



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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BIPARTISAN EXONEREE COMPENSATION BILL CLEARS COMMITTEE

Legislation Would Increase Wisconsin's Compensation Award Limit, Which is Currently Worst in the Nation

(MADISON) – State Rep. Gary Hebl (D-Sun Prairie) today praised swift action by two legislative committees that unanimously passed bipartisan legislation to overhaul Wisconsin's exoneree compensation law. Wisconsin's current compensation allowance of \$5,000 per year – limited to a total of \$25,000 – is the lowest statutory compensation cap in the nation.

Hebl has worked closely with Rep. Dale Kooyenga (R-Brookfield), Sen. Van Wanggaard (R-Racine), and Sen. Fred Risser (D-Madison) on the legislation, which would raise compensation to the federal standard of \$50,000 a year while capping total award amounts at \$1 million.

The Senate Committee on Judiciary passed the bill 4-0 last week. Today, the Assembly Committee on State Affairs and Government Operations passed the bill 14-0.

Hebl said that while it may be impossible to ever fully restore justice to those who have been wrongfully incarcerated, this bill provides exonerees more opportunities to succeed.

“This bill, which will fairly compensate and provide some justice to wrongfully convicted persons, is a product of bipartisan collaboration and negotiation,” Hebl said. “I am proud of our efforts to move this bill forward and will continue to work with colleagues from both sides of the aisle to see this bill passed through the legislature and signed into law.”

Provisions of the bill include:

- **Fair compensation, with a \$1,000,000 cap.**
 - The bill increases compensation to \$50,000 per year of a wrongful incarceration up to \$1,000,000.
- **Access to Transitional Services.**
 - The bill gives exonerees access to transitional services including access to state health care.
- **Protecting State Resources.**
 - The bill provides that if a wrongfully convicted person obtains a third-party settlement, judgment, or award in a civil wrongful conviction suit, the exoneree must return to the state the equal amount of the third-party award, up to the amount received from the state.

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