

STATE OF NEW YORK

53

2017-2018 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

(Prefiled)

January 4, 2017

Introduced by Sens. HOYLMAN, PERKINS -- read twice and ordered printed,
and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Judiciary

AN ACT to amend the court of claims act, the public housing law, the
correction law, and the civil service law, in relation to the avail-
ability of certain benefits to exonerees; and to repeal certain
provisions of the court of claims act relating thereto

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assem-
bly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. The court of claims act is amended by adding a new section
2 8-c to read as follows:

3 § 8-c. Definitions. When used in this act, unless otherwise required
4 by the context, or unless a contrary intent is expressly declared in the
5 provision to be construed, the term "exoneree" shall mean any person who
6 has been granted a judgment in a claim for unjust conviction and impri-
7 sonment under section eight-b of this act.

8 § 2. Subparagraphs (i) and (ii) of paragraph (b) of subdivision 5 of
9 section 8-b of the court of claims act, as added by chapter 1009 of the
10 laws of 1984, are amended to read as follows:

11 (i) he or she has been pardoned upon the ground of innocence of the
12 crime or crimes for which he or she was sentenced and which are the
13 grounds for the complaint; or (ii) his or her judgment of conviction was
14 reversed or vacated, and the accusatory instrument dismissed or, if a
15 new trial was ordered, either he or she was found not guilty at the new
16 trial or he or she was not retried and the accusatory instrument
17 dismissed; provided that the judgement of conviction was reversed or
18 vacated, and the accusatory instrument was dismissed, on any of the
19 following grounds: (A) [~~paragraph (a), (b), (c), (e) or (g) of~~] subdivi-
20 sion one of section 440.10 of the criminal procedure law; or (B) subdivi-
21 sion [~~one (where based upon grounds set forth in item (A) hereof),~~]
22 two, three (where the count dismissed was the sole basis for the impri-

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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sonment complained of) or five of section 470.20 of the criminal procedure law; or (C) comparable provisions of the former code of criminal procedure or subsequent law; or (D) the statute, or application thereof, on which the accusatory instrument was based violated the constitution of the United States or the state of New York; and

§ 3. Paragraph (c) of subdivision 5 of section 8-b of the court of claims act, as added by chapter 1009 of the laws of 1984, is amended to read as follows:

(c) he or she did not commit any of the acts [~~charged in the accusatory instrument~~] for which he or she was convicted or his or her acts or omissions charged in the accusatory instrument did not constitute a felony or misdemeanor against the state; and

§ 4. Paragraph (d) of subdivision 5 of section 8-b of the court of claims act, as added by chapter 1009 of the laws of 1984, is amended to read as follows:

(d) he or she did not by his or her own [~~conduct~~] misconduct cause or bring about his or her conviction. For purposes of this subdivision, a confession, admission or plea of guilty made or entered by the claimant may not be considered evidence of misconduct unless such confession, admission or plea of guilty was made or entered knowingly, voluntarily, without duress and with the intent to prevent the investigation or prosecution: (i) of the claimant for a crime unrelated to the crime or crimes that were the subject of such confession, admission or plea of guilty; or (ii) of another person who the claimant, at the time of such confession, admission or plea, believed to be the perpetrator of the crime or crimes that were the subject of such confession, admission or plea.

§ 5. Subdivision 7 of section 8-b of the court of claims act is REPEALED.

§ 6. Subdivision 6 of section 8-b of the court of claims act, as added by chapter 1009 of the laws of 1984, is amended to read as follows:

6. If the court finds that the claimant is entitled to a judgment, it shall award damages in such sum of money as the court determines will fairly and reasonably compensate him or her, as well as any benefits to which the claimant is entitled under this section.

§ 7. Section 8-b of the court of claims act is amended by adding eight new subdivisions 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14 to read as follows:

7. Any exoneree shall be entitled to have all records of his or her conviction sealed pursuant to section 160.50 of the criminal procedure law.

8. No benefits paid pursuant to this article shall be considered gross income as defined in section six hundred twelve of the tax law, nor shall they be taxable by any entity.

9. No benefits paid pursuant to this article shall be reduced by any amount to compensate the state for the costs of incarcerating the exoneree.

10. Exonerees shall be enrolled in the health benefit plan established pursuant to section one hundred sixty-one of the civil service law, the supplementary health benefit plan established pursuant to section one hundred sixty-three-a of the civil service law, and the dental insurance plan established pursuant to section one hundred sixty of the civil service law. The full cost of premium or subscription charges for such coverage shall be paid by the state.

11. The exoneree shall be entitled to reasonable attorney's fees incurred in the process of vacating or reversing the judgment against him or her. The exoneree shall petition the court of claims in seeking

1 reasonable attorney's fees as against the state. Any award of attorney's
2 fees shall be reimbursable by the state.

3 12. An exoneree who enrolls at any institution of the city university
4 of New York or any institution of the state university of New York shall
5 be eligible for a tuition award in an amount equal to the tuition
6 charged at such institution, the mandatory fees charged at such institu-
7 tion and the non-tuition cost of attendance at such institution or
8 college, provided that the scholarship shall not exceed an amount that
9 is equal to the total cost of attendance determined for federal Title IV
10 student financial aid purposes.

11 13. Any and all benefits made available to parolees through the divi-
12 sion of parole shall also be made available to exonerees. Any state
13 contract with a service provider for parolees must also require the
14 service provider to also serve exonerees.

15 14. Nothing in this act shall be construed to prevent an exoneree from
16 pursuing further civil lawsuits against any state agencies or employees
17 for any reason, including in connection with the wrongful conviction.

18 § 8. Subdivision 1 of section 156 of the public housing law is amended
19 by adding a new paragraph c to read as follows:

20 c. also for any exoneree as defined in section eight-c of the court of
21 claims act. Any benefits due to such exoneree shall not be included in
22 the calculation of probable aggregate income used to determine eligibil-
23 ity for these dwellings. Exonerees shall be assigned the highest need-
24 -based priority for placement in a dwelling unit.

25 § 9. Subdivision 4 of section 404 of the correction law, as added by
26 chapter 548 of the laws of 2014, is amended to read as follows:

27 4. Every inmate who has received mental health treatment pursuant to
28 this article within three years of his or her anticipated release date
29 from a state correctional facility and every exoneree, as defined in
30 section eight-c of the court of claims act, shall be provided with
31 mental health discharge planning and, when necessary, an appointment
32 with a mental health professional in the community who can prescribe
33 medications following discharge and sufficient mental health medications
34 and prescriptions to bridge the period between discharge and such time
35 as such mental health professional may assume care of the patient.
36 Inmates who have refused mental health treatment may also be provided
37 mental health discharge planning and any necessary appointment with a
38 mental health professional.

39 § 10. Subdivision 2 of section 163 of the civil service law, as
40 amended by section 4 of part T of chapter 56 of the laws of 2010, is
41 amended to read as follows:

42 2. The contract or contracts shall provide for health benefits for
43 retired employees of the state and of the state colleges of agriculture,
44 home economics, industrial labor relations and veterinary medicine, the
45 state agricultural experiment station at Geneva, and any other institu-
46 tion or agency under the management and control of Cornell university as
47 the representative of the board of trustees of the state university of
48 New York, and the state college of ceramics under the management and
49 control of Alfred university as the representative of the board of trus-
50 tees of the state university of New York, and their spouses and depend-
51 ent children as defined by the regulations of the president, and exoner-
52 ees as defined in section eight-c of the court of claims act, on such
53 terms as the president may deem appropriate, and the president may
54 authorize the inclusion in the plan of the employees and retired employ-
55 ees of public authorities, public benefit corporations, school
56 districts, special districts, district corporations, municipal corpo-

1 rations excluding active employees and retired employees of cities
2 having a population of one million or more inhabitants whose compen-
3 sation is or was before retirement paid out of the city treasury, or
4 other appropriate agencies, subdivisions or quasi-public organizations
5 of the state, including active members of volunteer fire and volunteer
6 ambulance companies serving one or more municipal corporations pursuant
7 to subdivision seven of section ninety-two-a of the general municipal
8 law, and their spouses and dependent children as defined by the regu-
9 lations of the president. Any such corporation, district, agency or
10 organization electing to participate in the plan shall be required to
11 pay its proportionate share of the expenses of administration of the
12 plan in such amounts and at such times as determined and fixed by the
13 president. All amounts payable for such expenses of administration shall
14 be paid to the commissioner of taxation and finance and shall be applied
15 to the reimbursement of funds previously advanced for such purposes.
16 Neither the state nor any other participant in the plan shall be charged
17 with the particular experience attributable to the employees of the
18 participant, and all dividends or retroactive rate credits shall be
19 distributed pro-rata based upon the number of employees of such partic-
20 ipant covered by the plan.

21 § 11. This act shall take effect immediately.