

**Floyd Bledsoe Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 336**  
**Wrongful Conviction Compensation Legislation**  
**Senate Judiciary Committee**  
**February 14, 2018**

My name is Floyd Bledsoe and I live in Hutchinson, Kansas. I strongly support this legislation because it would provide me and other wrongfully convicted Kansans with the financial compensation necessary to rebuild our lives after suffering the terrible injustice of being incarcerated as an innocent person.

My life was happy before my wrongful conviction. My wife and I met in church, got married and had two boys. I owned a dairy farm and had a good income. My focus was on my family and building our future.

Everything changed in November of 1999. My wife's sister Camille Arfmann was raped and murdered. My brother Tom confessed to the crime, turned over the murder weapon, and led police to her body where she was buried behind his home. Once he was in jail he changed his story and said that I was the one who did it. For some reason law enforcement turned on me and eventually arrested me. My trial last four days and I was found guilty. In the blink of an eye, my life was destroyed.

I spent 16 years in prison for a crime that I did not commit. The suffering is hard to describe. My wife's relatives believed the verdict and she ended up divorcing me. I didn't see my sons while I was in prison, not once. With my family turned against me, I lost contact with the outside world. Every day in prison was full of chaos and violence. One time five inmates beat me so badly that I had a concussion and my teeth went through my lip.

Despite these horrible circumstances I tried to stay positive. I took vocational courses and worked on building maintenance. I joined a church and volunteered at the prison hospice. Eventually the Paul E. Wilson Project for Innocence at Kansas University School of Law and the Midwest Innocence Project took my case. DNA testing was done on the rape kit and the results excluded me and matched to Tom. Soon after, my brother committed suicide. He left notes admitting that he raped and killed Camille, and that I was innocent. Finally on December 8, 2015, a judge vacated my conviction.

I haven't gotten a penny from the state that wrongfully imprisoned me. However, the state of Kansas took every penny I had in this ordeal. The economic losses I suffered include:

- \$28,000 in court costs and restitution.
- My 54-acres of land had to be sold to pay for legal fees and to settle a wrongful death lawsuit filed by Camille's family.
- All of my property on the farm including livestock, cars and tools.
- An annual income of \$28,000 as a dairy farmer.
- An additional \$3,000 in earnings each year from helping other farmers.

Of course, the biggest price I paid was losing my family. When I was incarcerated my sons were nine months and two and half years old. When I got out they were 17 and 19. I never saw them while I was in prison, not even once. I had to give up my parental rights to them while I was incarcerated. We have started to build a relationship since my exoneration, but they call me "Floyd," not dad. It really sunk in one day when my son invited me to his football game and they called the parents onto the field. My ex-wife and his stepdad were called up, not me. I realized that these are someone else's kids, not mine.

The state of Kansas can try to make things right by passing this compensation law. It could help relieve the economic stress I've been going through since my exoneration. With no work history, it took me months to find a job. I started doing odd jobs, but people were afraid to hire me because I had been in prison, even though they knew I was innocent. Now I'm a project manager at a building maintenance company. I'm happy to be working and earning money, but my salary would be much higher if I hadn't lost 16 years.

My past was full of pain and loss, but I'm placing my faith in the future. Two years ago I married a wonderful woman, and now have a 2-year-old stepson and a new baby. There is no way to get back all that I lost, but with this law I could be eligible to receive \$80,000 for each year of my wrongful imprisonment. That would go a long way in helping to reestablish my life. For the first time in two decades, I wouldn't have to struggle to survive. I hope that you will pass this legislation so I can finally get justice and closure.