Senator Gorsek, Chair, and Members of the Committee, for the record, my name is Representative Lamar Wise, and I proudly represent House District 48, SE Portland and North Clackamas. I strongly support Senate Bill 1569.

SB 1569 is a targeted, thoughtful update to Oregon's Public Employees Retirement System that recognizes the real-world duties and risks faced by certain public employees who perform law enforcement like work but are not consistently recognized as such under PERS.

At its core, this bill does something simple and fair: It aligns retirement classification with actual job responsibilities, not outdated or incomplete statutory definitions.

Across our state, there are workers who investigate violent crimes, supervise individuals in custody, secure sensitive facilities, collect forensic evidence, and protect critical infrastructure. They work alongside sworn officers, are exposed to the same dangers, and are held to comparable standards of training, certification, and accountability, yet they are treated differently when it comes to retirement benefits. SB 1569 addresses that inequity.

This bill recognizes specific categories of workers, including assistant attorneys general in the Criminal Justice Division, juvenile custody services specialists, forensic scientists and evidence technicians, fingerprint identification staff, medicolegal death investigators, and force protection officers in the Oregon Military Department, and provides them with police officer classification for PERS purposes only, and only for service performed after the effective date of the act. That distinction matters.

SB 1569 is not retroactive, it does not reopen past service credit, and it does not broadly expand police classification. Instead, it is narrowly tailored, prospective, and fiscally responsible. It ensures that the state is honest with workers going forward about how their service is valued and classified.

Just as importantly, this bill supports recruitment and retention in critical public safety roles. Many of these positions are experiencing high turnover, burnout, and difficulty attracting qualified candidates. Clear, consistent retirement classification is one tool we have to stabilize this workforce and ensure continuity in our justice and public safety systems. This is also a matter of respect.

When we ask people to take on dangerous, high-stress work in service to the public, whether that means supervising youth in custody, investigating deaths, securing military installations, or handling sensitive forensic evidence, our policies should reflect that reality. SB 1569 does exactly that.

I appreciate that this legislation was drafted carefully, with clear eligibility criteria and guardrails, and with an understanding of its long-term implications. It reflects collaboration among stakeholders and a commitment to getting the policy right.

For these reasons, I urge the committee to support Senate Bill 1569 and move it forward.

Thank you for your time and consideration.