



The North Carolina Innocence Inquiry Commission An Official State Agency*

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News Release

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From the North Carolina Innocence Inquiry Commission
Kendra Montgomery-Blinn, Executive Director

Innocence Inquiry Commission Receives Federal Grant

The North Carolina Innocence Inquiry Commission (Commission) is proud to announce that they have been awarded a federal grant from the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) in the amount of \$566,980 for DNA testing of post-conviction innocence claims. The Commission applied for the grant with the support of the North Carolina Attorney General's Office and the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation. The money will be used from January 2010 through June 2011.

Under the NIJ grant, the Commission will be able to dramatically expand their capacity to review DNA cases and conduct forensic testing. The grant includes: funding for two staff attorney positions, training, supplies, expert witness fees, and DNA testing.

The Commission is a state agency that currently operates with a staff of five and is allotted a budget of \$372,879 per year. The Commission reviews and evaluates post-conviction claims of actual innocence. Since the Commission's creation, they have reviewed 557 innocence claims and conducted three hearings. A public hearing in the case of State v. Gregory Flynt Taylor was conducted on September 3rd and 4th and is now pending for final hearing before a three-judge panel.

The Commission's Executive Director, Kendra Montgomery-Blinn, explained that the Commission reviews cases that involve DNA testing and cases where there is no physical

* Created by the North Carolina General Assembly in 2006 pursuant to N.C. G.S. § 15A-1460-75.

evidence to test. The grant may only be used for cases involving DNA testing, but the Commission will continue to use their regular funds to review both types of cases.

The Commission's Chairman, Judge Quentin T. Sumner, said, "This grant is recognition of the important work the Commission does. I am proud of how much we have accomplished in the past three years and ready to see how much more we can do with this extra funding." Executive Director, Kendra Montgomery-Blinn, said, "This funding comes at a time when it is desperately needed and will almost double our budget."

Cases may be referred to the Commission by any person or agency. If you have an innocence claim to refer, please send information about the claim to the Commission at:

North Carolina Innocence Inquiry Commission
Administrative Office of the Courts
P.O. Box 2448
Raleigh, NC 27602

More information about referring an innocence claim can be found on the Commission's website at: www.innocencecommission-nc.gov

For more information, please contact the Commission's Executive Director, Kendra Montgomery-Blinn, at (919) 890-1580 or Kendra.A.Montgomery@nccourts.org

More information, including photographs and case statistics can be found on the Commission's website at: www.innocencecommission-nc.gov