

United States; and seagoing vessels, whether steam or sail, which have been certified by the Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation as safe to carry dry and perishable cargo, wherever built, which are to engage only in trade with foreign countries, with the Philippine Islands, the Islands of Guam, Tutuila, Wake, Midway, and Kingman Reef, being wholly owned by citizens of the United States or corporations organized and chartered under the laws of the United States, or of any State thereof, the president and managing directors of which shall be citizens of the United States, and no others, may be registered as directed in this title."

Approved, May 24, 1938.

[CHAPTER 266]

AN ACT

To grant relief to persons erroneously convicted in courts of the United States.

May 24, 1938
[S. 750]

[Public, No. 539]

United States courts.
Relief of persons erroneously convicted who have served all or part of sentence.
Innocence established by courts or pardoning authority.

Suit for damages permitted.

Admissible evidence.

Pardon to recite basis for granting, etc.

Actions in forma pauperis.
Extent of award.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That any person who, having been convicted of any crime or offense against the United States and having been sentenced to imprisonment and having served all or any part of his sentence, shall hereafter, on appeal or on a new trial or rehearing, be found not guilty of the crime of which he was convicted or shall hereafter receive a pardon on the ground of innocence, if it shall appear that such person did not commit any of the acts with which he was charged or that his conduct in connection with such charge did not constitute a crime or offense against the United States or any State, Territory, or possession of the United States or the District of Columbia, in which the offense or acts are alleged to have been committed, and that he has not, either intentionally, or by willful misconduct, or negligence, contributed to bring about his arrest or conviction, may, subject to the limitations and conditions hereinafter stated, and in accordance with the provisions of the Judicial Code, maintain suit against the United States in the Court of Claims for damages sustained by him as a result of such conviction and imprisonment.

SEC. 2. The only evidence admissible on the issue of innocence of the plaintiff shall be a certificate of the court in which such person was adjudged not guilty or a pardon or certified copy of a pardon, and such certificate of the court, pardon, or certified copy of a pardon shall contain recitals or findings that—

(a) Claimant did not commit any of the acts with which he was charged; or

(b) that his conduct in connection with such charge did not constitute a crime or offense against the United States or any State, Territory, or possession of the United States or the District of Columbia, in which the offense or acts are alleged to have been committed; and

(c) that he has not, either intentionally, or by willful misconduct, or negligence, contributed to bring about his arrest or conviction.

SEC. 3. No pardon or certified copy of a pardon shall be filed with the Court of Claims unless it contains recitals that the pardon was granted after applicant had exhausted all recourse to the courts and further that the time for any court to exercise its jurisdiction had expired.

SEC. 4. Upon a showing satisfactory to it, the Court may permit the plaintiff to prosecute such action in forma pauperis. In the event that the court shall render judgment for the plaintiff, the amount of damages awarded shall not exceed the sum of \$5,000.

Approved, May 24, 1938.