



2,517 Exonerations

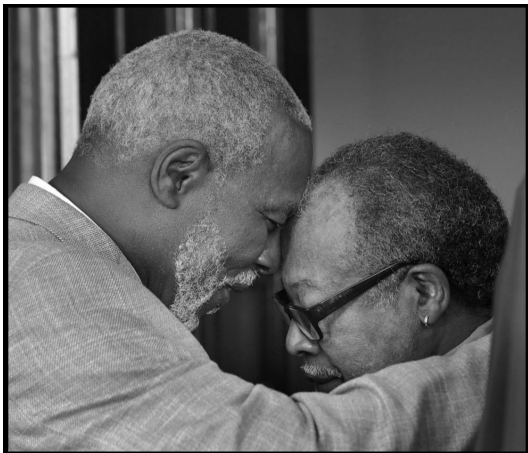
22,315 Years Lost

⚖️ **Spotlight:** Florida CIUS

✓ CIUs by the Nos.

## 1 Year In: Florida's New Conviction Integrity Units

Prior to 2019, Florida was the most populous state without a single operating conviction integrity unit. However, since January 1, 2019, three conviction integrity units were created in Florida - in the 4th Circuit (Clay, Duval, and Nassau counties), the 9th Circuit (Orange and Osceola counties), and the 13th Circuit (Hillsborough County). **So far, their public level of activity has been very different.**



Clifford Williams, Jr. & Nathan Hubert Myers



1 In early 2017, [Hubert Myers](#) read a newspaper article about the formation of a Conviction Integrity Unit in the State Attorney's

"If additional DNA testing can provide closure of issues related to Mr. Zeigler's conviction, the State has a moral obligation to embrace the

been convicted of murder in 1976. He wrote to State Attorney Melissa Nelson, asserting that he and his uncle, [Clifford Williams Jr.](#), who also had been convicted, were innocent. He cited alibi witnesses who had not been called to testify at trial, forensic and physical evidence that was not presented, and information about a man who confessed to the crime before he died.

In 2019, after the CIU was formed, a lengthy reinvestigation of the case was launched. Witnesses were interviewed and new forensic testing was performed. The trial record was reviewed. In March 2019, the CIU issued a [44-page report](#) recommending that Nelson support the exoneration of Myers and Williams. She did, and in March, both men were released from prison, 42 years and 7 months after they were convicted.

**2** The CIU in the 9th Circuit reviewed the case of Tommy Zeigler, who has spent 43 years on death row, with very different results. In April, CIU Chief Monique Haughton Worrell [submitted a report](#) to State Attorney Aramis Ayala supporting Zeigler's request for DNA analysis on evidence collected in his case.

After writing the memo, Haughton Worrell was replaced. The new CIU chief, Amanda Sampaio Bova, concluded that "retesting of evidence would not lead to an exoneration. I do not see that further investigation by the CIR (conviction integrity unit) is justified." There have been no exonerations from Orange or Osceola counties in 2019.

**3** A different type of review is taking place in the 13th Circuit CIU. They recently requested that 18 convictions be vacated so that they may dismiss them. The CIU makes a distinction between one and the rest. One is a case which the State Attorney says is a matter of "factual innocence." The other 17 of those involved misconduct of three separate police officers, which the State Attorney calls "issues that prevent the State from standing behind the conviction."

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Differences in age, location, population, and resources cannot fully account for the disparity in CIU exonerations across the nation. As the units in Florida demonstrate, the productivity of a CIU is often determined by political will.

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## A Comprehensive List of Conviction Integrity Units

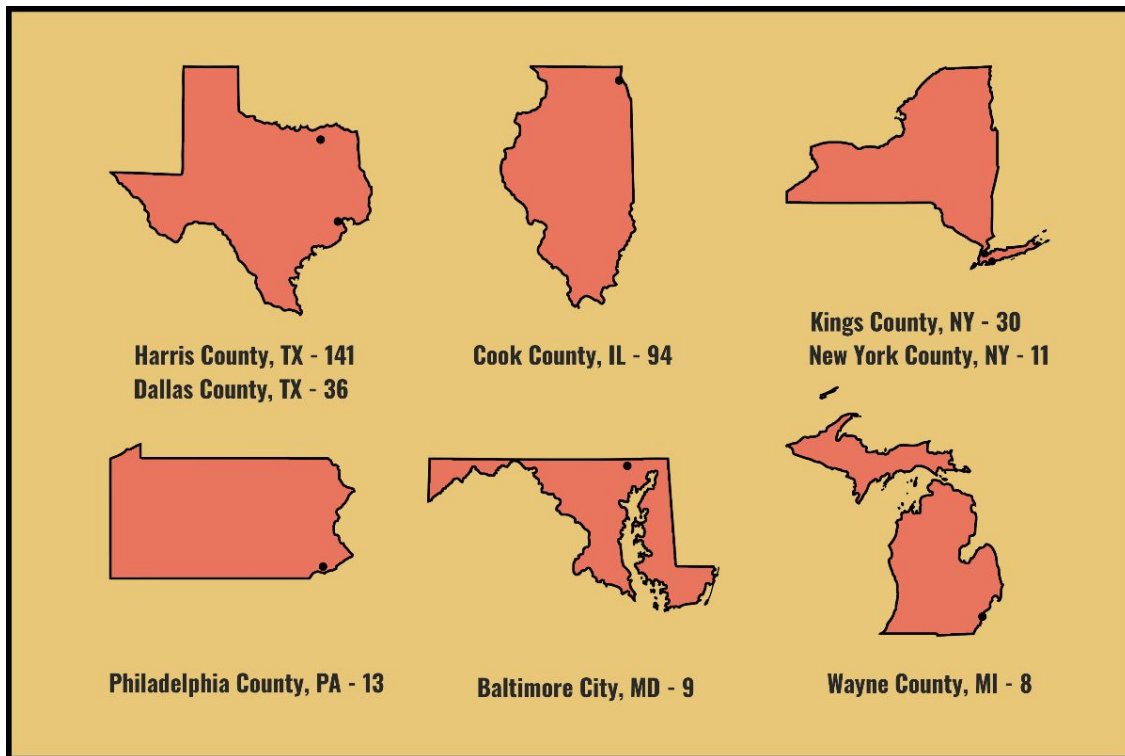
### By the Numbers: Top Exonerators

The conviction integrity units with the most exonerations to date are:

1. Harris Co, TX = 141

6. New York Co, NY = 11

- 3. Dallas Co, TX = 30
- 4. Kings Co, NY = 30
- 5. Philadelphia Co, PA = 13
- 6. Cook County, IL = 94
- 7. Wayne Co, MI = 8
- 8. Baltimore City, MD = 9
- 9. Santa Clara Co, CA = 6
- 10. Multnomah Co, OR = 5



## Up-And-Coming: NY & VA

2019 brought a wave of candidates promising progressive criminal justice reform on the campaign trail. Four top prosecutors, elected on November 5, vowed to create conviction integrity units in their districts. Will they make good on their promises? Keep track: [NRE Annual Audit of Conviction Integrity Units](#)



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