

May 26, 2020

Senate Interim Committee On Labor and Business

Chair: Senator Kathleen Taylor

Vice-Chair: Senator Tim Knopp

Senator Bill Hansell

Senator Mark Hass

Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson

Dear Chair Taylor, Vice-Chair Knopp, and Committee Members:

My name is Jay Pinkerton, and I am presently a senior police officer for the City of Salem. I was hired in December of 1998.

My regular duties at the beginning of the year were to act as a patrol officer. I would check into my car and go on patrol, and respond to various calls that came in over the radio. This meant that if there was a motor vehicle accident, I covered the motor vehicle accident. If there was a domestic disturbance, I responded to the domestic disturbance. If there were homeless people blocking the pedestrian bridge, I responded to that.

As part of our job, we have not been provided adequate PPE. Although the fire department has N95 masks, we do not. My wife has a compromised immune system, and in order to protect her, I do everything I can to avoid getting sick with COVID-19. Our shopping used to be online and scheduling a pick up; after the pandemic became a larger problem, it became very difficult to schedule a pick up time, and so we would do our shopping late at night with very few people around. Our children are homeschooled, thus reducing risk of exposure through them.

In late March, I began feeling ill with many of the symptoms that are reported as being potentially COVID-19 symptoms. I went in to get tested. The first test was done incorrectly, but the second test showed positive for COVID-19. I filed a workers' compensation claim and it was denied.

As a consequence of the denial, I am forced to use my own sick leave in order to maintain a reasonable cash flow for my household. In order to get my medical care paid for, I at present use my group health insurance and am liable to pay all co-pays and deductibles. Unless this claim is accepted, if I have long term health effects that arise from COVID-19, they will not be covered except for through my group health or other insurance. If I have permanent limitations on me, I will not be compensated for those in any way.

Respectfully submitted,

Jay M. Pinkerton