

2006 SESSION

INTRODUCED

065338424

HOUSE BILL NO. 1380

Offered January 11, 2006

A BILL for the relief of Phillip Thurman.

Patron—Moran

Referred to Committee on Appropriations

Whereas, Phillip Thurman (Mr. Thurman) was arrested on November 30, 1984, on suspicion in a rape committed in Alexandria, Virginia; and

Whereas, Mr. Thurman was incarcerated from that time through the time of his trial; and

Whereas, Mr. Thurman pled not guilty and maintained his innocence throughout the trial; and

Whereas, on June 7, 1985, Mr. Thurman was convicted by a jury in the Circuit Court of the City of Alexandria for rape, assault and battery, and abduction; and

Whereas, on August 22, 1985, Mr. Thurman was sentenced to serve a term of 31 years in the state penitentiary; and

Whereas, during the period of his incarceration, Mr. Thurman consistently maintained his innocence; and

Whereas, Mr. Thurman was released on parole on November 17, 2004, after serving approximately 20 years of his sentence; and

Whereas, after his release, Mr. Thurman married the woman that he was dating when he was convicted, has reestablished a relationship with his three children, and has begun to develop a strong relationship with his nine grandchildren, many of whom he had never met; and

Whereas, Mr. Thurman has also achieved certification in the installation of fiber optic cable, but has been unable to obtain employment; and

Whereas, subsequent to Mr. Thurman's release from prison, DNA tests were conducted on a sampling of biological evidence contained in files for cases between 1973 and 1988, prior to the availability of DNA testing; and

Whereas, DNA testing of the biological material contained in Mr. Thurman's case file excluded him as a suspect in the crimes for which he was convicted; and

Whereas, Mr. Thurman petitioned Governor Mark Warner for a grant of clemency on the grounds that substantial evidence supported the conclusion that he was unjustly convicted and actually innocent; and

Whereas, S. Randolph Sengel, attorney for the Commonwealth of the City of Alexandria, supported Mr. Thurman's release and indicated in a letter to Governor Warner that "[I] am satisfied beyond a reasonable doubt and to a reasonable degree of certainty that Phillip Thurman did not commit the offenses of which he was convicted in this case. I respectfully ask that Mr. Thurman be granted a pardon as to these offenses"; and

Whereas, on December 22, 2005, Governor Warner granted Mr. Thurman an absolute pardon; and

Whereas, Mr. Thurman has also suffered severe physical, emotional, and psychological damage as a result of his incarceration and has no other 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 shall be paid for the relief of Phillip Thurman from the general fund of the state treasury, upon execution of a release and waiver forever releasing (i) the Commonwealth or any agency, instrumentality, officer, employee, or political subdivision thereof, (ii) any legal counsel appointed pursuant to § 19.2-159 of the Code of Virginia, and (iii) all other parties of interest from any present or future claims he may have against such enumerated parties in connection with the aforesaid occurrence, the sum of \$1 million to be paid to Phillip Thurman on or before August 1, 2006, by check issued by the State Treasurer on warrant of the Comptroller.*

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