

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF ATTORNEY GENERAL



P.O. Box 30212
LANSING, MICHIGAN 48909

DANA NESSEL
ATTORNEY GENERAL

November 12, 2025

Senator Sarah Anthony, Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
S-324 Capitol Building
Lansing, MI 48933
SenSAnthony@senate.michigan.gov

Representative Ann Bollin, Chair
House Appropriations Committee
898 House Office Building
Lansing, MI 48933
AnnBollin@house.mi.gov

Kathryn Summers, Director
Senate Fiscal Agency
Victor Office Center
201 N Washington Square # 800
Lansing, MI 48933
ksummers@senate.michigan.gov

Mary Ann Cleary, Director
House Fiscal Agency
House Office Building
124 N Capitol Avenue #4
Lansing, MI 48933
mcleary@house.mi.gov

Jen Flood
State Budget Director
George W. Romney Building
111 S Capitol Avenue
Lansing, MI 48933
floodj3@michigan.gov

Sent by email only

Re: *Kenneth Milton v State of Michigan*
Court of Claims, Docket No. 24-000180-MZ

Dear Representatives, Senators, and Directors;

MCL 18.1396 directs that the Attorney General notify you in the event of a settlement or consent judgment in excess of \$200,000. Accordingly, I am notifying you that on October 13, 2025, Court of Claims Judge Christopher P. Yates entered a judgment in the amount of \$1,954,162.35 to Plaintiff Kenneth Milton for the thirty-nine years that he was wrongfully imprisoned in the state prison system. The Attorney General concurred in the judgment.

Mr. Milton was convicted of first-degree murder and felony firearm in 1985 for the killing of Roger Cottingham. The crime was determined to be drug related. The primary evidence implicating Milton came from two unreliable eyewitnesses. The first eyewitness was running a drug den out of his apartment where

Cottingham was shot and was never able to identify Milton as the shooter. The second eyewitness was only able to identify Milton as the shooter after the police identified Milton to her by name during a line-up.

The Wayne County Prosecutor's Office Conviction Integrity Unit (WCPO CIU) re-interviewed individuals involved in the shooting at the time of the initial investigation, who knew Milton, as well as individuals Milton became acquainted with in prison who had independent knowledge of the shooting. The witnesses originally involved in the homicide all believed the second eyewitness only testified for the prosecution in exchange for not being charged with narcotics crimes. The witnesses Milton met in prison attested to Milton not being present during the shooting. None of them believed Milton shot Cottingham. There was no physical evidence tying Milton to the shooting, no apparent motive, and Milton had an alibi from his neighbor. WCPO CIU determined Milton was not involved in this crime and identified other individuals who were likely responsible

The WCPO CIU entered a stipulated order to the Wayne County Circuit Court vacating Milton's conviction based on the new evidence, and the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office subsequently dismissed the charges.

The primary purpose of the Wrongful Imprisonment Compensation Act (WICA), MCL 691.1751 *et seq*, is to provide compensation and other relief to individuals wrongfully imprisoned for crimes they did not commit. The WICA provides that a plaintiff who was wrongfully imprisoned is entitled to \$50,000.00 for each year he was wrongfully incarcerated and a prorated amount for any additional time less than a year. MCL 691.1755(2)(a). Mr. Milton established that he was entitled to compensation under the WICA because he demonstrated, by clear and convincing evidence, that: (1) he was convicted of one or more crimes under the law of this state, was sentenced to a term of imprisonment in a state correctional facility, and served time on his sentence; (2) his convictions were reversed and his charges dismissed based upon new evidence; and (3) new evidence demonstrated that he did not perpetrate the crime and was not an accomplice or accessory to the acts that were the basis of his conviction. MCL 691.1755(1).

Sincerely,



Ashley Steffen
Director of Legislative Affairs
Department of Attorney General