



June 2019

Case Update – Favorable DNA Test Results

We have received good DNA results in three of our cases. This means that the results of DNA testing support in some way the innocence claim of these three clients. Of course, prosecutors can always make the argument that DNA results do not prove innocence and our attorneys are prepared to counter those arguments. Favorable results, in addition to our extensive investigation and litigation strategies, leave us feeling optimistic that we have the evidence to prove innocence.

Our reports to you on DNA testing are intermittent because the process of locating the evidence, receiving court permission to test, the testing itself and sometimes additional analysis can take anywhere from months to years. The federal grants we have received over the years help pay for what can be extraordinary costs to conduct DNA testing.

State Funding for IIP

The state of Illinois has appropriated a \$1,000,000 grant to IIP through the Office of the Lt. Governor. Sen. Andy Manar (Bunker Hill), in his role as a state budget negotiator, worked with Project staff and representatives of the Office of Lt. Governor to secure this grant for the upcoming fiscal year.

We are grateful for our legislators' devotion to justice, their understanding of the flaws in the criminal justice system and their support of the Project's need to have the staff and resources necessary to do this critical work.

Legislation Update

We are pleased to report the three legislative bills we opposed *failed to proceed* during this spring's General Assembly. We outright opposed HB 1447 and SB 1929, and engaged in discussions with lawmakers about how SB 2763 might be reformulated. Your financial support helped us give voice to the innocent among lawmakers. Thank you!

1. [HB 1447](#) would have made it easier for the Illinois State Police crime lab to use up an entire piece of evidence when conducting DNA testing, destroying any chance to DNA test that evidence again as testing techniques advance.
2. [SB 1929](#) would have reduced the documents that prosecutors must disclose when requested via the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), cutting back access to information that could potentially help an innocent person who has been wrongfully accused of a crime.
3. [HB 2763](#) would have reversed an eyewitness identification best practice for the administration of lineups by making optional the use of a "blind" administrator – one who does not know who the suspect is.

Summer Student Volunteers Fill Staffing Gap

When the office quiets during the summer as most IIP students go home, we are thankful for new students who fill this gap. Welcome Hayley Goben and Kaylan Schardan!

Hayley Goben is from Bath, Illinois, and graduated this spring from UIS with a bachelor's degree in Political Science/Environmental Studies. She took two criminal justice-related classes in her last semester and was hooked. Knowing she'd be in Springfield for the summer, she asked to volunteer at IIP with the goal of learning more about what leads to the conviction of innocent people and how to combat these convictions. Like anyone new to IIP without legal experience, this summer Hayley is studying individual case files to get a sense of how the postconviction process works. She plans to stay with IIP in the fall when she begins her master's program in public administration.

Kaylan Schardan is from Medora, Illinois, and just completed her first year at Saint Louis University School of Law. She worked as a journalist and researcher after graduating from Webster University but soon followed her lifelong passion for law and justice by going to law school. Kaylan is volunteering with IIP because it gives her an outlet for her passion for justice and hands-on experience applying her law education to the postconviction research and legal process. This summer she is working on a clemency petition under the direction of IIP attorneys and compiling case updates. Kaylan intends to continue volunteering with the Project during law school and as a criminal law attorney after she graduates in 2021.

Brian Banks Movie

We are working to get the movie *Brian Banks* to Springfield when it opens nationwide on August 9. The movie features the inspirational story of Brian Banks, an All-American high school football star committed to USC whose life was upended when he was wrongfully convicted of a crime he didn't commit and sentenced to a decade of prison and probation. Years later, with the support of Justin Brooks, director of the California Innocence Project, Brian fought to reclaim his life and fulfill his dreams of playing in the NFL. Brian and Justin were the featured speakers at our 2014 Defenders Event.