



STATEMENT FROM THE ARIZONA JUSTICE PROJECT

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Arizona Passes a New Law, Financial Compensation for Those Who Have Been Wrongly Convicted

On Friday, June 27, 2025, Governor Katie Hobbs signed SB1500 into law, making Arizona the 41st state to provide a legal avenue to seek financial compensation for years lost due to a wrongful conviction. Those who meet the narrow requirements of the law can receive two-times the median household income for each year lost as well as reintegrative services upon release. Those formerly on death row may receive an additional \$25,000 per year. The law also includes a measure to assist the original crime victim with mental health services for the unique harm caused by a wrongful conviction. The bill goes into effect on December 31, 2025.

Representative Khyl Powell, legislative district 14, the champion behind this compensation bill, worked hard all session meeting with criminal justice stakeholders, making amendments to ensure the purpose of the bill was met, and obtaining bipartisan support to move the bill through.

The bill, originally introduced as HB2813 and later amended onto SB1500, received unanimous support before the House Public Safety Committee, House Appropriations Committee, and a 55-1 vote on the House floor on the last night of the session. The Senate approved the bill with a 16-13 vote on Friday, June 27th. Hours later, Governor Hobbs signed the bill into law.

“This bill reflects the truth that justice doesn’t come from an exoneration alone—it requires repair,” said Hope DeLap, Quattrone Strategic Litigation Counsel at the Arizona Justice Project. “I’m incredibly proud to have worked alongside Representative Khyl Powell to move this legislation forward. Together, we turned outrage into action, and action into meaningful support for those who lost years to wrongful incarceration. Today, Arizona takes a step toward accountability and healing.”



Khalil Rushdan, who served 15 ½ years before his conviction was overturned on prosecutorial misconduct and vindictiveness in 2011, stated, “Each day in prison was a battle against despair, frustration, and hopelessness. Even after I was freed, the trauma of wrongful conviction still lingers. I still struggle with anxiety, the emotional scars of incarceration, and the difficulty of rebuilding a life that was unjustly taken from me. I left prison with no financial support, no employment prospects, and no resources to help me reintegrate into society. The years of lost opportunities—education, career growth, personal relationships, and the simple joys of everyday life—are things I can never get back.”

It is estimated that just over 20 individuals in Arizona may be eligible for compensation under this new law.

“Accountability and fairness are what we expect from the criminal justice system,” said Arizona Justice Project Executive Director, Lindsay Herf. “But, like any system run by humans, it is not perfect. The consequence of imprisoning an innocent person is devastating to the innocent, the crime victim, and the community. This bill is a tremendous step toward acknowledging the damage in the wake of a wrongful conviction and doing something about it.”

The Arizona Justice Project is proud to be a part of something that will be life changing for those who have suffered a wrongful conviction.

The Arizona Justice Project is a non-profit organization founded in 1998 and dedicated to exonerating the innocent and correcting cases of manifest injustice in Arizona.