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**LAURA RITTALL
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INC.**

Date: March 19th, 2025

Attn. Co-Chairs, Senator Broadman and Representative Evans of the Public Safety Committee and members.

Re: POP 104 implementation

Greetings,

I am a mitigation investigator in Oregon and Washington. I am writing in support for the POP 104 package that includes an increase in investigator pay in Oregon, which is long overdue. I would ask that the rate increase become effective as soon as possible, or by July, of 2025.

The rate that investigators are currently paid, minus overhead, is about the same as someone who works in a convenience store. It does not reflect the value that investigators provide to the community in public defense.

It should not be such a difficult ask, when states around us are paying so much more. Many investigators, including myself, have been lured to work elsewhere because of it, and because they pay in a timely manner. Newer investigators are discouraged and don't stay.

The fewer investigators there are, the more it burdens the lawyers. No case should lack quality investigation, but we see it happening. The more delay in fixing this issue, the more the public defense crisis deepens.

We can already see that this issue is creating a contentious environment of blaming, and outrageous and non-credible attacks are being launched the people doing the work. This has to stop. One way, is to support the work instead of continuing to undermine it. Please make the increased rate effective no later than July, 2025.

Thank you,
Laura Rittall