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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**NACOLE AND INNOCENCE PROJECT ANNOUNCE COLLABORATION TO PREVENT WRONGFUL
CONVICTIONS AND IMPROVE POLICE PRACTICES**

April 20, 2015 – The National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE) and the Innocence Project are pleased to announce that as of April 13, 2015, NACOLE and the Innocence Project have mutually expressed their support for each other’s work and pledged to collaborate to prevent wrongful convictions and improve police practices.

Wrongful convictions cause tremendous harm to innocent persons and their families, to crime victims, and the public. They can also have a profound negative impact on public trust in police, police legitimacy, and the relationship between police and the communities they serve. When the wrong person – an innocent person – is convicted and imprisoned, the person who committed the crime remains free and a continued threat to public safety. In addition, prosecution and imprisonment of the wrong person wastes precious police and other resources and erodes faith in law enforcement and the criminal justice system.

Simple improvements to policing and police investigations can significantly reduce the chance of false arrest and wrongful conviction. The Innocence Project and NACOLE are committed to improvements such as, but not limited to, adopting core procedural reforms to improve the accuracy of eyewitness identification, electronically recording all interrogations in felony cases in their entirety, removing all restrictions to post-conviction DNA testing, and promoting forensic science research and scientifically developed standards.

The public needs to believe that law enforcement agencies and individual officers are willing to take whatever steps necessary to ensure public safety and the reliability of arrests and convictions. The public also deserves transparency in policing and accountability for mistakes and misconduct that can lead to wrongful convictions.

Through their important work to enhance police and community relations, NACOLE helps to ensure the fair, transparent, and professional police services, which, in turn, helps improve the outcome of police investigations and prevent false arrests and wrongful conviction. The Innocence Project works to correct and prevent the wrongful conviction and imprisonment of innocent people. Both also engage in advocacy to improve the overall fairness and accuracy of the criminal justice system.

The important partnership and collaboration between NACOLE, its members, and the Innocence Project, including the entire Innocence Network, will move the nation toward a fairer and unfailing criminal justice process.

Attached to this release are NACOLE’s resolution to improve police legitimacy and community-police relations through the prevention of wrongful convictions and the Innocence Project’s letter of support for NACOLE and its work.

About NACOLE

Established 1995, NACOLE is a non-profit organization that works to enhance accountability and transparency in policing and build community trust through civilian oversight. To further our mission, we hold an annual conference that brings together the growing community of civilian oversight practitioners, law enforcement officials, journalists, elected officials, students, community members, and others to meet and exchange information and ideas about issues facing civilian oversight and law enforcement.

In addition to the annual conference, NACOLE publishes a regular newsletter, hosts an e-mail listserv, conducts regional training, offers a professional credential in the practice of oversight, administers a professional mentoring program for newer oversight practitioners, and provides assistance to communities looking to develop a new civilian oversight process or review their existing one. More information about NACOLE can be found on our website, www.nacole.org.

About Innocence Project

The Innocence Project is a national litigation and public policy organization dedicated to exonerating wrongfully convicted people through DNA testing and reforming the criminal justice system to prevent future injustice.

The Innocence Project was founded at Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law at Yeshiva University in 1992, and became an independent nonprofit organization (still closely affiliated with Cardozo) in 2004. Since the organization's founding, 329 people have been exonerated through DNA testing in the United States, including 20 who were at one time sentenced to death. The Innocence Project was involved in 176 of the 329 DNA exonerations. Others were helped by Innocence Network organizations, private attorneys and by pro se defendants in a few instances. More information about the Innocence Project can be found on its website, www.innocenceproject.org.

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