether the petitioner has proven actual innocence established that he or she is a wrongfully incarcerated person who is eligible for compensation under this act.
- (5) The petitioner must prove actual innocence before the administrative law judge by clear and convincing evidence. Any questions of fact, the nature, significance or effect of the evidence of actual innocence, and the petitioner's eligibility for compensation under this act must be established by clear and convincing evidence by the petitioner before an administrative law judge.
- (6) (a) Pursuant to division rules and any additional rules set forth by the administrative law judge, a hearing $\underline{\text{must}}$ shall be conducted no later than 120 days after the transfer of the

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204 petition to the division.

- (b) The prosecuting authority shall appear for the purpose of contesting, as necessary, the facts, the nature, and significance or effect of the evidence of actual innocence as presented by the petitioner.
- (c) No later than 45 days after the adjournment of the hearing, the administrative law judge shall issue an order setting forth his or her findings and recommendation and shall file the order with the original sentencing court.
- (d) The original sentencing court shall review the findings and recommendation contained in the order of the administrative law judge and, within 60 days, shall issue its own order adopting or declining to adopt the findings and recommendation of the administrative law judge.
- (7) If the court concludes that the petitioner is a wrongfully incarcerated person as defined by this act and is eligible for compensation as defined in this act, the court shall include in its order a certification to the department that:
- (a)1. The order of the administrative law judge finds that the petitioner has met his or her burden of proving actual innocence establishing by clear and convincing evidence that the petitioner committed neither the act nor the offense that served as the basis for the conviction and incarceration and that the petitioner did not aid, abet, or act as an accomplice to a person who committed the act or offense;
- 2. The findings and recommendation of the administrative law judge on which its order is based are supported by competent, substantial evidence; and

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3. The petitioner is a wrongfully incarcerated person who is eligible for compensation; or

- (b) 2. That The court has declined to adopt the findings and recommendation recommendations of the administrative law judge that the petitioner failed to prove actual innocence by clear and convincing evidence and finds that the petitioner has met his or her burden of proving actual innocence establishing by clear and convincing evidence, and that the petitioner is a wrongfully incarcerated person who is eligible for compensation. that the petitioner committed neither the act nor the offense that served as the basis for the conviction and incarceration and that the petitioner did not aid, abet, or act as an accomplice to a person who committed the act or offense; and
- (b) The original sentencing court determines the findings and recommendations on which its order is based are supported by competent, substantial evidence.
- (8) The establishment of the method by which a person may seek the status of a wrongfully incarcerated person and a finding as to eligibility for compensation under this act in no way creates any rights of due process beyond those set forth in this act herein, nor is there created any right to further petition or appeal beyond the scope of the method set forth in this act herein.
- Section 3. Section 961.05, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:
- 961.05 Application for compensation for wrongful incarceration; administrative expunction; determination of entitlement to compensation.—
 - (1) A wrongfully incarcerated person who is eligible for

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compensation as defined in this act must initiate his or her application for compensation as required in this section no more than 2 years after the original sentencing court enters its order finding that the person meets the definition of \underline{a} wrongfully incarcerated person and is eligible for compensation as defined in this act.

- (2) A wrongfully incarcerated person who is eligible for compensation under the act must apply to the Department of Legal Affairs. No estate of, or personal representative for, a decedent is entitled to apply on behalf of the decedent for compensation for wrongful incarceration.
- (3) The Department of Legal Affairs may adopt rules regarding the forms and procedures related to applications for compensation under this act the Victims of Wrongful Incarceration Compensation Act.
 - (4) The application must include:
- (a) Identification of the original sentencing court and the criminal case number of the case or cases for which the person was wrongfully incarcerated A certified copy of the order vacating the conviction and sentence;
- (b) A certified copy of the original sentencing court's order finding the claimant to be a wrongfully incarcerated person who is eligible for compensation under this act;
 - (c) Certified copies of the original judgment and sentence;
- (d) Documentation demonstrating the length of the sentence served, including documentation from the Department of Corrections regarding the person's admission into and release from the custody of the Department of Corrections;
 - (b) (e) Positive proof of identification, including two full

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sets of fingerprints administered by a law enforcement agency and a current form of photo identification, demonstrating that the person seeking compensation is the same individual who was wrongfully incarcerated;

- $\underline{\text{(c)}}$ All supporting documentation of any fine, penalty, or court costs imposed and paid by the wrongfully incarcerated person as described in s. 961.06(1)(c);
- $\underline{\text{(d)}}_{\text{(g)}}$ All supporting documentation of any reasonable attorney's fees and expenses as described in s. 961.06(1)(d); and
- (e) (h) Any other documentation, evidence, or information required by rules adopted by the department.
- (5) Upon receipt of the application, the department shall:
 forward one full set of fingerprints of the applicant to the
 Department of Law Enforcement for statewide criminal records
 checks. The Department of Law Enforcement shall forward the
 second set of fingerprints to the Federal Bureau of
 Investigation for national criminal records checks. The results
 of the state and national records checks shall be submitted to
 the department.
- (a) Request that the clerk of the court provide a certified copy of the order vacating the conviction and sentence and certified copies of the original judgment and sentence. The clerk shall provide these records at no charge.
- (b) Request that the Department of Corrections provide documentation demonstrating the length of the sentence served, including the dates of the wrongfully incarcerated person's admission into and release from the custody of the Department of Corrections. The Department of Corrections shall provide this

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320 documentation at no charge.

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(c) (6) Upon receipt of an application, the department shall Examine the application and notify the wrongfully incarcerated person claimant within 30 calendar days of any errors or omissions, and request any additional information relevant to the review of the application. The wrongfully incarcerated person claimant shall have 15 days after proper notification of any existing errors or omissions to supplement the application. The department may not deny an application for failure of the wrongfully incarcerated person claimant to correct an error or omission or supply additional information unless the department timely notified the person claimant of such errors or omissions or requested the additional information within the 30-day period specified in this paragraph subsection. The department shall process and review each completed application within 90 calendar days. Once the department determines whether a claim for compensation meets the requirements of this act, the department shall notify the wrongfully incarcerated person claimant within 5 business days of that determination.

(6) (7) If the department determines that a wrongfully incarcerated person claimant meets the requirements of this act, the wrongfully incarcerated person who is the subject of the claim becomes entitled to compensation, subject to the provisions in s. 961.06.

Section 4. Section 961.06, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

- 961.06 Compensation for wrongful incarceration.-
- (1) Except as otherwise provided in this act and subject to the limitations and procedures prescribed in this section, a

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person who is found to be entitled to compensation under the provisions of this act is entitled to:

- (a) Monetary compensation for wrongful incarceration, which shall be calculated at a rate of \$50,000 for each year of wrongful incarceration, prorated as necessary to account for a portion of a year. For persons found to be wrongfully incarcerated after December 31, 2008, the Chief Financial Officer may adjust the annual rate of compensation for inflation using the change in the December-to-December "Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers" of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor;
- (b) A waiver of tuition and fees for up to 120 hours of instruction at any career center established under s. 1001.44, any community college as defined in s. 1000.21(3), or any state university as defined in s. 1000.21(6), if the wrongfully incarcerated person meets and maintains the regular admission requirements of such career center, community college, or state university; remains registered at such educational institution; and makes satisfactory academic progress as defined by the educational institution in which the wrongfully incarcerated person claimant is enrolled;
- (c) The amount of any fine, penalty, or court costs imposed and paid by the wrongfully incarcerated person;
- (d) The amount of any reasonable attorney's fees and expenses incurred and paid by the wrongfully incarcerated person in connection with all criminal proceedings and appeals regarding the wrongful conviction, to be calculated by the department based upon the supporting documentation submitted as specified in s. 961.05; and

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(e) The amount of any reasonable attorney's fees and expenses incurred by the wrongfully incarcerated person in connection with obtaining compensation under this act, not to exceed \$50,000, to be calculated by the department upon the submission of supporting documentation of those fees and expenses. The Chief Financial Officer shall pay the attorney's fees and costs directly to the attorney, and the attorney may not receive additional fees and costs from the wrongfully incarcerated person by another arrangement or contract; and

(f) (e) Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary in s. 943.0585, immediate administrative expunction of the wrongfully incarcerated person's criminal record resulting from his or her wrongful arrest, wrongful conviction, and wrongful incarceration. The Department of Legal Affairs and the Department of Law Enforcement shall, upon a determination that a person claimant is entitled to compensation, immediately take all action necessary to administratively expunge the person's claimant's criminal record arising from his or her wrongful arrest, wrongful conviction, and wrongful incarceration. All fees for this process shall be waived.

The total compensation awarded under paragraphs (a), (c), and (d), and (e) may not exceed \$2 million. Except as provided in paragraph (e), no further award for attorney's fees, lobbying fees, costs, or other similar expenses shall be made by the state.

(2) In calculating monetary compensation under paragraph(1) (a), a wrongfully incarcerated person who is placed on parole or community supervision while serving the sentence resulting

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from the wrongful conviction and who commits anything less than a felony law violation that results in revocation of the parole or community supervision is eligible for compensation for the total number of years incarcerated. A wrongfully incarcerated person who commits a felony law violation that results in revocation of the parole or community supervision is ineligible for any compensation under subsection (1).

- (3) Within 15 calendar days after issuing notice to the wrongfully incarcerated person claimant that his or her claim satisfies all of the requirements under this act, the department shall notify the Chief Financial Officer to draw a warrant from the General Revenue Fund or another source designated by the Legislature in law for the purchase of an annuity for the wrongfully incarcerated person claimant based on the total amount determined by the department under this act.
- (4) The Chief Financial Officer shall issue payment in the amount determined by the department to an insurance company or other financial institution admitted and authorized to issue purchase an annuity contracts in this state to purchase an annuity, selected by the wrongfully incarcerated person, on behalf of the claimant for a term of not less than 10 years. The Chief Financial Officer shall execute all necessary agreements to implement this act and maximize the benefit to the wrongfully incarcerated person. The terms of the annuity shall:
- (a) Provide that the annuity may not be sold, discounted, or used as security for a loan or mortgage by the <u>wrongfully</u> <u>incarcerated person</u> <u>applicant</u>.
- (b) Contain beneficiary provisions for the continued disbursement of the annuity in the event of the death of the

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wrongfully incarcerated person applicant.

- (5) Before the department approves the application under s.

 961.05 Chief Financial Officer draws the warrant for the
 purchase of the annuity, the wrongfully incarcerated person
 claimant must sign a release and waiver on behalf of the
 wrongfully incarcerated person claimant and his or her heirs,
 successors, and assigns, forever releasing the state or any
 agency, instrumentality, or any political subdivision thereof,
 or any other entity subject to the provisions of s. 768.28, from
 all present or future claims that the wrongfully incarcerated
 person claimant or his or her heirs, successors, or assigns may
 have against such entities arising out of the facts in
 connection with the wrongful conviction for which compensation
 is being sought under the act. The release and waiver must be
 provided to the department prior to the issuance of the warrant
 by the Chief Financial Officer.
- (6) (a) A wrongfully incarcerated person may not submit an application for compensation under this act if the person has a civil action lawsuit pending against the state or any agency, instrumentality, or any political subdivision thereof, or any other entity subject to the provisions of s. 768.28, in state or federal court requesting compensation arising out of the facts in connection with the wrongfully incarcerated person's claimant's conviction and incarceration.
- (b) A wrongfully incarcerated person may not submit an application for compensation under this act if the person has received a prior judgment in his or her favor in a civil action against the state or any agency, instrumentality, or any political subdivision thereof, or against any other entity

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subject to s. 768.28, in state or federal court arising out of the wrongfully incarcerated person's conviction and incarceration.

- (c) (b) A wrongfully incarcerated person may not submit an application for compensation under this act if the person is the subject of a claim bill pending for claims arising out of the facts in connection with the wrongfully incarcerated person's claimant's conviction and incarceration.
- (d) (e) Once an application is filed under this act, a wrongfully incarcerated person may not pursue recovery under a claim bill until the final disposition of the application.
- (e) (d) Any amount awarded under this act is intended to provide the sole compensation for any and all present and future claims arising out of the facts in connection with the wrongfully incarcerated person's claimant's conviction and incarceration. Upon notification by the department that an application meets the requirements of this act, a wrongfully incarcerated person may not recover under a claim bill.
- (f) (e) Any compensation awarded under a claim bill shall be the sole redress for claims arising out of the facts in connection with the wrongfully incarcerated person's claimant's conviction and incarceration and, upon any award of compensation to a wrongfully incarcerated person under a claim bill, the person may not receive compensation under this act.
- (7) Any payment made under this act does not constitute a waiver of any defense of sovereign immunity or an increase in the limits of liability on behalf of the state or any person subject to the provisions of s. 768.28 or other law.
 - Section 5. This act shall take effect July 1, 2012.