

Submitter: Wayne Gunderson
On Behalf Of: Self and Oregon Private Investigators
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee
On Public Safety
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5031

Support for POP 104 and the Increase in Investigator Pay

I am writing to express my support for POP 104 and the proposed increase in investigator pay. However, I respectfully request that the implementation of the rate increase take effect in July 2025.

It is important to note that public defense investigators are currently paid significantly less than what was earned in 1985 when adjusted for inflation. In 1985, investigators were paid \$25 per hour, which is equivalent to \$75 per hour today. We are merely seeking to be brought current to the same pay rate that we were paid in 1985.

Currently, there is a significant struggle to recruit and retain investigators in public defense due to the low rate of pay. Increasing the rate will not only help retain more investigators within state public defense, but it will also attract the desperately needed new investigators. Where there are not enough investigators, attorneys must undertake tasks that would otherwise be done by investigators. More investigators will ensure these tasks can be done for less money, allowing attorneys to take on more cases.

Recruiting and retaining investigators is a crucial component in resolving the public defense crisis in Oregon. Delaying the rate increase by six months further postpones progress toward resolving this crisis. Therefore, we are requesting the rate change be implemented in July of this year.

Thank you for considering this request and for your ongoing support.

Sincerely,

Wayne Gunderson
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Gunderson Services, LLC