



WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

TO: Members, Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety

FROM: Barbara Sella, Associate Director

DATE: January 11, 2018

RE: Senate Bill 456 - Compensating Wrongfully Imprisoned

The Wisconsin Catholic Conference (WCC) supports Senate Bill 456.

We support increasing state compensation for people who have been wrongly imprisoned because it accords well with the principles articulated by Wisconsin's Catholic bishops in their statement, *Public Safety, the Common Good, and the Church: A Statement on Crime and Punishment in Wisconsin*, respect for the human person, common good, concern for the poor and marginalized, restoration, and solidarity.

People who have been wrongly imprisoned have lost years of their lives that can never be returned to them. They deserve to be compensated generously so they can rebuild their lives, care for their loved ones, and fully participate in their communities.

The State has a responsibility to stand in solidarity with these innocent persons, as well as their surviving family members, not just for their sake, but also for the sake of the common good. For when the State acknowledges its error and attempts to make amends it reestablishes trust and legitimacy.

We also support provisions within SB 456 that recognize restoration of the exonerated should start immediately, through the provision of transitional services as well as health care coverage. Such coverage is essential to achieving and maintaining a stable and productive life.

Finally, we applaud this bipartisan effort to make our criminal justice system more just. We look forward to supporting further bipartisan reform efforts.

Thank you.