

Submitter: Sam Clement

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Veterans, Emergency
Management, Federal and World Affairs

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4099

Greetings, Chair and members of the committee.

My name is Sam Clement, and I am a resident of Wood Village, Oregon. I am here today to express my concerns regarding HB 4099.

First, I want to highlight constitutional and due process issues. While the bill establishes a task force to study veteran crisis response, it does not clearly define procedural safeguards for interventions that might intersect with civil commitment or firearm restrictions. Any system affecting liberty or firearm rights should include explicit due process protections to ensure that no one is subject to actions without proper legal review.

Second, I am concerned about the firearm implications. Creating veteran-specific crisis response teams could unintentionally classify veterans in ways that trigger existing red flag or ERPO laws. The bill offers no clarity on how firearm rights are safeguarded, which raises significant constitutional concerns.

Third, fiscal responsibility is a major consideration. Even though this bill creates only a task force, it could set the stage for future statewide expenditures. Counties may face unfunded mandates, and there is no cost ceiling outlined in the legislation. Moreover, Oregon already has infrastructure in place, such as 988 crisis lines and mobile mental health units, which could address many of these needs without creating a new statewide framework.

Fourth, privacy and data collection is an important issue. The bill could allow for the collection and sharing of veteran status and mental health information across agencies. Without strict statutory limits, this creates a risk of profiling, breaches of HIPAA, or long-term retention of sensitive data.

Finally, the bill represents government scope expansion. HB 4099 creates a framework that could lead to mandatory county compliance and a permanent bureaucracy. Crisis services for veterans should be voluntary, local, and designed to supplement existing systems rather than establishing a new statewide program.

If the Legislature wishes to improve veteran crisis response, I would suggest focusing on strengthening existing programs, such as expanding funding for 988 and mobile crisis teams, providing peer-support grants for local veteran organizations, and requiring clear constitutional and privacy safeguards before any statewide implementation.

For all of these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to vote NO on HB 4099, or at minimum, to require significant amendments addressing constitutional protections, fiscal impact, privacy, and government scope.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.