

HB 6501

2021

1 A bill to be entitled

2 An act for the relief of Barney Brown, who was  
3 wrongfully incarcerated for 38 years; providing an  
4 appropriation to compensate him for his wrongful  
5 incarceration; providing that the act does not waive  
6 certain defenses or increase the state's liability;  
7 providing that the appropriation satisfies all present  
8 and future claims related to the arrest, conviction,  
9 and incarceration of Barney Brown; prohibiting the  
10 award of any additional amounts for specified  
11 purposes; providing an effective date.

12  
13 WHEREAS, in 1970, Barney Brown was convicted in Miami-Dade  
14 County, then known as Dade County, of rape and robbery and was  
15 sentenced to life in prison despite an earlier acquittal of the  
16 same charges in juvenile court, and

17 WHEREAS, Mr. Brown served 38 years in prison, during which  
18 time he steadfastly maintained his innocence, and

19 WHEREAS, in September 2008, the Circuit Court in the 11th  
20 Judicial Circuit in and for Miami-Dade County vacated the  
21 judgment and sentence of Mr. Brown as entered on September 11,  
22 1970, because significant doubt existed as to his guilt, and

23 WHEREAS, the Legislature acknowledges that the state's  
24 system of justice yielded an imperfect result that had tragic  
25 consequences in this case, and

26 WHEREAS, this act is based on a moral desire to acknowledge  
 27 those who are wrongfully convicted of a felony offense,  
 28 incarcerated as a result of that conviction, and subsequently  
 29 determined to actually be innocent, and is not a recognition of  
 30 a constitutional right or violation, and

31 WHEREAS, the Legislature is providing compensation to Mr.  
 32 Brown to acknowledge the fact that he suffered significant  
 33 damages that are unique to him, and

34 WHEREAS, the Legislature intends that any compensation made  
 35 pursuant to this act be the sole compensation provided by the  
 36 state for any and all present and future claims arising out of  
 37 the factual situation described in the preamble of this act,  
 38 including the wrongful incarceration of Mr. Brown for 38 years,  
 39 NOW, THEREFORE,

40  
 41 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

42  
 43 Section 1. The facts stated in the preamble to this act  
 44 are found and declared to be true.

45 Section 2. The sum of \$1.9 million is appropriated from  
 46 the General Revenue Fund to the Department of Financial Services  
 47 for the relief of Barney Brown for the injuries and damages he  
 48 sustained.

49 Section 3. The Chief Financial Officer is directed to draw  
 50 a warrant in favor of Barney Brown in the sum of \$1.9 million

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51 upon funds of the Department of Financial Services in the State  
52 Treasury, and the Chief Financial Officer is directed to pay the  
53 same out of such funds in the State Treasury.

54 Section 4. The Legislature, by this act, does not waive  
55 any defense of sovereign immunity or increase the limits of  
56 liability on behalf of the state or any person or entity that is  
57 subject to s. 768.28, Florida Statutes, or any other law.

58 Section 5. This award is intended to provide the sole  
59 compensation for any and all present and future claims arising  
60 out of the factual situation in connection with Barney Brown's  
61 arrest, conviction, and incarceration. Any additional award may  
62 not be made for attorney fees, lobbying fees, costs, or other  
63 similar expenses to Barney Brown by the state or any agency,  
64 instrumentality, or political subdivision thereof, or by any  
65 other entity, including any county constitutional office,  
66 officer, or employee, in state or federal court.

67 Section 6. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.