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SB-1134 Habeas corpus: new evidence: motion to vacate judgment: indemnity. (2015-2016)

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Senate Bill No. 1134

CHAPTER 785

An act to amend Sections 1473, 1485.5, and 1485.55 of the Penal Code, relating to habeas corpus.

[Approved by Governor September 28, 2016. Filed with Secretary of State September 28, 2016.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1134, Leno. Habeas corpus: new evidence: motion to vacate judgment: indemnity.

Existing law allows every person who is unlawfully imprisoned or restrained of his or her liberty to prosecute a writ of habeas corpus to inquire into the cause of his or her imprisonment or restraint. Existing law allows a writ of habeas corpus to be prosecuted for, but not limited to, false evidence that is substantially material or probative to the issue of guilt or punishment that was introduced at trial and false physical evidence which was a material factor directly related to the plea of guilty of the person.

This bill would additionally allow a writ of habeas corpus to be prosecuted on the basis of new evidence that is credible, material, presented without substantial delay, and of such decisive force and value that it would have more likely than not changed the outcome at trial.

Existing law requires the California Victim Compensation Board to recommend an appropriation be made by the Legislature for the purpose of indemnifying a person if the evidence shows that a crime with which the person was charged was either not committed at all, or, if committed, was not committed by that person. Existing law requires that the appropriation recommended shall be a sum equivalent to \$140 per day of incarceration served. If a court grants a writ of habeas corpus or vacates a judgment on the basis of new evidence and finds that the new evidence points unerringly to innocence, existing law requires the board to recommend an appropriation to the Legislature pursuant to these provisions without a hearing.

This bill would require the board, without a hearing, to recommend an appropriation to the Legislature if the court finds that the person is factually innocent. The bill would make additional clarifying and technical changes.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 1473 of the Penal Code is amended to read:

1473. (a) A person unlawfully imprisoned or restrained of his or her liberty, under any pretense, may prosecute a writ of habeas corpus to inquire into the cause of his or her imprisonment or restraint.

(b) A writ of habeas corpus may be prosecuted for, but not limited to, the following reasons:

(1) False evidence that is substantially material or probative on the issue of guilt or punishment was introduced against a person at a hearing or trial relating to his or her incarceration.

(2) False physical evidence, believed by a person to be factual, probative, or material on the issue of guilt, which was known by the person at the time of entering a plea of guilty, which was a material factor directly related to the plea of guilty by the person.

(3) (A) New evidence exists that is credible, material, presented without substantial delay, and of such decisive force and value that it would have more likely than not changed the outcome at trial.

(B) For purposes of this section, "new evidence" means evidence that has been discovered after trial, that could not have been discovered prior to trial by the exercise of due diligence, and is admissible and not merely cumulative, corroborative, collateral, or impeaching.

(c) Any allegation that the prosecution knew or should have known of the false nature of the evidence referred to in paragraphs (1) and (2) of subdivision (b) is immaterial to the prosecution of a writ of habeas corpus brought pursuant to paragraph (1) or (2) of subdivision (b).

(d) This section does not limit the grounds for which a writ of habeas corpus may be prosecuted or preclude the use of any other remedies.

(e) (1) For purposes of this section, "false evidence" includes opinions of experts that have either been repudiated by the expert who originally provided the opinion at a hearing or trial or that have been undermined by later scientific research or technological advances.

(2) This section does not create additional liabilities, beyond those already recognized, for an expert who repudiates his or her original opinion provided at a hearing or trial or whose opinion has been undermined by later scientific research or technological advancements.

SEC. 2. Section 1485.5 of the Penal Code is amended to read:

1485.5. (a) If the district attorney or Attorney General stipulates to or does not contest the factual allegations underlying one or more of the grounds for granting a writ of habeas corpus or a motion to vacate a judgment, the facts underlying the basis for the court's ruling or order shall be binding on the Attorney General, the factfinder, and the California Victim Compensation Board.

(b) The district attorney shall provide notice to the Attorney General prior to entering into a stipulation of facts that will be the basis for the granting of a writ of habeas corpus or a motion to vacate a judgment.

(c) In a contested or uncontested proceeding, the express factual findings made by the court, including credibility determinations, in considering a petition for habeas corpus, a motion to vacate judgment pursuant to Section 1473.6, or an application for a certificate of factual innocence, shall be binding on the Attorney General, the factfinder, and the California Victim Compensation Board.

(d) For the purposes of this section, "express factual findings" are findings established as the basis for the court's ruling or order.

(e) For purposes of this section, "court" is defined as a state or federal court.

SEC. 3. Section 1485.55 of the Penal Code is amended to read:

1485.55. (a) In a contested proceeding, if the court has granted a writ of habeas corpus or when, pursuant to Section 1473.6, the court vacates a judgment, and if the court has found that the person is factually innocent, that finding shall be binding on the California Victim Compensation Board for a claim presented to the board, and upon application by the person, the board shall, without a hearing, recommend to the Legislature that an appropriation be made and the claim paid pursuant to Section 4904.

(b) In a contested or uncontested proceeding, if the court grants a writ of habeas corpus and did not find the person factually innocent in the habeas corpus proceedings, the petitioner may move for a finding of factual innocence by a preponderance of the evidence that the crime with which he or she was charged was either not committed at all or, if committed, was not committed by him or her.

(c) If the court vacates a judgment pursuant to Section 1473.6, on any ground, the petitioner may move for a finding of factual innocence by a preponderance of the evidence that the crime with which he or she was charged was either not committed at all or, if committed, was not committed by him or her.

(d) If the court makes a finding that the petitioner has proven his or her factual innocence by a preponderance of the evidence pursuant to subdivision (b) or (c), the board shall, without a hearing, recommend to the Legislature that an appropriation be made and any claim filed shall be paid pursuant to Section 4904.

(e) A presumption does not exist in any other proceeding for failure to make a motion or obtain a favorable ruling pursuant to subdivision (b) or (c).

(f) If a federal court, after granting a writ of habeas corpus, pursuant to a nonstatutory motion or request, finds a petitioner factually innocent by no less than a preponderance of the evidence that the crime with which he or she was charged was either not committed at all or, if committed, was not committed by him or her, the board shall, without a hearing, recommend to the Legislature that an appropriation be made and any claim filed shall be paid pursuant to Section 4904.