
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO WRONGFUL IMPRISONMENT.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Act 156, Session
2 Laws of Hawaii 2016, (Act 156) was enacted to monetarily
3 compensate individuals who had been wrongfully convicted and
4 imprisoned in the Hawai'i criminal justice system. Act 156
5 established a compensation scheme, which has been in effect for
6 several years, to provide redress to those who have been
7 wrongfully imprisoned.

8 The legislature further finds that in its findings for
9 Act 156, it found that individuals who were wrongfully convicted
10 and imprisoned by the State deserved "an avenue of redress over
11 and above the existing tort remedies to seek compensation for
12 damages from the jurisdiction that convicted and imprisoned
13 them". The legislature also finds that existing law stipulates
14 that if a court finds that a person has proven a claim for
15 wrongful conviction and imprisonment, the court is required to
16 award the person \$50,000 for each year of actual confinement,
17 including time spent awaiting trial. The legislature recognized



1 that although the compensation process requires court trials to
2 determine whether a petitioner is entitled to compensation and
3 the amount of compensation, in practice, petitioners have been
4 subjected to lengthy trials.

5 The legislature recognizes the recent Hawaii supreme court
6 decision in *Jardine v. State*, 155 Hawaii 60 (2024). The court
7 considered the language of section 661B-1, Hawaii Revised
8 Statutes, which in part requires that a petitioner's judgment of
9 conviction be reversed or vacated "because the petitioner was
10 actually innocent of the crimes for which the petitioner was
11 convicted, and the court decision so states". The Hawaii
12 supreme court held that the statute does not require the exact
13 words "actually innocent" to appear in the order. However, the
14 court also held that the statute "does, however, require that
15 such an order state a finding that supports a petitioner's
16 'actual innocence' - that is, the order should support the
17 conclusion that the petitioner did not commit the crime".

18 The legislature also finds that wrongful compensation
19 claims in Hawaii have often been subject to prolonged litigation
20 and delay, including delay caused by the State. The prolonged
21 uncertainty and financial hardship caused by a delay are unjust



1 to those wrongfully convicted. In at least one situation, the
2 wrongfully convicted individual passed away before receiving any
3 compensation after almost a decade of litigation seeking
4 compensation. The legislature finds that these unresolved
5 claims are also a potential liability to the State. The
6 legislature therefore concludes that rather than allow claims
7 for compensation for wrongful conviction and imprisonment to
8 languish for years, the law should be amended to give certainty
9 to the budgeting process and to those who were wrongfully
10 convicted.

11 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to:

12 (1) Establish the procedure that a trial court shall
13 follow upon the reversal or vacation of an
14 individual's judgment of conviction on grounds
15 consistent with innocence, and where the charges were
16 dismissed;

17 (2) Require the State to pay advance compensation to any
18 person who was convicted in a court of the State,
19 imprisoned for at least one year, and whose judgment
20 of conviction was reversed or vacated, or was
21 pardoned, on grounds consistent with innocence;



- 1 (3) Require the comptroller to issue a warrant for payment
- 2 of advance compensation to a petitioner;
- 3 (4) Require the adult client services division or a
- 4 contracted community-based agency to assign a case
- 5 manager to a petitioner upon the petitioner's release;
- 6 (5) Require the State to provide medical coverage to a
- 7 person for a certain duration upon the reversal or
- 8 vacation of the person's judgment of conviction on
- 9 grounds consistent with innocence and where the
- 10 charges were dismissed;
- 11 (6) Require the department of the attorney general to
- 12 submit an annual report to the legislature;
- 13 (7) Clarify eligibility to seek compensation for
- 14 individuals whose judgment of conviction was reversed
- 15 or vacated, or who were pardoned, on grounds
- 16 consistent with innocence, and whose charges were
- 17 dismissed; and
- 18 (8) Shift the burden of proof to the State to prove by a
- 19 preponderance of evidence that the reversal or
- 20 vacating of the judgment of conviction for a



1 petitioner, or the pardoning of the petitioner, was
2 inconsistent with innocence.

3 SECTION 2. Chapter 661B, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
4 amended by adding six new sections to be appropriately
5 designated and to read as follows:

6 "**§661B-A Liberal construction.** This chapter shall be
7 liberally construed to ensure that those persons who were
8 wrongfully convicted and imprisoned by the State receive
9 compensation.

10 **§661B-B Reversal or vacation of conviction; procedure.**

11 (a) Upon the reversal or vacation of a judgment of conviction
12 on grounds consistent with innocence, and where the charges were
13 dismissed, the trial court where the charge was originally filed
14 shall:

15 (1) Provide oral and written notice of the person's
16 ability to file a claim under this chapter;
17 (2) Award advance compensation payments pursuant to
18 section 661B-C unless the court orders the award under
19 paragraph (5);



1 (3) Order the department of corrections and rehabilitation
2 to assign a case manager to the person pursuant to
3 section 661B-D;

4 (4) Make the following findings:

5 (A) Whether the person was convicted in a court of
6 the State and subsequently imprisoned for one or
7 more crimes and the crime or crimes upon which
8 that conviction was based were reversed or
9 vacated;

10 (B) Whether the grounds for the reversal or vacation
11 of the crime or crimes support the conclusion
12 that the person did not commit the crime or
13 crimes;

14 (C) Whether the charges were dismissed;

15 (D) The number of years, months, and days that the
16 person spent in prison for the crime or crimes
17 described in subparagraph (B), including time
18 served before conviction, if any; and

19 (E) At the rate of \$50,000 for each year of actual
20 confinement, including time spent awaiting trial,



3 (5) If the person wishes to seek relief pursuant to this
4 chapter at the time of the reversal or vacation and
5 the court answers in the affirmative with respect to
6 paragraphs (4) (A) and (B), the court shall order the
7 award as calculated pursuant to paragraph (4) (E);
8 provided that neither the State nor a county
9 prosecuting authority has filed new charges based on
10 the same alleged act or acts for which the petitioner
11 was originally convicted; and

12 (6) Award reasonable attorney's fees not exceeding \$10,000
13 pursuant to section 661B-3.

14 (b) A person does not waive their right to seek relief
15 pursuant to this chapter if they do not elect to seek relief at
16 the time of reversal or vacation.

17 **§661B-C Advance compensation; requirements.** (a) The
18 State shall pay advance compensation to any petitioner who was
19 convicted in a court of the State, imprisoned for at least one
20 year, and whose judgment of conviction was reversed or vacated,
21 or was pardoned, on grounds consistent with innocence; provided



1 that the charges were dismissed and neither the State nor a
2 county prosecuting authority has filed new charges based on the
3 same alleged act or acts for which the petitioner was originally
4 convicted.

5 (b) Within five business days of the reversal or vacation,
6 the comptroller shall issue a warrant pursuant to section 40-51
7 for a payment of \$5,000 to the petitioner. Subsequently, on the
8 first day of every month, the comptroller shall issue a warrant
9 for a payment of \$5,000 to the petitioner until the State has
10 paid in the aggregate an amount equal to the payment for one
11 year of imprisonment pursuant to section 661B-3(c); provided
12 that the payments shall cease if the attorney general or a
13 county prosecuting attorney files new charges based on the same
14 alleged act or acts for which the petitioner was originally
15 convicted.

16 (c) Any advance compensation paid to the petitioner shall
17 be deducted from any compensation to which the petitioner is
18 entitled under this chapter. If the petition is subsequently
19 denied, the petitioner shall not be required to repay any funds
20 disbursed.



1 §661B-D Case manager; appointment. (a) Upon the reversal
2 or vacation of a person's judgment of conviction on grounds
3 consistent with innocence and where the charges were dismissed,
4 the adult client services division or a contracted community-
5 based agency shall appoint a case manager to the person.
6 Services shall commence immediately and continue for sixty days
7 from the day of the person's release.

8 (b) Case manager duties shall include assisting the person
9 in obtaining the following:
10 (1) Housing;
11 (2) State identification;
12 (3) Medical, dental, and mental health insurance and
13 appointments;
14 (4) A cell phone; and
15 (5) Employment.

16 §661B-E Medical coverage; petitioner; spouse and
17 dependents. (a) Upon the reversal or vacation of a person's
18 judgment of conviction on grounds consistent with innocence and
19 where the charges were dismissed, the person shall be eligible
20 to obtain medical coverage from the State.



1 (b) The medical coverage offered under subsection (a) may
2 include the person's spouse and dependents.

3 (c) The State shall provide medical coverage to a
4 petitioner under subsection (a) for a period of time equal to
5 that of the petitioner's wrongful imprisonment, including any
6 period during which the petitioner was released on parole.

7 **S661B-F Annual report.** The department of the attorney
8 general shall submit an annual report of its findings and
9 recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the
10 legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
11 each regular session. The report shall detail the
12 implementation and application of this chapter and shall include
13 the following:

14 (1) The name of any person whose judgment of conviction
15 was reversed or vacated, or who was pardoned, on
16 grounds consistent with innocence, and whose charges
17 were dismissed;

18 (2) Whether the State or a county prosecuting authority
19 filed new charges based on the same alleged act or
20 acts for which the petitioner was originally
21 convicted;



- 1 (3) The court's findings pursuant to section 661B-B;
- 2 (4) Whether the person chose to seek relief and whether
3 the person chose to do so at the time of reversal or
4 vacation, or later;
- 5 (5) If the person, subsequent to the court's findings,
6 filed a petition:
 - 7 (A) The date the petition was filed;
 - 8 (B) The circuit in which the petition was filed;
 - 9 (C) Whether the department of the attorney general
10 admitted or denied that the petitioner is
11 entitled to compensation;
 - 12 (D) The date that the department of the attorney
13 general's response was filed; and
 - 14 (E) The status of the petition on the date the report
15 is submitted; and
- 16 (6) Whether any compensation has been made to the
17 petitioner, including any advance compensation
18 rendered pursuant to section 661B-C, and the dates
19 that the compensation was disbursed."

20 SECTION 3. Section 661B-1, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
21 amended to read as follows:



1 " [+]§661B-1[+] Statement of claim for compensation. [+(a)]
2 Any person convicted in a court of the State and imprisoned for
3 one or more crimes ~~[of which the person was actually innocent]~~
4 whose judgment of conviction was reversed or vacated, or who was
5 pardoned, on grounds consistent with innocence, and where the
6 charges were dismissed, may file a petition for relief pursuant
7 to this chapter for an award of damages against the State;
8 provided that the requirements of ~~[subsection (b)]~~ this section
9 are met[+]; provided further that the court has not previously
10 awarded compensation to the person pursuant to section 661B-B.

11 [+(b)] To present an actionable claim against the State for
12 wrongful conviction and imprisonment, the petitioner shall
13 allege that the petitioner was convicted of one or more crimes
14 under the laws of the State, was subsequently sentenced to a
15 term of imprisonment, and has served all or any part of the
16 sentence and either that:

17 (1) The judgment of conviction was reversed or vacated
18 ~~[because the petitioner was actually innocent of the~~
19 ~~crimes for which the petitioner was convicted, and the~~
20 ~~court decision so states]~~; or



6 SECTION 4. Section 661B-3, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
7 amended as follows:

8 1. By amending subsections (a) through (c) to read:

9 "(a) The [petitioner] State shall have the burden to prove

10 by a preponderance of the evidence [÷

11 (1) ~~That the petitioner is eligible to seek compensation~~

12 ~~in accordance with the requirements set forth in~~

13 ~~section 661B-1;~~

14 (2) ~~That the petitioner was convicted in a court of the~~

15 ~~State and subsequently imprisoned for one or more~~

16 ~~crimes, but the petitioner was actually innocent of~~

17 ~~the crimes at issue; and~~

18 (3) ~~That the petitioner served time in prison for the~~

19 ~~crime or crimes, including time served prior to~~

20 ~~conviction, if any.] that the reversal or vacating of~~

21 ~~the judgment of conviction for the petitioner or the~~



1 pardoning of the petitioner was inconsistent with
2 innocence.

3 (b) The following shall be affirmative defenses, on which
4 the State shall have the burden of proof by a preponderance of
5 the evidence:

6 (1) The petitioner was serving a term of imprisonment for
7 another crime, including crimes under the laws of the
8 United States, concurrently with imprisonment for the
9 crime or crimes for which the petitioner, [was
10 actually innocent;] whose judgment of conviction was
11 reversed or vacated or who was pardoned on grounds
12 consistent with innocence; provided that if the
13 petitioner served additional time in prison due to the
14 conviction that is the basis of the petition, then the
15 petitioner shall receive compensation for that portion
16 of the time served in prison during which the
17 petitioner was serving no other sentence;

18 (2) The petitioner committed perjury or fabricated
19 evidence or induced another person to commit perjury
20 or fabricate evidence to cause or bring about the
21 conviction at issue;





1 (c) If the court finds that the petitioner has [proven]
2 filed a claim for wrongful conviction and imprisonment[~~r~~] and
3 the State has not met its burden of proof under subsection (a)
4 or proven an affirmative defense pursuant to subsection (b), the
5 court shall award the petitioner \$50,000 for each year of actual
6 confinement, including time spent awaiting trial, served by the
7 petitioner for the crime or crimes for which the [petitioner was
8 actually innocent;] judgment of conviction was reversed or
9 vacated or for which the petitioner was pardoned on grounds
10 consistent with innocence; provided that:

11 (1) The petitioner shall not be compensated for the time
12 imprisoned if the petitioner was concurrently
13 imprisoned for a different conviction, even if the
14 other conviction was related to the conviction that
15 was vacated or reversed or for which the petitioner
16 was pardoned [because of actual innocence;] on grounds
17 consistent with innocence;

18 (2) The award shall be prorated for partial years of
19 imprisonment; [and]

20 (3) Any advance compensation paid to the petitioner shall
21 be deducted from the award; and



1 [+] (4) If the court finds, by a preponderance of the
2 evidence, extraordinary circumstances pertain to a
3 conviction that is set aside or a pardon that is
4 granted [~~because of actual innocence,~~] on grounds
5 consistent with innocence, the court may award the
6 petitioner a maximum of \$100,000 in additional
7 compensation."

8 2. By amending subsection (f) to read:

9 "(f) On all moneys awarded to the petitioner for claims
10 instituted under this chapter, interest shall be computed at the
11 rate of four per cent a year from the date of judgment up to,
12 but not exceeding, thirty days after the date of approval of any
13 appropriation act providing for payment of the judgment[.] or
14 after the date the comptroller was required to issue a warrant
15 pursuant to section 661B-C."

16 SECTION 5. Section 661B-6, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
17 amended to read as follows:

18 "**[+]§661B-6[.] Waiver of sovereign immunity.** This chapter
19 shall constitute a waiver of sovereign immunity by the State
20 only for the claims brought pursuant to this chapter. The State
21 makes no other waiver of sovereign immunity, and fully retains



1 its sovereign immunity as to all other claims, however
2 denominated, that seek compensation of any kind or nature that
3 are a result of, related to, or arise from a conviction and
4 imprisonment for crimes for which the claimant ~~[alleges actual~~
5 ~~innocence.]~~ whose judgment of conviction was reversed or
6 vacated, or who was pardoned, on grounds consistent with
7 innocence. This section shall be broadly construed in favor of
8 the State and against any waiver of sovereign immunity."

9 SECTION 6. Section 661B-7, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
10 amended by amending subsection (a) to read as follows:

11 "(a) Notwithstanding any other law, including the common
12 law, to the contrary, this chapter sets forth the exclusive
13 remedy for any person seeking compensation of any kind or nature
14 whatsoever, as a result of, related to, or arising from a
15 conviction and imprisonment for crimes for which the person ~~[was~~
16 ~~actually innocent.]~~ whose judgment of conviction was reversed or
17 vacated, or who was pardoned, on grounds consistent with
18 innocence. This section shall be strictly construed in favor of
19 any person against whom a claim is asserted, and against the
20 person asserting the claim."



1 SECTION 7. In codifying the new sections added by
2 section 2 of this Act, the revisor of statutes shall substitute
3 appropriate section numbers for the letters used in designating
4 the new sections in this Act.

5 SECTION 8. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
6 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

7 SECTION 9. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 3000.



Report Title:

AG; DCR; DAGS; Wrongful Conviction and Imprisonment; Compensation; Annual Report

Description:

Establishes the procedure that a trial court shall follow upon the reversal or vacation of an individual's judgment of conviction on grounds consistent with innocence, and where the charges were dismissed. Requires the State to pay advance compensation to any petitioner who was convicted in a court of the State, imprisoned for at least one year, and whose judgment of conviction was reversed or vacated, or was pardoned, on grounds consistent with innocence. Requires the Comptroller to issue a warrant for payment of advance compensation to a petitioner. Requires the Adult Client Services Division or a contracted community-based agency to assign a case manager to a petitioner upon the petitioner's release. Requires the State to provide medical coverage to a person for a certain duration upon the reversal or vacation of the person's judgment of conviction on grounds consistent with innocence and where the charges were dismissed. Requires the Department of the Attorney General to submit an annual report to the Legislature. Clarifies eligibility to seek compensation for individuals whose judgment of conviction was reversed or vacated, or who were pardoned, on grounds consistent with innocence, and where the charges were dismissed. Shifts the burden of proof to the State to prove by a preponderance of evidence that the reversal or vacating of the judgment of conviction for a petitioner, or the pardoning of the petitioner, was inconsistent with innocence. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

