

Submitter: Bernard Brown  
On Behalf Of: Licensed Private Investigators  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Public Safety  
Measure: SB5532

My name is Bernard "Bernie" Brown and my business address is PO Box 1723 Albany, Or.

I am a self-employed criminal defense investigator of 21 years with a law enforcement background of 17 years and nearly 4000 hours of classroom training. I'm writing to ask you to support the OPDS base budget bill (SB 5532) and POPs 101 and 114.

If POP 114 fails I will be stepping away from state court cases as an investigator. Even at the current \$40/hr rate I will no longer take on Murder or Jessica Law cases. They are complicated, time consuming and not financially feasible.

It is imperative to fund the OPDS base budget bill, otherwise the public defender shortage will increase, and it will result in more unrepresented people. It is also imperative to pass POPs 101 and 114 so that we can retain and attract investigators who are an essential part of the defense team. Without investigators, cases will not move forward.

I am paid hourly for my work at the rate of \$40/hr. I am not a state employee. My overhead costs (roughly 63%) come from that hourly rate. We don't have health insurance, retirement plans or sick leave. Simply put, if I need a pencil or a pad of paper, I pay for what is in my supply closet. I don't have an IT tech or a company to replace my failed computers, software, printers or ink and toner. Nobody pays me to attend CE training to maintain my license.

POP 114 increases the investigator rate from \$40/hr to \$75/hr for investigators who are paid hourly (about 75% of criminal defense investigators). That rate is even lower than the current federal investigator rate and nearby state courts. Thus the low state rate is pushing qualified investigators out of the Oregon state court system and fails at recruitment.

For investigators who are salaried and employed by a nonprofit public defense office (about 25% of criminal defense investigators), POP 101 would increase investigator salaries to match comparable state prosecutor and appellate public defender compensations.

The investments in SB 5532 and OPDS POPs 101 and 114 are critical to retaining

the current criminal defense workforce. See attached one-pager on POP 114 specifically.