

I am the mother of a son who is a recovering addict. While my son was living at home with me I had multiple occasions in which I had to call for assistance because his behavior was too difficult for me to handle. My interactions with law enforcement always left me with the decision that I would never call law enforcement for help in this situation again. I was frequently told rudely that I was enabling my son because I allowed him to have a roof over his head. I attempted to explain his history which was to explain that I knew he had mental health issues and that the drug use was a way for him to self medicate. It was apparent to me, from my interactions that the police had no experience with mental health disorders. I asked for my son to be taken to two north, the behavioral health unit at the hospital and they would take him to jail. I would call the jail and ask them to keep him long enough to have a mental health screening. My requests went ignored. This went on for over two years while I watched my son become increasingly detached from reality. Finally someone in the community who was not in any way connected with law enforcement, the judicial system or the department of human services helped him get into a treatment facility where he was finally assessed for mental health diagnosis. He was then prescribed appropriate medication and today is a happy, stable young man. I knew all along that what I was seeing was not simply the behavior of a "tweaker" but knowing my son, I knew he needed more help. NO one would listen to me until he was connected with a psychiatrist through the drug treatment program. If there had been a crisis mobile unit who was staffed with trained mental health professionals, my son could have been identified and treated long before his behaviors turned violent and dangerous. All of the stress and suffering that my entire family went through could have been prevented. The police are trained to deal with crime. Their area of expertise is in law enforcement and making arrests. Every time the police were called to my home they were indignant and at times rude and angry that I did not want to press charges. Making an arrest and booking were their routine duties and they saw me as a hindrance to their goals. I know without a doubt that more harm was done to my son and my family because of the current law enforcement system. A program that contained a crisis mobile unit would keep the jails available for people who have intent to break the law not people who are not capable of making sound reasonable decisions because they are anxious, paranoid, hallucinating, experiencing symptoms of PTSD, abuse, suicidally depressed, etc. It would also free up our police force to do the work they are needed to do. Keeping our communities safe. I am hoping that you will support HB2417. Thank you .