

Appropriations Committee Public Hearing

March 4, 2011

Testimony of Victoria Bonitatebus to Support the Operating Grant for the Brain Injury Association of Connecticut

My name is Victoria Bonitatebus, I am a parent of a son who endured a Mild Traumatic Brain Injury and who suffered for 2 years with Post Concussion Syndrome.

Before my son Joseph suffered his concussion I knew relatively nothing about them. In my mind I thought they were no big deal, you would hear of people getting them and that was the end of it, they were fine soon after.

I became aware pretty quickly that this was not at all the case. I never knew that a concussion was actually a Brain Injury or maybe I refused to believe it.

When my son was unable to participate in life, as he knew it, we decided that others needed to be aware of what a concussion really was and how it should be treated. There was a lot of education to be done. We reached out to the Brain Injury Association of Connecticut (BIAC) and became more educated by gathering all the information, brochures, and pamphlets we could. We participated in a conference and educational support groups, which BIAC offered.

My son was the only survivor who testified in front of the Connecticut Legislative Education Committee to help pass Bill 456 Concerning Student Athletes and Concussions, so that all student athletes will be protected in Connecticut.

My son completed his Senior Internship for Ridgefield High School with BIAC by speaking at the educational programs at Lyme – Old Lyme High School and Norwich elementary. He participated at Health Fairs and the “Let’s Get Better Together Conference” for BIAC. He also helped develop a helmet Brochure, which included the Connecticut helmet law and proper ways to wear a helmet.

I know that concussions are only a small part of the brain injuries that BIAC works with on a daily basis. BIAC was there for us so that we could learn more and then in turn help others. How will the State Government provide services to those with Brain Injuries without BIAC and where will people go, where will you go? Do not let Connecticut fall behind other states that have Brian Injury Associations. We want Connecticut to have the same if not better programs for all Brain Injured families.

Thank you for listening to my testimony and please vote to ensure that the Services for Persons with Disabilities line item, which includes funding for the Brain Injury Association of Connecticut remains intact.