

Submitter: Terry Courtney

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee
On Public Safety

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5031

Hello: I am writing to support POP 104 and the increase in investigator pay. Part of Oregon's indigent defense crisis is the inability to retain experienced investigators due to the poor rate of pay. In 1985 investigators were paid \$25/hour. The equivalent of that rate today is \$75/hour. The current rate is \$55/hour. As an experienced investigator, I cannot work indigent investigations because I simply can't afford to. I also see potential new investigators having second thoughts about getting licensed in Oregon due to this low rate.

When there are not enough investigators, attorneys end up doing aspects of investigation work to move their cases forward. Freeing up attorneys to do legal work by building and retaining the investigator pool means attorneys can potentially take more cases. Thus, recruiting and retaining investigators at \$75/hour is a key component to resolving the public defense crisis in Oregon.

Please support the rate change for investigators and please implement this rate change effective July 2025. Further delays with either increasing the rate or implementing the rate change only contributes to a further worsening of the public defense crisis.

Thank you.