

February 18, 2009
Appropriations Committee Public Hearing Testimony
Michelle Peters
Member, Board of Directors
Brain Injury Association of Connecticut

Good afternoon Chairpersons Geragosian, Harp, and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Michelle Peters, I am a member of the Board of Directors of the Brain Injury Association of Connecticut (BIAC), and I am here today for three reasons.

- I am here to ask that you make a minimum of 100 additional ABI Waiver slots available to acquired brain injury survivors.
- I am here to ask that the dollars required to fund those slots be approved, as well.
- And I am here to underscore the fact that approving the first two requests will save the State of Connecticut as much as \$25 million a year at a time when saving money has never mattered more.

As you may know, the ABI Waiver Program is a Medicaid-based waiver program that provides a range of non-medical home- and community-based services to eligible

Now is the time because every twelve months, as many as 8,000 individuals sustain a traumatic brain injury right here in Connecticut. Now is the time because every year, more and more of those individuals will survive their brain injury. And now is the time because caring for all of those survivors in institutions is going to be significantly more expensive than caring for them in the community through ABI Waiver Service Plans.

While it may not show on any balance sheet, the quality-of-life benefits of returning those with brain injuries to their homes and loved ones will be immeasurable — and that's a blessing Connecticut's growing population of survivors and family members will certainly appreciate. But the fiscal benefits of returning those with brain injuries to their homes and loved ones by adding just 100 additional ABI Waiver slots will also save the State as much as \$25 million a year — and that's an efficiency Connecticut's hard-working taxpayers absolutely deserve.

Thank you.

As a voting constituent from Bridgeport I would like to ask the Appropriations Committee to reinstate funding for Children's Trust Fund, the Parent Trust Fund, and the Commission on Children. In tough economic time programs that teach advocacy and promote involvement are especially valuable.

In 2008 my wife and I completed the Parent Leadership Training Institute program in Bridgeport and our children completed the Children's Leadership Training Institute program. We use the training we received weekly if not daily. There are hundreds like us being trained each year in this state. Once the training is done we are out there working in the communities and making a difference.

The Children's Trust Fund and the Commission on Children does great work helping at risk children and promoting positive roles for children. Once children are shown that they are valued and can have a positive role in society you can change their path forever.

Funding for prevention programs are important all times but especially now when the budget is tight. Studies show that it is more cost effective to prevent problems with youth than to correct them in the future. It also sends a message to our youth and parents that they are valuable to us.

Thank you for your time.

John Wilkins

Bridgeport