

Submitter: Tony Chiotti

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee  
On Public Safety

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5031

- I'm writing to voice my support POP 104 within HB5031 and the increase in investigator pay, but ask that the implementation for the rate increase take effect July 2025.

- Public defense investigators are paid significantly less than what we were paid in 1985 when adjusted for inflation. The costs incurred by an investigator have only grown, including the need to pay out of that rate for our continued legal education, software and database subscriptions, and our individual health insurance.

- In 1985 investigators were paid \$25/hr. The equivalent of that today is \$75/hr. We are asking only to be brought current to the same pay rate that we were paid in 1985.

- Currently we struggle to recruit and retain investigators in public defense due to the low rate. Increasing the rate will keep more investigators in state public defense, and will attract desperately needed new investigators.

- Where there are not enough investigators, attorneys must do tasks that would otherwise be done by investigators (such as reviewing voluminous discovery with clients, poring over phone records and warrant returns, etc.). In short, we are a FORCE MULTIPLIER. More investigators mean that these tasks can be done for less money, and attorneys can put their time toward take more additional cases.

- Recruiting and retaining qualified and motivated investigators is a key component to resolving the public defense crisis in Oregon. POP 104 directly supports this part of the solution.

Thank you for you time.

Tony Chiotti

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