

February 6th, 2026

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

For the record, my name is Lela Clay and I am a Juvenile Custody Service Specialist at Multnomah County. I have been in this position for the last 15 years. This job contributes to the public safety sector and works to help keep communities safe by housing at risk and violent youth in a secure setting.

Routine duties include but are not limited to: Working with a culturally diverse population while providing active supervision, safety, security, situational awareness, searches of space and persons, de-escalation skills and care of youth who exhibit a variety of emotional, behavioral, and intellectual challenges. Monitoring recreational activities, school, leisure time, personal hygiene, visitation, medical, dental appointments, and court transport. Conduct orientation of newly admitted youth to detention by explaining facility rules, daily routines, expectations, the behavior level system, as well as their safety, rights, and responsibilities. Participating in physical interventions. Supervising volunteers and facilitating or assisting with skill building activities. Supporting youth with problem-solving conversations and restorative processes with our restorative justice coordinators. Facilitating professional and personal calls for youth and documentation of individual behavior, shift reports, and incident reports.

I am here today in support of SB 1569, which aligns Juvenile Custody Service Specialist into PER's Police and Fire. Like many classifications in this bill, our counterparts employed by other employers across the state already receive this enhanced retirement benefit.

National and state statistics show that Juvenile Custody Service Specialists encounter a lot of the same physical, emotional, and mental side effects as those working in correctional and law enforcement departments. These can include: High rates of PTSD, depression, anxiety, panic attacks, hypertension, diabetes, and heart disease. Increased risk of obesity, chronic fatigue, burnout, isolation, physical injury, hypervigilance, desensitization, irritability, and substance abuse. There is also a lowered life expectancy by about 15 years. This in turn makes it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain staff in detention.

I urge this committee to vote yes on SB 1569.

Respectfully,

Lela Clay
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