

2/10/2024

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**FAIRFAX COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY STEVE DESCANO ANNOUNCES
CONVICTION INTEGRITY UNIT WITH MID-ATLANTIC INNOCENCE PROJECT**

Fairfax, VA – Fairfax Commonwealth's Attorney Steve Descano announced today the creation of Fairfax County's first-ever Conviction Integrity Unit (CIU) in partnership with the Mid-Atlantic Innocence Project (MAIP). Under this partnership, individuals who believe they have been wrongfully convicted of a felony in Fairfax County can submit their case for a review by MAIP.

"Wrongful convictions undermine public trust in the justice system and have devastating impacts on defendants, their families, and our community," **CA Descano** said. "Establishing a Conviction Integrity Unit is a crucial part of making Fairfax County's criminal legal system both fairer and more just. We're extremely proud to have found a partner in the Mid-Atlantic Innocence Project, an organization dedicated to supporting this mission."

"We're thrilled that Fairfax County has taken this step," said MAIP's Executive Director, **Shawn Armbrust**. "When people see that elected officials are willing to identify and learn from past acts of injustice, it enhances the public's trust in our system and ultimately improves public safety."

For cases to be eligible for review, individuals must have a felony conviction in Fairfax County *and* be willing to sign an affidavit that they are factually innocent. Priority will be given to individuals who are presently incarcerated. The initial screening process will be handled by MAIP, who will coordinate with the CIU to litigate cases that have substantial innocence claims.

Since its founding in 2000, [MAIP](#) has helped correct the convictions of more than 40 innocent men in D.C., Maryland, and Virginia who had served a combined total of nearly 900 years in prison. MAIP has also helped pass 20 laws in the DMV region to prevent wrongful convictions from occurring, make them easier to correct, or help exonerees rebuild their lives upon release.

Prior to this partnership, CA Descano's office has successfully worked to overturn the conviction of an individual whose conviction resulted from exculpatory evidence being hidden by authorities and free from prison a DC firefighter whose case stemmed from an illegal traffic stop, among other issues with the case. Sadly, these cases are likely not the only ones where justice has been denied by our legal system, and this partnership will be instrumental in ensuring that others who have been wrongfully convicted can finally receive justice.

[Learn more about the Fairfax County CIU and how to apply for MAIP review.](#)