

Members of the Committee,

My name is Deanna Grossi, and I am submitting this written testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 1569. I have served as a Criminalist with the Gresham Police Department for 20 years, and I appreciate the opportunity to share why this legislation is essential for crime scene investigators throughout Oregon.

During my career, I have responded to and processed homicide scenes, major assaults, suspicious deaths, and dangerous arson scenes. These environments are often unstable, unpredictable, and sometimes still active. Crime scene investigators frequently work in hazardous situations, including scenes with volatile individuals, requiring us to balance officer safety, scene integrity, and the preservation of critical evidence.

Our duties extend far beyond documentation. We process suspects for evidence, often in close physical proximity to individuals who may be agitated, intoxicated, or combative. We routinely encounter hazardous materials, including bloodborne pathogens, chemical contaminants, drug lab residues, and environmental toxins. Fire scenes present structural instability, airborne hazards, and extreme heat exposure long after suppression efforts have ended.

It is important to note that House Bill 4045 previously recognized forensic specialists within the Oregon State Police Forensic Laboratory as members of the “safety” PERS. These professionals perform vital analytical work, but they do so in controlled laboratory environments. Their role is to analyze the evidence that crime scene investigators collect in the field. By contrast, CSIs are the ones who enter unpredictable, hazardous, and sometimes dangerous scenes to locate, document, and recover that evidence. Senate Bill 1569 addresses this gap by recognizing the risks and responsibilities borne by those who perform forensic work outside the safety of the laboratory.

Our duties as crime scene investigators place us in situations that are physically dangerous, emotionally taxing, and often indistinguishable from the risks faced by sworn personnel. Yet historically, our role has not been fully recognized in policy or statute in a way that reflects the hazards we face.

Senate Bill 1569 acknowledges the reality of our work. It ensures that crime scene investigators—who are essential to solving violent crimes, supporting victims, and securing successful prosecutions—receive the recognition and protections that align with the risks inherent in our duties.

After two decades in this profession, I can say with certainty that the protections and recognition provided by SB 1569 are both appropriate and necessary. This bill will strengthen Oregon’s ability to recruit and retain qualified forensic professionals, support

the integrity of criminal investigations, and reflect the true nature of the work performed by crime scene investigators.

I respectfully urge the committee to support Senate Bill 1569.

Thank you for your consideration.

Deanna Grossi