

House Resolution 1078

By: Representative Tumlin of the 38th

A RESOLUTION

1 Compensating Mr. Willie Otis "Pete" Williams; and for other purposes.

2 WHEREAS, for nearly 22 years Mr. Williams has adamantly proclaimed his innocence and
3 maintained that his conviction was the result of mistaken eyewitness identification; and

4 WHEREAS, on September 12, 1985, a Fulton County jury found Mr. Williams guilty of
5 rape, kidnapping, and aggravated sodomy and he was sentenced to 45 years in prison; and

6 WHEREAS, Mr. Williams was 23 years old on the date of his sentencing and he spent the
7 next 21 years and nine months of his life in prison for a crime of which he was innocent; and

8 WHEREAS, while at the time of Mr. Williams' conviction DNA testing was unavailable, in
9 2007 it was such testing that proved Mr. Williams could not have committed the crime for
10 which he was convicted; and

11 WHEREAS, since his release from prison on January 23, 2007, and full exoneration on
12 February 13, 2007, Mr. Williams has begun the arduous task of rebuilding his life with the
13 help and support of the Georgia Innocence Project and countless volunteers; and

14 WHEREAS, Mr. Williams has found a permanent residence, reconnected with his family,
15 and has started taking vocational classes at Atlanta Technical College; and

16 WHEREAS, while his transition into society – after spending almost half his life as an
17 innocent man behind bars – has been difficult, Mr. Williams continues to meet these
18 challenges head on and is determined to succeed in the life that has been restored to him; and

19 WHEREAS, Mr. Williams has suffered loss of liberty, personal injury, lost wages, injury to
20 reputation, emotional distress, and other damages as a result of his nearly 22 years of
21 incarceration and expenses in trying to prove his innocence; and

1 WHEREAS, the conviction, incarceration, and subsequent loss of liberty and other damages
2 occurred through no fault or negligence on the part of Mr. Williams, and it is only fitting and
3 proper that he be compensated for his loss.

4 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
5 GEORGIA that the Department of Corrections is authorized and directed to pay the sum of
6 \$1.2 million to Mr. Willie Otis "Pete" Williams as compensation as provided above. Said
7 sum shall be paid from funds appropriated to or available to the Department of Corrections
8 and shall be in full and complete satisfaction of all claims against the state arising out of said
9 occurrence. Said sum shall not be subject to state income taxes and shall be paid in the form
10 of an annuity over a 20 year period of time with an initial lump sum payment of \$100,000.00.