

Substitute for House Resolution No. 161.

A resolution to declare October 2, 2015, as Wrongful Conviction Day in the state of Michigan.

Whereas, Wrongful Conviction Day is an annual event that highlights the need to prevent and remedy wrongful convictions around the world. On October 2 each year, innocence groups from around the world undertake activities to raise awareness about wrongful convictions worldwide. Innocence groups headquartered around the world are committed to identifying, advocating for, and exonerating individuals who have been convicted of a serious crime which they did not commit, and to preventing future wrongful convictions through awareness, education and justice system reform; and

Whereas, In the United States alone, there were 125 recorded exonerations in 2014. Since 1989, there have been 1577 recorded exonerations in the United States. Thus far in 2015, there have been 70 recorded exonerations in the United States. Nationwide, the average exoneree serves fourteen years in prison before exoneration. Thirty states, the federal government, and the District of Columbia have recognized the obligation to compensate wrongfully convicted people for the years stolen from their lives by failures of the criminal justice system; and

Whereas, According to the National Registry of Exonerations, there have been 60 people wrongfully convicted and exonerated in Michigan since 1990. Michigan has averaged two exonerations per year. Unlike parolees, exonerees in Michigan are given no services to help with re-integration into society; and

Whereas, Wrongful Conviction Day is a specifically allocated annual day to focus attention on and discuss the problem of wrongful convictions around the world. The conviction of innocent people is an international human rights issue; and

Whereas, Awareness can be raised in any number of ways, including through media releases, interviews, educational forums, church services, exoneree presentations and involvement, commemoration services, vigils, book signings, film festivals, blogs, Facebook, websites, Twitter, magazines. Frank and open discussions about the causes of wrongful convictions will lead to positive change in our criminal justice systems and help reduce future wrongful convictions; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That the members of this legislative body declare October 2, 2015, as Wrongful Conviction Day in the state of Michigan.