

Paul Hess
Police Sergeant
250 SE 10th Ave.
Hillsboro, Oregon 97123
503-899-7476
February 3rd, 2024

Dear Chair Hovley and Members of the Committee:

My name is Paul Hess and I have been a Police officer for thirty (30) years. I currently hold the position of Detective Sergeant. I was the President of the Hillsboro Police Officers Association for six (6) years and Vice President for four (4) years prior to becoming President. I would like to state my position and support in favor of House Bill forty-one fifteen (HB4115).

As a non-represented Sergeant, I have seen a significant issue in the equality of pay and benefits compared to Officer rank creating a compression between the two ranks. This inequality is beginning to create issues in the quality of service that we provide for our community and the quality and tenure of people that are willing to ascend to higher ranks, such as Sergeant, in the police department.

Sergeants in our department do not receive many of the incentives that the officers receive. For example, I supervise more than one detective that receives 25% in incentive pay above their base salary. The incentive pay they receive along with their base salary makes them equal in pay to the Sergeant pay. These detectives have over ten (10) years of law enforcement experience to include additional specialty experience. I have encouraged them to apply for the rank of Sergeant knowing their experience would be valuable to the Department in the form of knowledge, experience, and mentorship. The common response I get is, "Why would I give up my incentive pay to take on more responsibility and have less protections." This brings me back to my above statement about how Sergeants not being represented effects the service to our community.

Due to these issues outlined above, the Sergeant rank in our department continues to get younger and less experienced. Many newly promoted Sergeants have about five years of experience and no complex investigation experience. This lack of experience is causing investigation mistakes at the beginning of complex investigations to include crimes against our children in the community. We owe it to our community to put the best people in ranks such as Sergeant to ensure quality service to our community and protect the officers and organization from errors and deviations that this inequality in pay has created.

Should HB4115 pass, it would give the opportunity for Sergeants, such as myself, to enter collective bargain with the backing of the Public Employee Collective Bargaining Act (PECBA). I have no doubt that we would see officers with tenure and experience apply for the rank of Sergeant creating a more secure quality-controlled department and more importantly better service to our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Hess". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and "H".

Paul Hess
Detective Sergeant