

Submitter: Sean Coyne  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee  
On Public Safety  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5031

Sean Coyne  
Crux Private Eye LLC  
PO Box 86082  
Portland, OR 97286  
sean@cruxprivateeye.com  
347-415-3983

March 19, 2025

Oregon State Legislature  
Joint Subcommittee on Public Safety  
900 Court St NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Subject: Urging Support for Policy Option Package 104 – Investigator Pay Increase to \$75/hr

Dear Members of the House Committee on Judiciary,

I am writing to express my strong support for Policy Option Package (POP) 104, which includes an increase in public defense investigator pay to \$75 per hour. As a licensed private investigator in Oregon with years of experience working on complex criminal defense cases, I have seen firsthand how vital our role is in ensuring access to justice. I urge you to pass this provision and to implement the increase by July 2025, rather than delaying it until January 2026.

The current investigator pay rate—unchanged for decades—fails to reflect the importance of our work or the cost of living in Oregon. In 1985, investigators were paid \$25 per hour, the equivalent of \$75 per hour in today's dollars when adjusted for inflation. We are not asking for a raise beyond what we were already earning nearly 40 years ago—we are simply asking to be brought current.

At the current rate, public defense investigators struggle to remain in this field, and recruiting new investigators is nearly impossible. Without sufficient investigators, attorneys are forced to take on investigative tasks themselves, which is neither cost-effective nor an efficient use of legal resources. The lack of available investigators directly contributes to delays in the justice system, increased case backlogs, and

inadequate defense for indigent clients.

Raising the investigator rate to \$75 per hour would help Oregon retain experienced investigators, attract new professionals, and ensure that attorneys can focus on legal work while investigators handle essential case research and fact-finding.

Implementing this increase in July 2025, rather than delaying it another six months, would be a critical step toward resolving the public defense crisis that Oregon is currently facing.

This investment is not just about fair compensation—it is about efficiency, effectiveness, and upholding the integrity of Oregon's legal system. I urge you to support Policy Option Package 104 and implement the rate increase by July 2025.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sean Coyne  
Crux Private Eye LLC  
DPSST #79027