

**Floyd Bledsoe**  
**Testimony in Support of HB2131**  
**House Judiciary Committee**  
**January 30, 2025**

My name is Floyd Bledsoe and I live in Hutchinson, Kansas. I spent 16 years in prison for a crime I did not commit and I'm here today to testify in support of HB2131, the Pete Coones Memorial Act.

Even though my case didn't involve unreliable testimony from a jailhouse witness, police still used incentivized lies, in my case from the actual perpetrator, to convict me. Those false accusations cost me more than you can imagine. I support this bill because no one should have to live through what I went through, regardless of where the accusation comes from.

My life was happy before my wrongful conviction. My wife and I met in church, got married and had two boys. I owned a dairy farm and had a good income. My focus was on my family and building our future. Everything changed in 1999, when my wife's 14-year-old sister was raped and murdered. The real perpetrator confessed to the crime, turned over the murder weapon, and led police to her body where she was buried behind his home. But once he was in jail, he changed his story and lied and said that I was the one who did it. Based on his testimony, the State charged me and a jury found me guilty. In the blink of an eye, my life was destroyed.

It is no surprise that prison is awful, and that goes double for someone convicted of sexual assault. And it is even worse for someone who is innocent. The suffering is hard to describe. I lost my family and everyone I thought supported me. My wife's relatives believed the verdict and she ended up divorcing me. I had to give up my parental rights to my sons while I was incarcerated. I didn't see them while I was in prison, not once. When I went to prison they were nine months and two and half years old. When I got out they were 17 and 19. With my family gone, I lost contact with the outside world.

I was forced to sell my 40-acres of land to pay for legal fees and to settle a wrongful death lawsuit. All of my property on the farm including livestock, cars and tools was gone. Every day in prison was full of chaos and violence. One time five inmates beat me so badly that I had a concussion and my teeth went through my lip.

My wrongful conviction, like all of them, took away my job, my family, my life. No one should have to go through what I went through, and I know that HB2131 can help. If just one person is protected from a faulty conviction, it will have been worth it and more, because the cost of just one more false accusation from a jailhouse witness is just too high. I hope you will continue supporting HB2131. Thank you for your time.