

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

25-112

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

September 19, 2023

To commemorate and recognize October 2nd, 2023, as International Wrongful Conviction Day in the District of Columbia.

WHEREAS, International Wrongful Conviction Day was established on October 2, 2013, by the Innocence Network to raise awareness of the causes and remedies of wrongful convictions;

WHEREAS, according to the National Registry of Exonerations, there have been 3,360 exonerations since 1989 in the United States;

WHEREAS, further according to the National Registry of Exonerations, 26 of the 3,360 individuals exonerated since 1989 were sentenced in the District;

WHEREAS, of the 26 people exonerated, all are men, 62% are Black, 23% are White, and 8% are Hispanic;

WHEREAS, the personal, social, and emotional costs of wrongful convictions are immeasurable;

WHEREAS, psychological research shows that those who are wrongfully convicted suffer mental health consequences such as post-traumatic stress disorder, suicidal thoughts, anxiety, depression, institutionalization, and personality changes;

WHEREAS, the District is grateful to the attorneys who work to exonerate those who are wrongfully convicted;

WHEREAS, the former Chief Judge of the DC Superior Court, Robert E. Morin, prior to being a judge, advocated for over a decade as a defense lawyer specializing in death-penalty cases;

WHEREAS, in 1993, Judge Morin represented Kirk N. Bloodsworth, an Eastern Shore waterman who was freed from prison in 1993 after DNA evidence cleared him of the 1984 rape and murder of a 9-year-old Baltimore girl;

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WHEREAS, according to the Innocent Project, Kirk Bloodsworth was the first American to be sentenced to death and then subsequently exonerated by DNA evidence;

WHEREAS, Kirk Bloodsworth is now a published author and an effective advocate for the rights of those who are wrongfully convicted;

WHEREAS, the District of Columbia recognizes International Wrongful Conviction Day and thanks Judge Morin for his dedication to the residents of the District of Columbia and for working to exonerate those who have been wrongfully convicted.

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the “International Wrongful Conviction Day Ceremonial Recognition Resolution of 2023”.

Sec. 2. The Council recognizes International Wrongful Conviction Day in the District of Columbia and honors the important work of attorneys and organizations that work to end wrongful convictions;

Sec. 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately.