



DATE: April 16, 2018

TO: Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors

FROM: LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS SANTA BARBARA,

Contact: Susan Horne, Social Policy Committee, 805-962-2415, susanhorne@cox.net

SUPPORTING FUNDING SHERIFF DEPARTMENT'S ASSISTED OUTPATIENT TREATMENT (AOT), CRISIS INTERVENTION TRAINING (CIT) PROGRAM AND CIT COORDINATOR POSITION FOR THE 2018/2019 BUDGET

The League of Women Voters of Santa Barbara (League) supports comprehensive, flexible and effective mental health legislation and programs for adults and children needing preventive help, maintenance, treatment and rehabilitation.

The League is concerned that the Sheriff Department's Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) may be at risk in this budget cycle. Without CIT Training, law enforcement encounters with the mentally ill may result in injury, loss of life, and millions in costly lawsuits. CIT is a model core program of the Stepping Up Initiative.

Along with Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT), early CIT is key to diverting persons with mental illness from criminalization to treatment.

The League also strongly supports the funding of the CIT Coordinator position. Much of the CIT Coordinator work goes beyond Training. The CIT coordinator is key to steering mentally ill persons into treatment instead of incarceration.

The CIT coordinator often is responsible for guiding sheriffs through calls to handle mentally ill persons in crisis which avoids use of force and the trauma and the associated high costs of injury, medical treatments, court cases and jail.

The CIT coordinator is a part of multiple community groups, collaborating with other counties, as needed. The volume of calls to the Sheriff's Dept. continues to increase with growing awareness of the value of crisis intervention.

It has been verified that the County's budget concerns are directly and positively addressed by lowering the costs of jail and courts when CIT and AOT are utilized. **The League strongly recommends full funding for the CIT Coordinator position and program.**

Sincerely Yours,

Lindsey Baker, Co-Chair, League of Women Voters of Santa Barbara