



December 2018

SAVE THE DATE

Defenders of the Innocent Event

Saturday, March 30, 2019

Crowne Plaza Springfield Registration opens January 4, 2019

IIP's "Jailhouse Snitch" Legislation Becomes Law January 1

Illinois will enact, on January 1, 2019, the [strongest law](#) in the nation to prevent wrongful convictions due to "jailhouse snitches." Illinois lawmakers in a strong bipartisan effort (80-31) overturned Gov. Rauner's veto of legislation the Illinois Innocence Project introduced spring 2018 and spearheaded in collaboration with the Innocence Project in New York.

Jailhouse snitches offer testimony or information on other inmates, typically with the expectation of receiving leniency or other benefits from the state. They are a leading cause of wrongful convictions, playing a role in 16 percent of DNA-based exonerations of innocent Americans.

Illinois has the largest number of exonerations in the nation where jailhouse informants played a role – 17 innocent people who lost a cumulative 227 years of their lives to wrongful imprisonment. (The number of innocent people currently imprisoned due to informants is unknown.)

While those 17 individuals sat behind bars, the **actual perpetrators** of the crimes went on to commit **seven additional murders**. Illinois taxpayers paid **over \$86 million** in civil awards and settlements, and **over \$1.7 million** in state compensation stemming from these wrongful convictions involving jailhouse informants.

With this law, sponsored by Sen. Mike Hastings and Rep. Art Turner Jr., Illinois will be the first state in the country to require judges to hold pre-trial reliability hearings before jailhouse informant witness testimony is admissible in murder, sexual assault and arson cases. In addition, the law requires prosecutors to disclose key evidence regarding jailhouse informant witnesses to the defense, including benefits provided in exchange for testimony and their complete criminal history and previous jailhouse informant activities.

IIP is developing strong bipartisan relationships with Illinois lawmakers who are committed to protecting innocent people in Illinois. In May, IIP worked closely with lawmakers on both sides of the aisle to secure state compensation owed to Illinois exonerees and delayed by the state's fiscal crisis; and in prior years, to legally mandate eyewitness identification best practices.

Help us continue our fight to PREVENT wrongful convictions.

Please [Give the Gift of Freedom](#) this holiday season.

And THANK YOU for your ongoing support of this critical
and costly work on behalf of the innocent in Illinois.