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NC Trial Lawyers Fighting for Eugenics Victims Pro Bono

RALEIGH, NC —

Two years after passage of a compensation bill, many victims of North Carolina's Eugenics Program are still fighting for restitution and the NC Advocates for Justice (NCAJ) Workers' Compensation Section are honored to represent them

More than 7,000 people in North Carolina — many poor or disabled — were sterilized between 1929 and 1976 in one of the country's most aggressive eugenics programs.* In 2013, North Carolina passed a law to compensate victims of the state-run program; they set aside \$10 million for one-time payments to an estimated 1,500 victims who are still alive (Senate Bill 402).

Some qualified applicants received compensation beginning in the fall of 2014 but other victims are still fighting for restitution.

They have needed the pro bono assistance of the NCAJ Workers' Compensation Section to get justice for their families. These attorney members have represented numerous victims since 2013 and have also worked with Elizabeth McLaughlin Haddix and her colleagues at the UNC Center For Civil Rights on this effort. Many victims have cases pending at the N.C.

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Industrial Commission's Eugenics Asexualization and Sterilization Compensation Program, and others have appeals pending with the N.C. Court of Appeals.

To be eligible under the new compensation law, operations have to have occurred under the authority of the state's Eugenics Board. However, judges and social service workers were greenlighting sterilizations as well, complicating many victims' cases.*

"We are honored to represent these victims without charge and we hope that we will obtain justice for each and every one of them," says Bob Bollinger, an attorney representing eugenics victims.

ABOUT NCAJ:

NCAJ provides continuing legal education for lawyers aimed at enhancing the quality of the legal profession, offers public education programs aimed at enhancing public access and understanding of the legal system, supports the writing of amicus briefs for the appellate courts, and advocacy work at the legislature in the areas of criminal and civil justice. The association has served its members for over 50 years.

*NPR, Payments Start For N.C. Eugenics Victims, But Many Won't Qualify, October 31, 2014, <http://www.npr.org/blogs/health/2014/10/31/360355784/payments-start-for-n-c-eugenics-victims-but-many-wont-qualify>