



Senate Committee on Judiciary
RE: House Bill 3206 A-Engrossed – Testimony in Support
Ted Bradford, Exoneree
June 1, 2015

My name is Ted Bradford and I am the first person to be exonerated in Washington State with DNA evidence. I'm here today to tell my story, which shows why meaningful access to DNA testing for the wrongfully convicted is so important.

In 1996 I was wrongfully convicted of raping a woman in Yakima WA. A witness said she saw my car at the crime scene and after being interrogated for 8 hours I falsely confessed to the crime. At my original trial, DNA testing was done on the rape kit, but only DNA from the victim's husband was detected. Even though details of my confession were wrong and there was no biological evidence connecting me to the crime, I was still convicted and spent 10 years in prison for a crime I did not commit.

My nightmare did not end there because I was forced to register as a sex offender when I was released. The Northwestern Innocence Project took my case in 2002 and got DNA testing on a mask worn by the rapist, which excluded me. Despite this evidence the prosecutor still retried me. But this time I was acquitted.

Under Oregon's current law many deserving people are not eligible for post-conviction DNA testing because they are no longer incarcerated, and this is not fair. Without access to DNA testing after prison, I would not have been able to clear my name and move on with my life. Being in prison for a crime you didn't commit is one of the toughest things someone can face. I'll never get back the time I lost with my children. They were babies when I went in and adults when I came out. Being forced to live with the stigma of a conviction after prison is also difficult. It forces a person to live in a different kind of prison while out in the free world, and is something that no innocent person should have to go through.

I am here today to ask you to change the law in Oregon so that anyone who goes through the unique horror of wrongful conviction can have the opportunity to finally see justice. I know the good people of Oregon would want it this way.