



**August 2015**

## **DNA EVIDENCE TO BE TESTED ON NEW CASE**

The Project has reached an agreement with the Prosecutor's office to submit crime scene evidence for DNA testing in a northern Illinois county murder case for which our client is serving a 50-year sentence. On August 12, an IIP Attorney appeared in court alongside the State and obtained a cheek buccal swab from our client for DNA analysis.

This individual has maintained his innocence from the time he was first questioned by police as a 17-year-old in 1999. He voluntarily went to the police station that summer but had no idea he would never go home again. Ultimately he was convicted based on eyewitness identification, which is the leading cause of wrongful conviction. No physical evidence ever tied him to the crime. Our client says he sees a light at the end of the tunnel for the first time in many years.

## **GOVERNOR RAUNER SIGNS CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM BILL**

IIP Founding Director Larry Golden was invited to attend Governor Rauner's signing of a major criminal justice reform act (Public Act 099-0352) on August 19 at the State Capitol. The bill (SB1304), sponsored by the Project's 2015 Defenders Award recipient Senator Kwame Raoul, addresses critical policing issues including the wearing of body cameras, training of police officers and maintenance of a data bank to track "rogue" police officers.

The bill was a bipartisan effort that brought together all relevant parties – police unions, law enforcement organizations, civil liberties and civil rights groups, and a representative of President Obama's policing task force – to develop what is being called "the most comprehensive bill in the country ... one that serves as a national model. ..."

While Senator Raoul admits that the bill is not perfect, he says it is an important first step in addressing today's problems and challenges of policing

## **IIP TAKES LEAD ON WRONGFUL CONVICTION TRAINING FOR POLICE**

The Project and an Illinois police training facility are coordinating efforts to improve police cadet awareness of the causes of wrongful convictions and, ultimately, contribute to law enforcement's efforts to improve community relations.

Numerous law enforcement training centers nationwide are recognizing the importance of addressing the factors that contribute to wrongful convictions, including eyewitness misidentification, improper forensics and false confessions. Additionally, recent state legislation, such as SB304 noted above, and other initiatives have established new standards for Illinois law enforcement. The Project will examine current curriculum, and offer existing state and national training resources to the police training center.