

**Lamonte McIntyre**  
**Testimony Supporting House Bill 2544**  
**Preventing Wrongful Convictions Based on Jailhouse Witnesses**  
House Judiciary Committee Hearing  
February 6<sup>th</sup> 3:30 p.m.

Thank you to the House Judiciary Committee for hearing this important bill. As many of you know, I spent 23 years in prison for a crime I didn't commit. House Bill 2544 is an important step in preventing wrongful convictions in Kansas.

In the decades I spent in prison, I've seen everything that goes on in the system. I know people who are sitting in prison right now based on lies told by jailhouse witnesses who they've never met. People want to get out of their situations by testifying against other inmates.

I can tell you that people aren't talking about their crimes to other inmates in jail or prison. That just doesn't happen. Everyone knows that what you say about your case to other inmates can be used against you.

Juries don't understand because they don't know how prison actually works. They think that if a prosecutor put a jailhouse witness on the stand, the witness must be telling the truth. Defense attorneys usually find out right before the jailhouse witness testifies about the deals they are getting, or they are never told at all, so they can't prepare for trial. Then the jury never hears about the jailhouse witness's motivations to lie for an early release or other benefits.

Prosecutors can give the testimony even more credibility by telling the jury the jailhouse witness risked his life to do the right thing and testify. That is another myth, that "snitches get stitches." District attorneys already put their jailhouse witnesses in protective custody before they testify; they are too valuable to the state to keep in general population.

Nothing in this bill would make things less safe for jailhouse witnesses. What it would do is provide more information on who these jailhouse witnesses are before they testify, and prevent wrongful convictions based on lies. Jailhouse witnesses have everything to gain and almost nothing to lose by making up stories about other inmates, and there should be more protections if their testimony is used.