

I'm writing to you today to strongly support adding "factual innocence posthumously" to the 2019 Factual Innocence law.

My name is Ray Krone, and some of you may be familiar with my story. For those of you who aren't, I'll be brief. When New Year's Eve, 1991 rolled around, I was working as a letter carrier for the US Postal Service. Before joining the Postal Service, I'd received an honorable discharge for my six years of service in the US Air Force. I had no criminal record. Instead of looking forward to the new year, though, I was in a cell at the Maricopa County Jail, having been arrested for the kidnapping, sexual assault and murder of a bartender named Kim Ancona in Phoenix, AZ. Seven months after my arrest, I was sentenced to death, based on bite mark evidence, which led to the press referring to me as "The Snaggletooth Killer". I maintained my innocence, and in 1996 I was granted a new trial. I was convicted a second time, again based on bite mark evidence, but the judge wasn't convinced of my guilt. Instead of sentencing me to death, he sentenced me to life in prison, saying that my case would haunt him for the rest of his life. In 2002, after more than 10 years in prison, DNA identified the real killer and I was exonerated.

I don't ask you to imagine what those ten years in prison were like for me. I want you to imagine what they'd be like for you, if it was your son or daughter serving that time for a crime they didn't commit. At what point would you stop fighting to clear their name? How many times would they have to tell you "I didn't do it"?

While I was in prison in Arizona, my friends and family kept fighting to clear my name. My convictions and the salacious details of the crime were splashed all over the front page of my hometown newspaper in Pennsylvania. Meanwhile, my mother, father, brothers and sister still had to go to work every day, believing in my innocence, and knowing that somewhere, someone was whispering "there's that woman whose son raped and killed that girl in Arizona" or "did you see what his/her brother did?"

I didn't need anyone to tell me I was innocent; I knew I was. But what really kept me going was the need to clear my name, not just for myself but for my family and friends who stood beside me through two trials and more than ten years in prison.

I'd accepted the possibility that I'd die in prison, either from an untreated medical condition, an injury inflicted by a corrections officer or another prisoner, or old age. I refused to accept that my family would have to live with the pain and the stigma of my conviction. Had I died in that prison, not only would my family have been denied justice, but the family of Kim Ancona would have been denied as well. It was only because we didn't give up that Kim's killer is now behind bars.

I believe you all recognize the name of former Senator Ray Rawson. If you Google his name, this is the top search result, a preview from Wikipedia:

“He is best known for providing forensic evidence that led to the wrongful conviction of Ray Krone”.

As lawmakers, do you want to be best known for denying justice to the wrongfully convicted?

Refusing to allow a fact-based claim of innocence on a wrongful conviction is refusing justice for the convicted, the victim and both of their families.

Please support factual innocence cases being allowed to proceed to a conclusion, even if the person convicted of the crime has died.