

March 19, 2025

Public Safety Subcommittee of Ways and Means  
RE: In Support of a Stable Investigator Work Force

Dear Co-Chairs Broadman and Evans, Members of the Committee:

I am a public defense attorney working in Oregon. I am writing to ask you to support the increase in the rate paid to public defense investigators included in Policy Option Package 104 of the OPDC proposed budget, and to support rapid implementation of the rate change, making it effective in July of 2025.

As you know, Oregon's criminal justice system is compromised by the ongoing public defense crisis. The crisis involves the large numbers of unrepresented, indigent individuals, in our criminal justice system. I work with skilled, hard working, and competent investigators. These individuals are undervalued and underpaid. The current number of qualified investigators is a very small pool. The ability to *recruit and retain skilled investigators is vital* to solving the public defense crisis.

I strongly urge legislators to support HB 5031 - Policy Option Package 104 and raise the investigator hourly rate to \$75 effective July 2025. Thank you for your consideration.

Very Truly,

*Dianna J. Gentry*

Dianna J. Gentry  
Attorney at Law