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On Behalf Of: The taxpayer
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On Public Safety
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Greetings from Logsdon, where the Siletz River flows above its bottom that is still shallow enough to cause a roar as it slides over large boulders on its way to the sea. From my house along its banks, I am writing so that you might hear the roar that is produced when pointing out that criminal defense investigators should be working at a rate of \$75 per hour.

Others have pointed out the merits of adjusting for inflation, but I want to say a few words about the importance of the Private Investigator in the criminal justice system overall.

Please consider this. My job saves the taxpayer money. We need more criminal investigators and a rate of \$75 per hour will convince more to join our ranks.

I'm hearing that, due to the shortage of licensed investigators, there are attorneys who are having to do the work that an investigator should be doing. Please keep in mind that if an attorney doesn't have an investigator and she or he performs interviews of any kind, that attorney leaves themselves open to becoming an impeachable witness in the case, and cannot therefore legally continue to represent the client. But how does having an investigator save the taxpayer money?

When I go out into the field and marshal the information from the many layers of witnesses that the police didn't have time to interview, I can often go back to the attorney and tell them that, based upon the information I've obtained, it would be in the best interest of the client to accept a reasonable plea offer if one is available. Without the information I gather, consider the cost of going to trial, compounded by the cost to the taxpayer of having to show up for a jury pool and take time off from work, etc. Consider also the cost to the taxpayer to pay me travel time plus mileage to attempt to locate and serve witnesses involved in the case. Consider also the cost to the taxpayer to repeat that process after the trial has been postponed and subpoenas need to be re-issued.

Criminal investigators are worth our weight in gold in terms of often producing information to the client that can enlighten them to the fact that if they choose to go to trial, the testimony brought against them by the office of the District Attorney is very likely going to result in a prison sentence. Consider the cost of the taxpayer when they have to pony up the money to have someone sit in prison for 13 months versus 36 months.

Speaking of the office of the District Attorney, I'm wondering how much an eight hour day at their operating rate costs the taxpayer. And if an eight hour day doesn't have to go towards prosecuting my client, then maybe they can channel their publicly funded monies toward cases that really matter to the taxpayer.

Consider that during the process of my going out to interview those witnesses that the police didn't have time to interview, I uncover exculpatory information precipitating my written report to be delivered to the attorney who in turn shares that information with the office of the District Attorney and this time, the charges are dismissed. I can't tell you how many times I've made this happen. Every single time that happens, there's no trial and therefore no subpoenas and therefore the taxpayer is spared having to pay for that part of the judicial process that could've been avoided altogether had the client had the information that likely would have led to making a more informed decision.

There is a shortage of criminal investigators. I am currently turning down requests from attorneys to take more cases. At the rate of \$75 per hour, more licensed investigators will consider work in the criminal justice system as opposed to holding out for the big bucks in the private sector.