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I am an author, licensed private investigator and journalist.

After my first book, *Presumed Guilty: When Innocent People Are Wrongly Convicted*, was published in 1991, I left *The Columbus Dispatch* and began investigating wrongful convictions in Ohio and other states.

I have helped free over 30 wrongly convicted inmates since then, mostly in Ohio, and have been called “the most successful one-man innocence project in the country.” I document details of those exonerations in a new book, *Justice Denied: True Stories of False Convictions*.

Use of the Ohio public records law has played a major role in many of my Ohio exoneration cases. Had I not been able to obtain records that had previously been concealed, many of those innocent inmates would still be suffering in prison for crimes they did not commit.

This confirms James Madison’s warning that, “A popular government without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy; or, perhaps, both.”

This is why I strongly request that lines 14,899-14,902, 14,909-14,914, 15,190-15,198, and 41,062-41,068 in House Bill 96, as passed by the House, be removed. Those sections are not relevant to the Ohio budget but will prevent exonerations.