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SENATE BILL NO. 78

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the Senate Committee on Finance
on February 13, 1996)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Senator Ticer)

A BILL for the relief of Walter Tyrone Snyder, Jr.

Whereas, in January 1986, Walter Tyrone Snyder, Jr., was arrested by the City of Alexandria police for the rape and sexual assault of a resident of the City; and

Whereas, in June 1986, Walter Tyrone Snyder, Jr., was convicted by a jury of the City of Alexandria on five counts of rape and sexual assault; and

Whereas, in October 1986, Walter Tyrone Snyder, Jr., was sentenced by the Circuit court of the City of Alexandria to serve 45 years in prison; and

Whereas, in 1992, privately conducted DNA testing of evidence gathered in the investigation of said crimes demonstrated that Walter Tyrone Snyder, Jr., did not commit the crimes; and

Whereas, the Commonwealth's Attorney for the City of Alexandria subsequently confirmed the results of the DNA testing of said evidence, and became convinced beyond a reasonable doubt that Walter Tyrone Snyder, Jr., had been unjustly imprisoned; and

Whereas, on April 23, 1993, in response to a petition filed by Walter Tyrone Snyder, Jr., and supported by the Commonwealth's Attorney for the City of Alexandria, Governor L. Douglas Wilder granted Walter Tyrone Snyder, Jr., an absolute pardon for his 1986 conviction on the five counts of rape and sexual assault; and

Whereas, on April 23, 1993, Walter Tyrone Snyder, Jr., was released from prison after having been incarcerated for almost seven years for crimes that DNA testing demonstrated he did not commit; and

Whereas, the City of Alexandria has already provided compensation to Walter Tyrone Snyder, Jr., in recognition of the substantial time that he was incarcerated for crimes that DNA testing demonstrated he did not commit; and

Whereas, Walter Tyrone Snyder, Jr., has suffered severe physical, emotional, and psychological damage as a result of this wrongful restraint of his personal liberty and has no other means to obtain the adequate relief now requested 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 of the state treasury the sum of \$8,400 for the relief of Walter Tyrone Snyder, Jr. This sum shall be paid as herein provided upon the execution by Walter Tyrone Snyder, Jr., 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. The award granted hereby is subject to the following conditions: (i) The funds appropriated hereby shall be deposited with the State Council of Higher Education; (ii) a portion of such funds not exceeding \$2,800 shall be disbursed by the State Council of Higher Education to pay the tuition and required fees actually incurred by Walter Tyrone Snyder, Jr., in attending an institution in the Virginia Community College System for a period of two years; and (iii) if Walter Tyrone Snyder, Jr., completes an associate degree program from an institution in the Virginia Community College System and is admitted to a four-year public institution of higher education in the Commonwealth, the balance of such funds shall be disbursed by the State Council of Higher Education to pay the tuition and required fees actually incurred by Walter Tyrone Snyder, Jr., in attending such four-year public institution for a period of two years. Any funds appropriated by this act that have not been not disbursed for the purposes of this act within ten years following the effective date of this act shall be deposited in the general fund.*