

1 VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY — CHAPTER

2 *An Act for the relief of Michael Haas, relating to claims; compensation for wrongful incarceration.*

3 [S 928]

4 Approved

5 Whereas, Michael Haas (Mr. Haas) was convicted in the Circuit Court of Powhatan County on July
6 22, 1994, of the felony offenses of forcibly sodomizing his two sons, crimes that he did not commit;
7 and8 Whereas, Mr. Haas was sentenced to two terms of life imprisonment, to be served concurrently for
9 such conviction; and10 Whereas, Mr. Haas served 23 years and six months in the custody of the Virginia Department of
11 Corrections; and12 Whereas, Mr. Haas's sons testified at his trial that he sexually abused them on multiple occasions and
13 forensic evidence presented at the time substantiated such claims; and14 Whereas, both sons of Mr. Haas recanted their accusations of forcible sodomy shortly after the trial
15 and conviction; and

16 Whereas, Mr. Haas began pursuing exoneration at that time; and

17 Whereas, Mr. Haas secured the assistance of the Mid-Atlantic Innocence Project beginning in 2014 to
18 investigate his case; and19 Whereas, Mr. Haas was released from prison on December 19, 2017, placed on parole, and was
20 required to register as a sex offender; and21 Whereas, the Mid-Atlantic Innocence Project obtained further recanting affidavits from Mr. Haas's
22 sons and uncovered evidence that his sons were coerced to testify as to the forcible sodomy by their
23 mother and their counselor, rendering their accusations and trial testimony unreliable; and24 Whereas, in the time since Mr. Haas's conviction, advances in the field of sexual abuse pediatrics
25 have developed; and26 Whereas, under currently accepted sexual abuse pediatric standards, the physical examinations of Mr.
27 Haas's sons evidenced no indicia of abuse; and28 Whereas, Mr. Haas pursued a writ of actual innocence in the Virginia Court of Appeals on July 30,
29 2020; and30 Whereas, former Attorney General Mark Herring and current Attorney General Jason Miyares both
31 investigated Mr. Haas's case and determined that Mr. Haas is innocent of the crimes for which he was
32 convicted, had been wrongfully convicted, and should be entitled to a writ of actual innocence; and33 Whereas, the Virginia Court of Appeals granted Mr. Haas's petition and issued a writ of actual
34 innocence based on nonbiological evidence, vacating his convictions on April 19, 2022, pursuant to
35 Chapter 19.3 (§ 19.2-327.10 et seq.) of Title 19.2 of the Code of Virginia; and36 Whereas, Mr. Haas, as a result of his wrongful incarceration, lost 23 years and six months of his
37 freedom and countless life experiences and opportunities, including family relations, the opportunity to
38 further his education, and the opportunity to earn potential income from gainful employment during his
39 years of incarceration; and40 Whereas, Mr. Haas has no other means to obtain adequate relief except by action of this body; now,
41 therefore,42 **Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**43 1. § 1. That there is hereby appropriated from the general fund of the state treasury the sum of
44 \$1,530,653 for the relief of Michael Haas, to be paid by check issued by the State Treasurer on warrant
45 of the Comptroller upon execution of a release of all claims Mr. Haas may have against the
46 Commonwealth or any agency, instrumentality, office, employee, or political subdivision in connection
47 with the aforesaid occurrence.48 As Mr. Haas is older than 60 years of age, the compensation, subject to the execution of the release
49 described herein, shall be paid in one lump sum of \$1,530,653 by check issued by the State Treasurer
50 on warrant of the Comptroller within 60 days immediately following the execution of such release.51 § 2. That Mr. Haas shall receive a transition assistance grant of \$15,000 within 30 days of receipt of
52 the written request for the disbursement of such transition assistance grant to the Executive Secretary of
53 the Supreme Court of Virginia. Any amount paid to Mr. Haas as a transition assistance grant pursuant
54 to subsection D of § 8.01-195.11 of the Code of Virginia shall be deducted from any award received
55 pursuant to § 1 of this act.

56 § 3. That Mr. Haas shall be entitled to receive career and technical training within the Virginia

57 *Community College System free of tuition charges, up to a maximum of \$10,000. The tuition benefit*
58 *shall be paid by the community college at which the career or technical training is provided. The tuition*
59 *benefit provided by this section shall expire on January 1, 2027.*

60 **2. That the provisions of § 8.01-195.12 of the Code of Virginia shall apply to any compensation**
61 **awarded under this act.**