

Submitter: Helen Caswell

On Behalf  
Of:

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

Measure: SB5532

I am an Oregon licensed private investigator who works primarily with criminal defense and PCR. Although I am temporarily too ill to work, I want you to know that this bill is badly needed.

Currently, I see criminal defense attorneys take a very dismissive view of State clients because the pay is so low. In my PCR work it was not unusual to find attorneys do the barest minimum possible to help their client - and not instruct/insist their investigators to do better.

If we truly believe in assisting clients who can't afford representation, we must pay professionals to do the job. Currently clients are viewed with cynicism (and even hostility) by the attorneys who are charged with their care.

In another bill, at another time perhaps, I would like attorney's success/fail rate TIED to compensation. Because of the prevalence of cynicism noted earlier, many lawyers simply should not be paid by the government to help those who need it and have no other recourse, but who have no intention of living up to their professional obligations.