

Thank you for holding this hearing and taking my written testimony. I am a Medford resident in full support of HB2417. I grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area where I experienced a lot of police interaction due to an adverse upbringing. I understood quickly that police, despite any of their training, are not adequately equipped to handle mental health crises and do not actually help families or individuals beyond paying an aggressive or apathetic visit. I have since wondered if at any point, any one of the officers I came into contact with growing up had provided some form of proactive assistance to me or my siblings after recognizing our situation, how that could have greatly benefited us, maybe even help prevent some of the chronic trauma we continued to experience with a lack of such assistance. I recently had firsthand experience with police intervention here in Jackson County, and this understanding was further affirmed for me. I recognize that police are trained to work with a perspective that can ultimately be harmful to those in crisis, whereas mental health professionals are trained to help those very situations. Police do not provide follow-up services as a means of proactive assistance for the community, whereas our mobile crisis team, being based off of Eugene's CAHOOTS, would. I recognize that this type of mobile crisis intervention is overall more effective and less costly than law enforcement response or incarceration. I hear the overwhelming support for a Jackson County mobile crisis response team and for HB2417 from my fellow community members as well. People know what they need, and those of us more likely impacted are asking directly for such support with this bill. Points in opposition are failing to acknowledge the validity and severity of this need. Making appoint to acknowledge and reallocate funds for this crucial service would greatly impact our community's wellbeing, ultimately fostering a more functional and safer society for us all here in Jackson County.