

February 5th, 2026

To the Honorable Members of the Oregon State Legislature,

My name is Jamie Sage-Bastian, and I have 22 years of professional experience as a Police Identification Technician, and a total of 26 years of service with the Portland Police Bureau. I am writing in support of the proposed legislation under Senate Bill 1569 that would extend Police and Fire designation under PERS to certain forensic and identification personnel. I respectfully submit this letter to explain why this designation accurately reflects the nature, risks, and public safety importance of our work.

The bill applies to employees of the Oregon State Police, county sheriffs' offices, municipal police departments, and university police departments who are responsible for obtaining, classifying, and verifying fingerprints through electronic and manual methods. This description accurately reflects my job classification and daily responsibilities.

In my role as one of the eighteen (18) Police Identification Technicians of the Portland Police Bureau, I routinely obtain, analyze, and verify fingerprints for individuals who are under arrest and in custody at the Multnomah County Detention Center (MCDC), a maximum-security facility. This work requires direct, hands-on contact with detainees in a very challenging and stressful environment where there are significant safety and health risks. Identification Technicians are among the few civilian employees who regularly work in close physical proximity to incarcerated individuals.

The individuals we process are frequently volatile, mentally unstable, impaired by drugs or alcohol, or carrying communicable diseases. Obtaining usable fingerprints often requires cleaning blood, bodily fluids, or other contaminants from detainees' hands. I have performed fingerprinting duties immediately following serious violent crimes, including homicides, and have worked in close quarters with individuals exhibiting unpredictable or aggressive behavior.

The hazards of this position extend well beyond physical exposure. Over the course of my career, I have been exposed to bio-hazards, including blood borne pathogens, endured sexual harassment from inmates, and worked in environments affected by sewage contamination and other organic and inorganic hazards. I have also experienced intimidation and harassment outside the workplace due to my association with law enforcement. During the COVID-19 pandemic, identification staff were required to maintain close physical contact with detainees without timely access to appropriate personal protective equipment and without consistent notification of known infections, despite clear exposure risks. While other civilian classification jobs in the Bureau and City of Portland were allowed to work from home during the pandemic, the Police Identification Technicians were required to continue to report to work at the Central Precinct as our job requires hands-on contact with detainees in order to obtain identifying characteristics of fingerprint and palm prints.

Forensic identification and fingerprinting are foundational public safety functions. Our work directly supports criminal investigations, ensures accurate identification within custodial settings, and contributes to the integrity and safety of the criminal justice system. The risks we encounter are inherent to custodial law enforcement operations and are consistent with the responsibilities contemplated by this legislation.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Legislature to recognize the eighteen (18) Police Identification Technicians as eligible for Police and Fire designation under PERS, in alignment with both the language of the bill and the realities of the work we perform.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and continued commitment to public safety in Oregon.

Respectfully,
Jamie Sage-Bastian
Police Identification Technician I
Portland Police Bureau
Forensic Evidence Division