

February 2, 2026

Good morning Chair Taylor, Vice-chair Hayden and members of the committee,

For the record, my name is Jayme Kimberly and I am a Sr. Assistant Attorney General with the Criminal Justice Division of the Oregon Department of Justice. I have been a child abuse and sex crimes prosecutor in the State of Oregon for 19 years. I began my career as a Deputy District Attorney in Yamhill County DA's office in 2007 and became the Chief Deputy District Attorney for Polk County DA's Office in 2014. I have been with the Oregon Department of Justice since 2019.

During my time at DOJ, I have been assigned to the DA Assist section of the Criminal Justice Division. My particular position is to serve all 36 counties and provide whatever assistance is needed by their District Attorneys at the request of those offices. When assigned to assist a District Attorney, I am sworn in as a Special Deputy District Attorney and handle any prosecution matter the same as the sworn District Attorney or Deputy District Attorneys in that office. While I can, and have been, called to assist on type of case in any county, regardless of size, due to my particular training and specialization I am primarily called to serve rural counties in the prosecution of child abuse and sex crimes, as the nature of those cases require training and resources sometimes not widely available to all elected District Attorneys across the state.

Having served smaller communities as a Deputy District Attorney, I specifically chose to continue my career at the Oregon Department of Justice so that I could bring my unique skills and training to every corner of the state, especially rural communities. Prosecuting child abuse and sex crimes is not for the faint of heart. And is not a caseload suited for just any prosecutor, regardless of talent or skill. The large District Attorneys Offices usually have the bandwidth to handle these cases within their own ranks. But smaller offices do not always have that luxury. Thus, I am frequently called to assist rural offices to handle these extremely complex and devastating cases.

To bring my training and experience to these communities in an effort to right some of the most horrible wrongs is truly the greatest privilege I have experienced in my career. In addition to the burn out, stress, and vicarious trauma that any child abuse and sex crimes prosecutor experiences, my position requires me to spend a significant time away from my family. I leave my 5-year-old child for days and weeks at a time because I know that if it were my child who was harmed, I would want someone like me or my 23 colleagues to take that call. Any child who is harmed in this state deserves to have justice regardless of where they live.

I am here today in support of SB 1569, which aligns prosecutors of the criminal justice division at the Department of Justice into PER's Police and Fire. Like many classifications in this bill, our counterparts, the District Attorneys and Deputy District Attorneys across the state already receive this enhanced retirement benefit. This is about equity, but more importantly it is about recruitment and retention.

Due to the complexity of the types of cases traditionally handled by prosecutors in the criminal justice division, it requires several years, often a decade or more of prosecution experience to be qualified to handle the cases that we do. If the prosecutors in the criminal justice division are the only prosecutors in the state who do not get the same PERS benefits as District Attorneys offices, there is no incentive to continue to do this work outside of the county offices. Large counties will be able to hire and retain the most talented of these prosecutors, while smaller counties may have one less resource to rely on. Which is the training, skill, and resources of a well staffed Criminal Justice Division.

I urge this committee to vote yes on SB 1569.

Respectfully,

Jayne Kimberly  
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