

2001 SESSION

INTRODUCED
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HOUSE BILL NO. 1569

Offered January 10, 2001

Prefiled September 27, 2000

A BILL for the relief of Steve Lawton.

Patron—Crittenden

Referred to Committee on Claims

Whereas, on June 9, 1988, Steve Lawton was arrested by the City of Newport News police; and
Whereas, Mr. Lawton was charged with rape and use of a firearm in the commission of a felony;
and

Whereas, on September 6, 1990, Mr. Lawton, having pled not guilty to all charges, nevertheless was convicted and found guilty of all the crimes charged; and

Whereas, on October 23, 1990, Mr. Lawton was sentenced to 72 years in the state penitentiary; and

Whereas, subsequent appeals filed by Mr. Lawton were denied by both the Court of Appeals of Virginia and the Supreme Court of Virginia; and

Whereas, the alleged victim recanted her testimony in a sworn statement dated January 2, 1997; and

Whereas, as a result of the recantation, the Commonwealth's Attorney for the City of Newport News conducted an investigation in which the alleged victim reaffirmed that Mr. Lawton committed no crime against her; and

Whereas, on January 15, 1997, in response to a petition filed by Mr. Lawton and supported by the Commonwealth's Attorney, Governor George Allen granted Mr. Lawton an absolute pardon for his 1990 conviction; and

Whereas, Mr. Lawton was incarcerated from the time of his arrest in 1988 until he was released in 1997; and

Whereas, Mr. Lawton incurred legal bills in excess of \$150,000 attempting to gain his freedom; and

Whereas, Mr. Lawton's lost income during his nine years of incarceration exceed \$200,000; and

Whereas, Mr. Lawton has suffered severe physical, emotional and psychological damage as a result of this wrongful incarceration restraint and has no means to obtain adequate relief except by action of this body; now, therefore,

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. § 1. *That there is hereby appropriated from the general fund the sum of \$ 500,000 for the relief of Steve Lawton. This sum shall be paid by check issued by the State Treasurer on warrant of the Comptroller to Steve Lawton, upon execution by him of a release of all claims he may have against the Commonwealth or any agency, instrumentality, officer, employee or political subdivision thereof, in connection with the aforesaid occurrence.*

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