



FOUNDATIONAL
JUSTICE
—♦—
WE THE PEOPLE HAVE SPOKEN

MASTER PRO SE LEGAL GLOSSARY

WITH RED FLAG INDEX

1. Abuse at Prison: Cruel, violent, or unlawful treatment of an inmate by prison staff, guards, or other incarcerated individuals. If an inmate faces abuse as punishment for filing lawsuits or reporting wrongful convictions, it is a severe violation of the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments ► ***Flag:** Does the record show solitary confinement or reduced privileges within 30 days of filing a grievance or motion?*

2. Actual Innocence: A constitutional claim asserting that the defendant did not commit the crime. To succeed, a pro se litigant must present new, reliable evidence (such as DNA or an ironclad alibi) that was not available at trial, showing that no reasonable juror would have convicted them.

3. Adverse Inference: A principle where a judge assumes withheld or destroyed evidence would have harmed the party who hid it.

4. AEDPA (Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act): A strict federal law passed in 1996 that sets severe limitations on federal habeas corpus petitions. or Most notably, it imposes a strict 1-year deadline to file a federal petition after state appeals are exhausted. Current groups are seeking alternates to retract time limits for filing, believing this act/law violates the very Rights defendants do have for seeking justice.

5. Affidavit: A written statement of facts that a person voluntarily signs and swears to be true before a notary public or authorized official. In post-conviction work, affidavits from recanting witnesses or newly discovered witnesses are critical evidence.

6. Alibi: Evidence or witness testimony showing that the defendant was in a completely different physical location at the exact time the crime was committed, making it physically impossible for them to be guilty.

7. Altered Documents/Falsifying Records: The illegal act of changing, deleting, forging, or manufacturing documents, police reports, or laboratory results to mislead the court. or This is a severe form of governmental misconduct that can be used to overturn a conviction. It happens more often than people realize and not always known until copies of the case are retrieved and they are present. ► ***Flag:** Compare defense copies to the official court record; are page numbers or signatures missing?*

8. Appellate Court: A higher court that reviews decisions made by lower trial courts. or Appellate courts do not hear witness testimony or look at new evidence; they only review the

trial transcripts to check if the trial judge made severe errors of law.

9. Bad Faith / Unfounded: A claim, accusation, or charge that has absolutely no basis in fact, lacks any supporting evidence, or was brought purely to harass or damage someone.

10. Bad Faith Prosecution: A situation where a prosecutor brings criminal charges against someone knowing they are innocent, or purely to harass, intimidate, or punish them. This is a severe violation of the prosecutor's legal duty to seek justice rather than wins.

11. Bias (Judicial/Prosecutorial): Impartiality destroyed by personal or institutional interests.

▶ ***Flag:** Does the judge consistently rule against the defense on every minor motion while overruling objections by the state?*

12. Brady Violation: A severe constitutional violation named after the Supreme Court case Brady v. Maryland. It occurs when a prosecutor intentionally or accidentally hides evidence that could help prove the defendant's innocence or impeach a prosecution witness's credibility. ▶

***Flag:** Did the state "forget" to produce lab notes or informant contact info until after the trial?*

13. Brief: A formal, written legal argument submitted to a court. A pro se brief outlines the facts of the case, points to specific laws or past cases (precedents), and explains exactly why the court should overturn the conviction..

14. Burden of Proof: The legal duty to prove a claim in court. During a criminal trial, the prosecutor bears 100% of the burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. However, in post-conviction petitions, the burden flips completely to the pro se inmate to prove their conviction was unlawful. ▶ ***Flag:** Has the court shifted the burden to you to prove your innocence instead of them proving guilt?*

15. Certificate of Appealability (COA): A mandatory certificate that a federal judge must issue before a state prisoner is allowed to appeal a denied federal habeas corpus petition to the Circuit Court of Appeals. It requires showing that constitutional rights were legitimately violated.

16. Child Protective Services (CPS) / Family Regulation System: An investigative arm of the state that exerts power over families based on low thresholds of evidence. ▶ ***Flag:** Does the agency lack a warrant but threaten "emergency removal" to gain entry into your home?*

17. Civil Commitment: A legal process where a judge orders a person to be held in a secure psychiatric hospital or treatment facility rather than a standard prison. This is called a civil action, which makes it sound light. Its goal is indefinite detention. This strategy is typically used if a court determines a person is a danger to themselves or others due to mental illness. In reference to California Vs Adult; 2026; Defendant did not have the 2 mental illness diagnosis and was unlawfully taken by the county of the charges, out of prison 16 days before his release date, and a CC was fraudulently filed on him. Excessive amounts of fraud, including the courts claiming he had came out of a mental institution which he did not. Even stripping away all his property from the previous prison, to to appear as if he had not been there. The courts are still trying to move forward with their fraudulent case even after having the facts brought to the case. This goal is Indefinite detention in a psychiatric facility. ▶ ***Flag:** Were you transferred to a mental health facility just before your scheduled release date?*

18. Civil Rights Under Color of Law: Government officials using their authority to violate rights. or An action taken by a government official—such as a police officer, detective, or judge—while using the actual power given to them by the government. If an officer uses their badge or authority to violate someone's constitutional rights, they are acting "under color of law."

19. Civil Rights Violation: An unlawful act by a government official—such as a police officer or prison guard—that strips away an individual's basic rights protected by federal law. In the context of wrongful convictions, this often involves police brutality, illegal searches, or racial discrimination.

20. Clemency: An act of grace or mercy granted by a Governor (for state crimes) or the President (for federal crimes). Clemency forms include commutations (reducing a sentence length) and pardons (completely forgiving the crime and restoring rights).

21. Coerced (Coercion): Being forced into action via threats or abuse. or Being forced, threatened, or pressured into doing something against your will. In criminal cases, this usually refers to a coerced confession, where police use physical abuse, sleep deprivation, or psychological threats to force an innocent suspect to confess to a crime. ▶ ***Flag:** Were you denied food, sleep, or representation during the initial "questioning" phase?*

22. Colorable Claim: A legal claim that has enough factual and legal backing to be taken seriously by a judge. It does not mean the pro se inmate has won the case yet, but it means their claim of corruption or innocence is strong enough on its face that the court cannot dismiss it without a thorough review..

23. Collateral Attack: A separate, secondary lawsuit filed after all direct appeals are lost, used to challenge the lawfulness of a conviction. A Writ of Habeas Corpus is the most common form of a collateral attack.

24. Collusion: A conspiracy between officials (DAs, Judges, Public Defenders, etc.) to subvert justice. or A secret, illegal agreement or conspiracy between two or more people to deceive, trick, or cheat the legal system. For example, collusion happens if a police detective and a witness secretly agree to fabricate a story to framing an innocent person. Another example is Attorneys and Judges, District Attorneys and newspapers, detectives, probation officers, bail companies, etc.

25. Commuted Sentence: An official order by a Governor or the President that reduces the length or severity of a criminal sentence (such as changing a life sentence to 20 years). Crucially, a commuted sentence does not wipe away the criminal conviction or prove innocence—it only changes the punishment.

26. Compensation: Financial restitution or money paid by the state or federal government to a person who was wrongfully convicted and imprisoned. Many states have specific laws that pay a set dollar amount for every year an innocent person spent behind bars.

27. Confidentiality: The right to keep defense strategies hidden from the state. or The legal right to keep sensitive information, defense strategies, and personal case notes hidden from the public, prosecutors, and prison staff. For a pro se inmate, maintaining confidentiality requires utilizing specific court mechanisms like filing documents Under Seal. ▶ ***Flag:** Are your personal legal

notes being seized or read by prison guards?*

28. Conflict of Interest: Financial or personal ties that prevent fair advocacy. or A situation where a judge, prosecutor, or defense lawyer has a personal, financial, or political tie that stops them from being fair. For example, if a defense attorney secretly represents the main witness testifying against their own client, it is a severe conflict of interest. ▶ *Flag: Did your "appointed" counsel previously work for the prosecutor in the same county?*

29. Constructive Custody: Government control over life/liberty outside of a standard prison cell.

30. Constitutional Violation: A direct breach of the rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. For a pro se inmate, common examples include being denied a lawyer, being forced to confess (Fifth Amendment), or having an unfair trial (Fourteenth Amendment).(e.g., 5th, 6th, 14th Amendments).

31. Contempt (Civil/Criminal): An act of disobedience or disrespect toward the authority of a court. Civil contempt occurs when a person refuses to obey a judge's order (like refusing to hand over records), and they are held until they comply. Criminal contempt is a formal criminal charge used to punish someone for intentionally disrupting court proceedings or completely defying a judge's lawful command.

32. Conviction Review Unit (CRU): A division tasked with reviewing potentially wrongful convictions. or A specialized, independent division within a prosecutor's office or state Attorney General's office tasked with reviewing old cases to investigate claims of actual innocence and correct wrongful convictions.

33. Counsel: Under the Sixth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, "Counsel" refers to a competent attorney appointed or hired to represent a defendant. The Constitution guarantees that this counsel must provide effective assistance; a lawyer who is asleep, intoxicated, or fails to investigate basic facts does not meet the constitutional definition of counsel. The Constitution does not say the Counsel has to be a licensed Attorney.

34. Criminal Contempt of the Constitution: A descriptive term used when a government actor (like a prosecutor or police chief) intentionally, knowingly, and maliciously violates the U.S. Constitution. Legally, this is prosecuted under federal civil rights laws (such as 18 U.S.C. § 242) for depriving a citizen of their constitutional rights under color of law.

35. Cumulative Error: A doctrine where multiple small errors indicate a fundamentally unfair trial.

36. Court Docket: The official master log of all events in a case. ▶ *Flag: Are entries appearing on the docket that you never saw or were never noticed for?*

37. DA Deals: Secret or public agreements made by the District Attorney (DA) to give a witness a lighter prison sentence, drop their criminal charges, or pay them money in exchange for testifying against a defendant. If the DA hides these deals from the defense, it is a severe constitutional violation. ▶ *Flag: Did a star witness receive a "mystery" drop in their sentence immediately after your trial?*

38. Declaration: A formal, written statement of facts that a person signs and declares to be true under penalty of perjury. Unlike an affidavit, a declaration does not need to be witnessed or stamped by a notary public to be used as evidence in federal court, making it a vital tool for prisoners who lack notary access.

39. Defamation (Libel and Slander): False statements causing damage to reputation. **or** The act of making a false statement about someone that causes severe damage to their reputation, character, or livelihood. Slander is spoken defamation, while libel is written defamation. In wrongful convictions, this occurs when police or media falsely label an innocent suspect as a guilty perpetrator before a trial even begins.

40. Defense Guarantee: Fundamental rights (confronting witnesses, see evidence) protected by the Constitution. The absolute constitutional rights promised to every criminal defendant under the U.S. Constitution (primarily the Fifth, Sixth, and Fourteenth Amendments). These include the guarantee to a fair and speedy trial, the right to confront accusing witnesses, and the right to see the evidence against them.

41. Dependency Petition: The formal charging document filed by the state to initiate child removal.

42. Direct Appeal: The first automatic challenge to a conviction. **or** The automatic first step in challenging a conviction after a trial ends. The defendant asks a higher state court to review the trial record for legal errors. This process is strictly confined to things that happened inside the courtroom during the trial.

43. Disbarred: A severe punishment where a lawyer has their professional law license permanently taken away by the state bar association or supreme court due to illegal, unethical, or dishonest behavior. Discovering that a trial attorney was disbarred shortly after a case can strongly support a claim of Ineffective Assistance of Counsel. ► ***Flag:** Check the status of all former counsel; were they under investigation during your trial?*

44. Discovery: The process of sharing evidence before trial. **or** The legal process during which both sides must share evidence, witness lists, and relevant documents with each other before a trial. Withholding discovery materials can lead to an immediate Brady violation claim.

45. Dry-Labbing: A severe fraud where a lab tech invents scientific data. **or** A highly severe form of forensic fraud where a state laboratory technician manufactures fake scientific results. The technician writes up an official report claiming they tested DNA, drugs, or fingerprints, when in reality they never ran the tests at all, choosing instead to invent data that helps the prosecutor. ► ***Flag:** Do lab reports contain "boilerplate" language or inconsistent time/date stamps?*

46. Due Process (Including Duty to Investigate): The mandate that the government must follow fair procedures and investigate all leads. **or** A constitutional guarantee under the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments that the government must treat everyone fairly and follow established legal rules. This includes the police and prosecution's strict duty to investigate all leads—meaning they cannot intentionally ignore evidence that points to a different suspect just to convict the person they already arrested.

47. Entrapment: Inducing a person to commit a crime they otherwise would not have considered. or A situation where law enforcement officers or secret informants trick, pressure, or induce an innocent person into committing a crime they would have otherwise never committed. It is a defense to show that the crime was entirely the idea of the police, not the defendant.

48. Evidentiary Hearing: A court proceeding where testimony is taken to resolve disputed facts.

49. Exculpatory Evidence: Any evidence, testimony, or physical material that tends to clear a defendant from fault or guilt, supports their claim of innocence, or mitigates their criminal sentence.

50. Exhaustion of Remedies: The requirement to finish state court appeals before entering federal court. or A strict legal requirement stating that a state prisoner must give the state's highest court a full opportunity to hear and rule on their constitutional claims before they are legally allowed to file a federal habeas corpus petition.

51. Exoneration: The total rescission of a conviction and restoration of status as an innocent person. or The official legal act of clearing an individual from blame, completely vacating their conviction, dismissing all underlying criminal charges, and restoring their legal status as an innocent person.

52. Ex Parte Removal: Removing a child without notifying the parents or offering a hearing.

53. Expungement: A legal process where a court orders a criminal conviction or arrest record to be completely erased, destroyed, or sealed from public view, restoring the person's legal record as if the arrest or conviction never happened.

54. Extortion: Obtaining rights or property via threats. or The crime of forcing someone to give up money, property, or legal rights by using threats, intimidation, or fear. In wrongful conviction cases, this happens if police threaten to arrest an innocent person's family members unless they agree to sign a false confession. Reference State Vs Juvenile, 2002, Juvenile was placed in a room, where his county appointed attorney proceeded to abuse juvenile, for 3 days, until the juvenile complied to his demands.

55. Fabricated (Fabricated Evidence): False information or physical items that are intentionally created, manufactured, or invented out of nowhere to frame a suspect. Examples include police planting drugs or creating fake witness statements. Newspapers also mention fabricated evidence as real evidence in their stories.

56. Fact-Witness vs. Expert Witness: Distinction between someone who saw an event versus someone interpreting forensic data (often the source of junk science). ▶ ***Flag:** Has your "expert" witness testified for the prosecution in dozens of other local cases?*

57. False Witness (Perjury): A witness who intentionally lies under oath during a deposition, hearing, or trial, or who gives false information to police to wrongfully implicate an innocent person.

58. Family Miranda: The right to know one's constitutional protections against warrant-less

home intrusion by social workers.

59. Fraud on the Court: Intentional deception by an officer of the court to trick the judicial system. or A highly severe type of corruption where an officer of the court—such as a prosecutor or a lawyer—intentionally lies to the judge, manufactures fake physical evidence, or uses known perjury to deliberately trick the judicial system. This is can be filed on a court, but you must proceed with caution. Retaliation is to be expected. ▶ ***Flag:** Did a prosecutor present evidence as "newly found" when it was in their office for months?*

60. Fraudulent: An action that is based on intentional trickery, lying, or cheating to gain an unfair advantage or ruin someone else's rights. Fabricating a fake police report or forging a witness signature is a fraudulent act.

61. Fruit of the Poisonous Tree: Evidence found via illegal police conduct is inadmissible. A vital legal doctrine stating that any secondary evidence discovered because of an initial illegal act by police must also be thrown out of court. For example, if police perform an illegal search (the poisonous tree) and find a map leading to a weapon (the fruit), the weapon cannot be used as evidence against the defendant.

62. Hearsay: Unreliable, indirect evidence that is generally inadmissible. ▶ ***Flag:** Is the prosecution's entire case built on "reports of reports" "he said/she said" rather than eyewitnesses? *

63. Immunity (Qualified/Absolute): The unconstitutional shield protecting officials from lawsuits A legal shield made by the government for the government. It conveniently protects government workers from being personally sued for actions they take while doing their jobs. Judges and prosecutors usually have absolute immunity (they can almost never be sued), while police officers have qualified immunity (they cannot be sued unless they clearly and knowingly violated a well-established constitutional right). They do pretend not to know. Immunity is Unconstitutional. It is the leading cause of Wrongful Convictions. Organizations are doing all they can to abolish this Unconstitutional, deceptive weapon used against United States Citizens. It is a clear and diabolical obstruction of Justice.

64. Impeachment Evidence: Proof that a witness is biased or dishonest. Evidence used to attack, undermine, or destroy the credibility of a witness at trial, showing that they have lied in the past, hold a severe bias, or cut a secret leniency deal with prosecutors.

65. In Camera Review: A judge reviewing sensitive documents in private to determine if they should be released or A legal process where a judge inspects highly sensitive or confidential evidence privately inside their closed office chambers, completely hidden from prison staff, the public, and the media, before deciding how to rule.

66. In Forma Pauperis: Status waiving filing fees for indigent litigants or A Latin phrase meaning "in the character of a pauper." It is an official court status granted to low-income or indigent individuals (such as prisoners), which waives expensive court filing fees and transcript reproduction costs.

67. Ineffective Assistance of Counsel (IAC): Violations of the 6th Amendment due to poor legal representation or A constitutional claim under the Sixth Amendment arguing that the

defendant's defense attorney performed so poorly and made such egregious errors that they effectively deprived the defendant of a fair trial.

68. Involuntary Safety Plan: A state-enforced directive used as a threat to maintain custody.

69. Jailhouse Informant: An inmate who testifies for the state for favors or An incarcerated individual who claims to have heard a fellow prisoner confess to a crime while in custody. These informants often testify for the state in exchange for reduced sentences, making their hidden deals prime targets for post-conviction tracking. ▶ ***Flag:** Are the stories of multiple "informants" suspiciously identical?*

70. Judicial Overreaching/Judicial Misconduct (Judge acting as lawyer): A situation where a trial judge abandons their mandatory role as a neutral, fair referee and instead behaves like a prosecutor or defense lawyer. This happens if a judge aggressively cross-examines witnesses, suggests arguments to the prosecutor, or introduces evidence on their own. Now you know, and now you will notice.

71. Judicial Orders: Official commands, rulings, or directives written and signed by a judge that require the parties in a lawsuit to perform a specific action (such as an order forcing a police department to hand over records).

72. Jurisdiction: The legal power and authority given to a specific court to hear a case, make a judgment, and enforce laws over a specific geographic area or a specific type of crime

73. Jury Taint / Jury Misconduct (Tainted Jury): External influences (media, bribes) ruining a jury's fairness or A situation where a jury's fairness is completely ruined because jurors look at outside media coverage, use their phones to research the case, talk to people outside the courtroom, or let personal bribes or racial biases influence their final verdict.

74. Juvenile Dependency Court: The civil court system managing family removals/custody.

75. Lack of Jurisdiction: A situation where a court has absolutely no legal power to handle a case or sentence a defendant. If a court convicts someone without having proper jurisdiction, the final judgment is completely void and must be thrown out. This is happening now more than ever. Inmates are being transferred back to their counties, so that county can now file motions against the inmate. ▶ ***Flag:** Was your case transferred between counties to secure a more "conviction-friendly" judge?*

76. Malicious Prosecution: Filing charges without probable cause due to corrupt intent. or A civil tort claim that arises when police or prosecutors initiate a criminal case against an innocent person without any probable cause, driven entirely by malice or corrupt intent. If the innocent person wins their case or gets it dismissed, they can sue for damages under this concept.

77. Manifest Injustice: A legal failure so severe it overrides technical procedural rules.

78. Mentally Ill (Mental Incompetence): A severe psychological condition that affects a person's thinking, mood, or behavior. In criminal law, if a defendant is severely mentally ill at the time of trial and cannot understand the court proceedings or **assist** their lawyer, forcing them to go to trial violates the Fourteenth Amendment Due Process clause.

79. Miranda Rights: The requirement to warn suspects of the right to silence and counsel.

80. Misconduct (Official/Prosecutorial): Illegal acts by public figures to secure outcomes. or Intentional, illegal, or unethical actions taken by an official who is performing their public duties. In post-conviction cases, this refers to police or prosecutors breaking the rules—such as hiding evidence, threatening witnesses, or lying to a judge—to win a conviction.

81. Noble-Cause Corruption: A psychological phenomenon where law enforcement officials deliberately break the law, fabricate evidence, or lie under oath because they subjectively believe they are doing the "right thing." They do convince themselves that framing a specific suspect serves a greater good, completely destroying the rule of law.

82. Not Represented: A status indicating the denial of 6th Amendment counsel. or A status where a defendant has no legal counsel assisting them with their criminal case. If a defendant wanted a lawyer but was forced by a judge to go to trial without one, it is an automatic, severe violation of the Sixth Amendment.

83. Obstruction of Justice: Hiding evidence or threatening witnesses. or The crime of intentionally interfering with the administration of justice. This includes hiding physical evidence, threatening witnesses, lying to investigators, or altering files to stop the truth from coming out in a case.

84. Official Interference: Actions taken to block or corrupt judicial proceedings. or An illegal act where government actors or law enforcement officials use their power to intentionally disrupt, block, or corrupt an investigation or court proceeding to secure a specific outcome.

85. Parental Rights: The fundamental 14th Amendment right to the care and control of one's children.

86. Perjured Testimony Subornation: Procuring false testimony from a witness.

87. Pervasive Misconduct: Widespread pattern of corruption across an agency. or A continuous, widespread pattern of unethical or illegal behavior by law enforcement or prosecutors that occurs throughout an entire investigation or trial. Instead of a single isolated mistake, the misconduct is so constant that a fair trial becomes completely impossible.

88. Post-Conviction: The stage following trial where errors are challenged. or The legal stage that begins immediately after a criminal trial ends and a defendant is found guilty. Post-conviction remedies include filing motions for a new trial, direct appeals to higher state courts, and collateral attacks like a Writ of Habeas Corpus.

89. Preponderance of the Evidence: The "51% percent likelihood" standard for civil/post-conviction claims. or A standard of proof used in most civil cases and post conviction hearings. It means that a claim is more likely true than not true (essentially, a 51% or higher chance that the claim is correct).

90. Presumption of Innocence: The requirement to treat a defendant as innocent until proven guilty. or A legal rule that requires a court to assume a fact is true unless the opposing side proves otherwise. The most important example is the Presumption of Innocence, which means

every defendant must be treated as completely innocent until the prosecutor proves guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

91. Prison Mailbox Rule: The policy that filing occurs the moment the prisoner hands paperwork to the mail system. or A vital legal protection for incarcerated individuals stating that a pro se inmate's legal paperwork is officially considered filed the exact moment they hand it to prison staff or place it in the institutional mail system, rather than when it physically arrives at the court clerk's office.

92. Procedural Default: A technical failure to meet filing specifics. ▶*Flag: Is the court using a "technicality" to avoid addressing the merits of your actual innocence claim?*

93. Pro Se: Latin for "for oneself"; representing yourself. or A Latin term meaning "for oneself." It refers to an individual who chooses to navigate the legal system, file motions, draft briefs, and represent themselves in court without the assistance of a licensed attorney.

94. Prosecutorial Immunity Wall: The culture of mutual protection between judges and prosecutors. This is unconstitutional and gives the prosecutor and Judge the power to do whatever they want. This is a serious obstruction of justice.

95. Prosecutorial Misconduct: Illegal behavior by the state to win a case. or An illegal, unethical, or improper act committed by a government prosecutor during an investigation or trial, such as fabricating evidence, using known perjury, or making highly inflammatory statements to a jury.

96. Racketeering: Running an organized, ongoing enterprise of illegal acts. or Running or participating in an organized, ongoing criminal business or scheme. In post-conviction filings, it is used to describe a corrupt group of officials who routinely use illegal methods—like extortion, bribery, and evidence tampering—to secure false convictions.

97. Reasonable Efforts: The mandate for agencies to help prevent family separation. ▶*Flag: Does the agency have a goal of "permanent removal" in their internal notes rather than "reunification"?*

98. Recant: A statement by a witness that their previous testimony was false. or A formal statement by a witness declaring that their previous trial testimony or statements to the police were completely false, fabricated, or coerced.

99. Respondent: The party named in a petition (e.g., the Warden). The opposing party named in a post-conviction petition who must respond to the claims. In a Writ of Habeas Corpus, the prison Warden is always named as the Respondent because they physically hold the prisoner in custody.

100. Retaliation: Punishment for exercising constitutional rights. or Illegal punishment, harassment, or negative actions taken by prison guards or officials against an inmate because that inmate exercised their constitutional rights. Common forms of retaliation include placing an inmate in solitary confinement or destroying their legal paperwork because they filed a grievance
▶*Flag: Did your legal property disappear after requesting a law library visit?*

101. RICO Act (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act): Federal law targeting organized criminal enterprises. or A federal law designed to target ongoing criminal organizations, gangs, or syndicates. While usually used against organized crime bosses, pro se litigants sometimes cite it if a group of corrupt police officers and prosecutors operated together like a criminal enterprise to fabricate evidence.

102. Self-Advocacy: Pro se efforts to research and fight for rights. or The act of an incarcerated person actively speaking up, researching and fighting for their own constitutional and human rights without relying on an attorney. Successful self-advocacy requires tracking strict court deadlines, documenting facts meticulously, and utilizing prison law libraries.

103. Shadow of a Doubt (Beyond a Shadow of a Doubt): Common slang for "100% certainty"; not a recognized legal standard. or A common phrase that means 100% mathematical certainty with absolutely no lingering questions. While people use this phrase often, it is not a real legal standard. In a criminal trial, the prosecutor only has to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt, which does not mean proving it beyond all doubt or a shadow of a doubt.

104. Spoliation of Evidence: The destruction or hiding of physical evidence by the state. or The intentional, reckless, or bad-faith destruction, alteration, or hiding of physical evidence by law enforcement officials. When police destroy evidence that could have proven an inmate's innocence, the court can penalize the prosecution or overturn the conviction.

105. Statement of Fact: A clear assertion about a testable event. or A clear, direct assertion about a real event, action, or piece of physical evidence that can be proven true or false. In a Habeas Corpus petition, a pro se inmate must rely strictly on statements of fact (e.g., "The witness was paid \$500 by the detective") rather than opinions or emotions (e.g., "The detective was a bad person").

106. Statute of Limitations: Time limits for filing actions. or A strict legal law that sets the maximum amount of time a person has to file a lawsuit or a prosecutor has to bring criminal charges after an event occurs. If the time limit expires, the case can never be legally brought to court. This is also an Unconstitutional Obstruction of Justice regarding the fact many defendants did not know the exacts of what happened in their case at the time.

107. Statute of Repose: Absolute deadlines that cannot be tolled or paused. A strict time limit that sets an absolute deadline to file a lawsuit based on the date of a specific event (like the day a product was built or a trial ended), regardless of when the injury or wrongful conviction was actually discovered. Unlike a statute of limitations, a statute of repose cannot be paused (tolled) for any reason. Another obstruction of Justice against ignorance of case procedure.

108. Stipulation: A mutual agreement on facts. ▶ ***Flag:** Did your lawyer sign a stipulation waiving your right to challenge key evidence?*

109. Suppression Motion: A request to bar the use of evidence obtained illegally.

110. Systemic: A pattern of corruption embedded in a whole agency. or An issue, error, or pattern of corruption that is deeply embedded throughout an entire department, agency, or city government rather than being the fault of just one bad actor. For example, if an entire police department routinely trains officers to hide evidence, it is a systemic problem.

111. Tainted Evidence (Evidence Tampering); Evidence altered or planted to frame a defendant. or Physical evidence, documents, or digital logs that have been altered, planted, contaminated, or falsified by police or prosecutors to frame a defendant. Using tainted evidence to secure a conviction destroys the fairness of a trial and is grounds to vacate the judgment. Another example is being arrested for one "blurry" image that grew into 300 during hearings, then to 600, then to 800, then to over 100's images all while in police custody.

112. Tort: A civil wrong for which a lawsuit for damages may be brought. or A wrongful act or an infringement of a right (other than under a contract) that leads to civil legal liability. For prisoners, common torts include assault by a guard, medical malpractice by prison doctors, or slip-and-fall injuries due to poor prison maintenance, which can be fought through a civil lawsuit rather than a criminal appeal.

113. Tunnel Vision: Investigatory bias focusing only on one suspect. or A dangerous flaw in an investigation where police detectives immediately focus on one specific suspect and completely ignore all other leads, alternative suspects, or conflicting pieces of evidence. This narrow focus frequently leads to fabricated cases and false accusations.

114. Under Seal: Documents kept hidden from public access. or A court order closing files, evidence, or transcripts from public access. Documents filed under seal are kept in a secure envelope or encrypted file accessible only to the judge and authorized parties.

115. Uncorroborated: Claims made without independent support. or A claim, testimony, or statement that is completely unsupported by any other physical evidence, documents, or independent witness accounts. Convicting someone solely on the uncorroborated word of an incentivized jailhouse informant is a common cause of wrongful convictions.

116. Vacate: Wiping out a conviction or judgment. or A judge's formal order completely wiping out, canceling, or voiding a prior legal judgment, conviction, or sentence, rendering it completely dead and without any ongoing legal force.

117. Voluntary Services Agreement (VSA): A deceptive contract used by agencies to force compliance without court intervention. These are used by police when on an emergency call. They have alleged victims sign a paper saying they will agree to help in the prosecution of a defendant.

118. Void Judgment: A judgment that was illegal from its inception.

119. Voidable Judgment: A judgment that retains legal force until effectively challenged.

120. Warrants: Court orders authorizing police action, based on probable cause. or Official written orders issued and signed by a judge that authorize law enforcement officers to perform a specific action, such as searching a home (search warrant) or arresting a suspect (arrest warrant). Warrants must be based on probable cause.

121. Whistleblower: An insider exposing corruption in an agency. or A person within a police department, prosecutor's office, or forensic lab who exposes hidden corruption, illegal deals, or fabricated evidence to the public or a judge. Evidence brought forward by an inside whistleblower is often the turning point in overturning a wrongful conviction.

122. Withdrawal of Plea: Requesting to retract a guilty plea based on coercion or bad advice. or A formal legal request asking a judge to cancel or take back a guilty plea or a "no contest" plea that the defendant previously entered. This is usually requested before sentencing if the defendant can prove they were tricked, coerced, or given terrible advice by their lawyer. Juvenile case 2002, minor was abused and forced by appointed attorney to withdraw his withdrawal of plea which he was initially coerced into taking. He was 100% innocent.

123. With Prejudice: Permanent dismissal. or A judge's ruling that dismisses a legal claim or case permanently. If a case is dismissed with prejudice, it means it is gone forever and the pro se litigant can never file that exact same claim in that court again.

124. Without Prejudice: Dismissal with the right to refile. or A judge's ruling that dismisses a legal claim or case but allows it to be corrected and refiled later. If an inmate's petition is dismissed without prejudice, it usually means they made a technical error but have the right to fix it and resubmit the paperwork.

125. Witness Tampering: Intimidating or influencing or coercing or bribing a witness.

126. Writ of Habeas Corpus: A command to a warden to prove the lawfulness of imprisonment. or A Latin phrase meaning "that you have the body." A historic, powerful legal order that commands a prison warden to bring an inmate before a judge to prove that their imprisonment is lawful. It serves as the primary tool used by pro se prisoners to overturn a wrongful conviction based on constitutional flaws.