

Hello,

My name is Kara Joseph. I am a licensed Private Investigator based in Northeastern Oregon, specifically the 10th Judicial District. With my PI license, I provide professional services to attorneys from all over Oregon, but my main focus is criminal defense investigation, where I am contracted with OPDC.

Even living in a rural area, there is so much need for investigative work – such that I have to turn down cases at times in order to provide the best service possible to the clients and attorneys I work with.

While I run a healthy business, months can be lean by the time you pay for basic business expenses, licensing with DPSST, taxes, field vehicle repairs and maintenance, health insurance, as well as continuing education costs which are required to keep our licensing up-to-date. Not to mention trying to set a little money aside for retirement. Being a private contractor, there are no paid days off for sickness or vacation, nor are there set paychecks every month as pay from OPDC is based upon case closures. This is not a complaint, but a simple fact of doing business with the state.

As a life-long fiscal conservative, I don't take lightly the request to increase the hourly rate for OPDC Private Investigators. However, without a rate increase, I know I am not the only Private Investigator providing services to OPDC that will need to make a serious decision – to continue working at their \$55 per hour rate, or take on more retained work where I can earn a much higher rate on cases that are commonly less stressful or demanding.

To provide some perspective, I am currently driving an 11-year-old vehicle which I paid off prior to starting my career as a PI. I need to seriously consider purchasing a vehicle with less miles, and one that is more appropriate for the conditions I drive in for some of my cases. But I am concerned about being able to make ends meet with a car payment at the current interest rate and the inflation of literally everything else.

I don't say this to complain – that is not my intent at all. But I do hope it provides just one example of the choices Private Investigators dedicating their time to OPDC are faced with.

A rate increase to \$75 per hour for OPDC cases would alleviate some of the stressors we are faced with in this profession. It can be a dangerous, unpredictable, and sometimes thankless job. I am passionate about my work as a criminal defense investigator, and would love to continue providing professional and compassionate services to defendants across the state.

I know there is also concern about when a potential rate increase could take place. I am afraid that if this rate increase doesn't take place in July of 2025 with the new fiscal year, OPDC will lose some very talented Private Investigators which will only increase the workload of those PIs who remain. This will add additional strain on an already fragile system.

I sincerely appreciate you taking the time to consider the testimonies you have heard and read from Private Investigators like myself.

Sincerely,

Kara Joseph