

Good evening,

My name is Cristina Lougal, I am the Principle Investigator at The Kenzie Group.

We currently work cases all over the state of Oregon. We work all criminal cases ranging from minor misdemeanors, class C and B felonies, ballot measure 11 crimes and more serious crimes such as Murder and J-Law cases.

We provide service and expertise that is not only crucial to maintaining a balance in the justice system but is also necessary for a Criminal Defense Attorney to effectively represent and provide a rigorous defense for their clients.

We have seen numerous changes in our Industry. We have witnessed an explosion in the amount of digital discovery that is associated with a criminal case, We now process and analyze hundreds of gigabytes of information if not more in any given case, especially with grand jury testimony and BWC (Body Worn Camera footage).

In order to be good at our job, Investigators need to have technical expertise, interviewing skills, report writing, discovery management, and organizational ability these are just some of a long list of needed skills for a decent criminal defense Investigator to possess.

In our industry, it is very rare to find an already licensed and seasoned Private Investigator. With that being said, we need to provide training and mentorship to those individuals who are not currently licensed but have a desire to become a Criminal Defense Investigator, this can be very challenging in this ever-changing environment.

Continuing education is not just a requirement but a need to stay relevant and serve our community properly.

With OPDC current rate for investigators at \$55 an hour, it makes it extremely difficult to attract, train, equip and retain good, qualified people who are motivated to provide exceptional service.

As far as timing, obviously the sooner this could be implemented the sooner, Investigators like me throughout the state can more effectively assist in the unrepresented crisis.

With an increase to \$75 an hour, we can attract more qualified people, offer more comprehensive training and keep technologically viable. My agency would pass this increase on to our contractors and everyone would benefit, especially the defendants.

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. More investigators mean that these tasks can be done for less money, and attorneys can take more cases.

This increase would allow us to create a better balance between the investigators and the Attorneys, thus allowing us to Recruit and retain investigators which is a key component to resolving the public defense crisis in Oregon.

Delaying the rate increase by six months further delays progress toward resolving the public defense crisis. We are asking for the rate change to be implemented in July of this year.

Respectfully,

Cristina Lougal



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