

Members of the Committee,

My name is Ross Nakamura and I am currently employed as a Crime Scene Investigator at the Clackamas County Sheriff's Office. My current job duties include responding to crime scenes that involve violent crime, fatal motor vehicle accidents, and suspicious death investigations. I have been employed in this career field for approximately ten years, with more than eight of those years in the State of Oregon.

I am unable to count the amount of traumatic crime scenes I have investigated, along with additional follow up investigative work that is required, such as attending autopsies, examining bloody clothing items, reviewing the images for court testimony, etc. These scenes are hazardous due to biological matter, chemical contamination, and structure/vehicle instability to name a few. I also investigate arson crime scenes which present well known hazards.

I frequently assist the county Medicolegal Death Investigators with their investigations, which includes manipulating and lifting deceased individuals, who often suffered traumatic injuries. I assist the Medicolegal Death Investigators by carrying the deceased individuals, which can range from going down three flights of stairs, up an embankment, or underneath a crashed vehicle. This takes a physical toll on not only the body, but also the mental health.

I believe the intention of the original House Bill (HB4045) was to recognize that these traumatic events also affect the investigators who are not sworn law enforcement, and to include them into the "safety" category of PERS. This only applied to members of the Oregon State Police Forensic Service Division. There are many law enforcement agencies in the State of Oregon who utilize their own non-sworn investigators for this role, and they were left out of HB4045 for some reason. We should have equal retirement benefits as those in the Oregon State Police Forensic Service Division as we experience the same traumatic events, if not more.

When I speak to other members of the Sheriff's Office that are included in the safety PERS, they assume that I was also included in the safety PERS section. Once I tell them that I am not, they are surprised because of the traumatic work I am involved in.

I believe the State of Oregon is taking a big step forward with the adoption of HB4045 and the consideration of SB1569. It shows that the hard work of the non-sworn investigators is being recognized and the well-being of the employees is considered. The long-term effects of the traumatic events is unknown, but the recognition from the state shows that our work is important. The adoption of SB1569 would likely assist in recruiting and retaining high quality non-sworn investigators throughout the state.

I respectfully request that the committee support Seante Bill 1569.

Thank you for your consideration.

Ross Nakamura