

September 24, 2013 /**24-7PressRelease**/ -- For months, the George Zimmerman criminal case has captured the nation's attention. Now that George Zimmerman has been acquitted, you may have heard of a seemingly unusual request: he and his legal team have asked Florida to pay him back for certain legal expenses he incurred in staging his defense.

While this request may strike you as out of the ordinary, it was in fact made in accordance with a well established Florida legal principle that is more than a century old. If, like George Zimmerman, you find yourself staging a [violent crime defense](#) , or if you are defending yourself from any other criminal charges in Florida, you too may be entitled to a reimbursement check from the state should you be acquitted.

Costs of things like expert witnesses, courtroom exhibits and transcripts may be reimbursed

Since 1846 -- just one year after Florida became a state -- Floridians who have been acquitted of a criminal charge at trial have had the right to ask for reimbursement of certain legal expenses. While the language of the original Florida statute that established this right has changed little over the years, a number of court rulings have spelled out which types of expenses may be footed by the public coffers after an acquittal. One cost that will not be refunded is attorney's fees, but a wide variety of other expenses incurred by acquitted defendants are fair game.

George Zimmerman is asking the state to refund some \$300,000. The reimbursement schedule must be itemized, and according to the Zimmerman Defense Fund website, some of the more unusual requests for reimbursement include \$56,000 for security, \$7,924.22 for PayPal and fund management fees related to administering the defense fund, and \$3,201.04 for miscellaneous expenses like office supplies, postage fees and "every now and again a pizza for the interns, who work for free."

Of course, if your case is not a [murder](#) prosecution attracting national media attention, you probably will not have to incur some of the more extraordinary and exotic expenses that Zimmerman did. It is likely that you would pursue reimbursement primarily for more standard costs, such as those for depositions, transcript fees, travel, creating exhibits and paying expert witnesses.

After being acquitted and making a request, the precise amount the defendant will be

Acquitted Floridians, even George Zimmerman, may recoup defense costs

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reimbursed is determined by the judge who was handling the case. The judge will eliminate any unreasonable expenses; if the defendant does not agree with the judge's reimbursement decision, he or she has avenues to contest it.

Talk to a Florida defense attorney about building your case and recovering costs

Defending yourself against a criminal charge is never an easy ordeal. But, Florida's system of reimbursement helps ensure that if you are acquitted, you will not have to pay for the entirety of your defense on your own.

A Florida criminal defense attorney can help you fight the charges that have been levied against you, and can also assist you in asking for reimbursement after an acquittal. Contact a Florida defense attorney today if you are facing criminal prosecution.

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