

Steven Wilson
Portland Investigators
DPSST #33888

March 19, 2025

RE: HB 5031, POP 104

Senator Broadman, Representative Evans, and the Public Safety Subcommittee.:

Defense investigators provide an essential function in public defense. Investigators locate and interview witnesses, find records and evidence. They are essential to case strategy and can help settle cases and avoid trial.

Right now, due to inflationary pressure and competing wages, there are not enough public defense investigators. This gap in the workforce results in attorneys having to do investigative tasks – work they are not trained to do. Because lawyers are paid considerably more than investigators, this is also an inefficient use of taxpayer money. More investigators effectively reduces attorney caseloads and it does so for less money than hiring more attorneys.

I believe that the deficit in the investigator workforce can be addressed. A stable, reasonable hourly wage – one that is competitive, even if not equal to hourly rates we receive from other sources – will bring investigators back to state public defense work, encourage new investigators into the profession, and allow lawyers to do the work they were trained to do.

Please take a step towards resolving our public defense crisis by stabilizing the investigator workforce. Please vote yes on Measure HB 5031, POP 104.

Thank you,

Steven Wilson
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