

Chair Sanchez and Members of the Committee,

My name is Nick Benedetti and I live in Jackson County. I'm offering a personal testimony in support of HB2417. I went to testify live today however there wasn't time for me to testify so I'm writing you here.

In the past, I was in a situation where I felt distrustful, anxious, and unstable, and I needed mental health help. I was aware of my thought process where I'd want to respond in kind to the type of help offered - if help was friendly, I'd respond in a friendly way. If help was armed, I'd respond similarly.

Fortunately, I was connected with a mental health worker who skillfully navigated my distrust and connected me with a cab service so that I could get help that way - fortunately I went peacefully with the cab driver.

Due to this personal experience, I'm advocating strongly for funding mobile crises teams following the Cahoots model. Especially during Covid times where people may feel similar to how I was where they are more anxious, isolated, and less trustful of fellow humankind.

If the police would have come, and pointed a gun at me, I would have had a much worse experience perhaps even resulting in criminal charges.

In the past this model seemed like a good idea to help others in need. After having this experience, I didn't realize that this model could directly help me and people like me. So I urge you to imagine that someone you love or even for yourself - could have a mental health emergency, and how would you want to be helped? With someone who's compassionate and trained to help people in a mental health emergency, or somebody that's been trained to have the other person comply with their authority?

Please support this measure for a safer, healthier future in Oregon.

Sincerely,  
Nick Benedetti