

Continuation of testimony, cut off:

I will never forget this experience as long as I live, and it is one of the reasons I chose to become an attorney to help individuals who do not have an ability to advocate for themselves. If a CAHOOTS type program had existed then, the police would not have come in with guns blazing. Instead, a mental health professional would have been able to redirect and calm my brother while creating safety for the neighbor.

CAHOOTS will save the tax payers money, because at the civil, criminal, and treatment level, early recognition and intervention is essential. More individuals will call for help with a problematic interaction or an unwell person earlier in the process if they know someone OTHER than the police will be responding who has the training and skill set to help, rather than hurt, the compromised individual desperately needing support and assistance. We owe this safety net to our community, it is the right thing to do, and with hindsight as 20-20, we know criminalizing the mental health epidemic has dire consequences for all of us. Thank you for allowing me to speak to this important proposed legislation.