

I am writing in strong support of HB 2417. This bill would create state grants to match local funding from cities and counties that want to launch or strengthen mobile crisis teams. Such teams provide one-site crisis de-escalation services, and also connect people to services in non-criminal cases involving homelessness, substance abuse and mental illness. These mobile response teams have proved more effective and less costly than police and law enforcement responding to people on the street. More importantly, the services are more humane than arresting someone and putting them in jail when they are experiencing a mental health problem.

This bill would not defund the police but would help augment their services. In some cases law enforcement officers are not the proper answer to certain crises. Police officers are often not equipped with the appropriate tools and training to address a person in a mental health crisis. Mobile crisis teams allows police officers to focus on what they are trained to do and allow more appropriately-trained experts to respond to people experiencing mental health issues.

Thank you for your consideration