

House Resolution 1078 (RULES COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE)

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 Administrative Services is authorized and directed to pay
6 the sum of \$1.2 million to Mr. Willie Otis "Pete" Williams as compensation as provided
7 above. Said sum shall be paid from funds appropriated to or available to the Department of
8 Administrative Services and shall be in full and complete satisfaction of all claims against
9 the state arising out of said occurrence. Said sum shall not be subject to state income taxes
10 and shall be paid in the form of an annuity over a 20 year period of time with an initial lump
11 sum payment of \$100,000.00. Said sum shall be conditioned on the fact that Mr. Willie Otis
12 "Pete" Williams shall not be convicted of a felony after the effective date of this resolution.
13 If Mr. Williams is convicted of a felony during the period of time he is receiving payments
14 pursuant to this resolution, he shall forfeit any rights to any remaining balance of the sum to
15 which he was otherwise entitled pursuant to this resolution.