

**INNOCENCE  
PROJECT**

**Winnie Ye, State Policy Advocate  
Testimony on Senate Bill 1007  
to the Senate Committee on Judiciary  
on February 27, 2025**

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and members of the committee:

My name is Winnie Ye and I'm a State Policy Advocate at the Innocence Project. We work across the country to exonerate the innocent and, alongside our partners at Oregon Innocence Project and Forensic Justice Project, support reforms that prevent, reveal, and address wrongful convictions.

Today, we are expressing support for Senate Bill 1007 which improves the effectiveness of the Oregon Justice for Exonerees Act to compensate the wrongfully incarcerated. Since 1989, there have been 40 known exonerees in Oregon who collectively lost 197 years of their liberty to wrongful incarceration.

In 2022, Oregon took bold action when it enacted the Justice for Exonerees Act, becoming the 37<sup>th</sup> state in the country to compensate wrongfully convicted individuals. At the time, the legislation included the core components of model compensation laws but unfortunately, the law has not been implemented as intended and exonerees face lengthy and onerous processes to receive the compensation afforded them under the statute.

In the three decades that the Innocence Project has been advocating for and working with lawmakers on compensation statutes, we have not seen a landscape as adversarial as in Oregon. Since the law took effect only four exonerees have received compensation through settlements and there has been a substantial back and forth of litigation which has caused additional harm and trauma to Oregon exonerees.

Senate Bill 1007 would clarify the intent of the Oregon Justice for Exonerees Act and ensure that innocent Oregonians can receive compensation without further delay. It would bring Oregon closer to the original spirit of the law and other jurisdictions like Idaho and Virginia where we see the State working alongside exonerees to resolve claims swiftly and address the harms of wrongful convictions.

## **INNOCENCE PROJECT**

When someone has been wrongfully convicted of a crime they did not commit, the state has an obligation to correct and address the wrongful conviction and this bill brings Oregon closer to meeting that obligation.

Thank you for your time.