



# BIAC

Brain Injury Association  
of Connecticut

A resource in recovery. A partner in prevention.

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**Committee on Human Services**

**Julie Peters, Executive Director, Brain Injury Association of CT**

I am submitting this testimony representing the Brain Injury Association of Connecticut in support of **Bill #189 An Act Establishing an Advisory Council on Services for Persons with Traumatic Brain Injury**. We believe the establishment of this advisory council would strengthen the work that is already being accomplished in Connecticut through the Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Board, which is appointed by the Commissioner of Social Services.

Each year, more than 1.4 million Americans will sustain a brain injury. In Connecticut alone, the average is 22 people every day, 8,000 every year. Both nationwide and in Connecticut, brain injury disables more people each year than spinal cord injury, multiple sclerosis, HIV/AIDS and breast cancer combined – in fact, **six times more people**. This public health concern ranks as the leading cause of death and disability in children and young adults. For survivors and families, brain injury is a life-altering experience and the costs to both caregivers and the State is staggering and continues to increase.

Currently, access to full community based services is only available for 369 individuals who meet the strict income guidelines and who would otherwise be forced to be institutionalized. Even with the strict requirements, the waiting list for community-based programs is over 2 years long. Moreover, this program does nothing to address the needs to those whose injury may not be as dramatic, but for whom activities of daily living can be significantly impacted.

During the time it takes to hold this hearing, more than 10 people in Connecticut are likely to have sustained a head injury. It can happen to anyone- young or old, rich or poor, male or female. **Everyone** deserves the right to live safely in their own community.

We believe that this advisory council, if membership includes those in our community with a complete understanding of this issues including persons with traumatic brain injury and their caregivers, can help Connecticut better address the needs of residents with brain injuries in our state.  
Thank you.

