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From: Deb Shulansky <dshulansky@biact.org>
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Cc: Julie Peters
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February 21, 2013

Appropriations Committee Public Hearing Testimony
Deb Shulansky, *Director of Community Outreach and Support*
Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut (BIAC)

My name is Deb Shulansky and I respectfully submit this testimony as a representative of the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut, in my role as the Director of Community Outreach and Support. I am asking for your commitment to funding \$150,000 for the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut within the Community Services line (with specific language referencing the grant in the back of budget).

As the Director of Community Outreach and Support, I oversee brain injury support groups throughout the State of Connecticut. In 2012, more than 2600 brain injury survivors and caregivers attended BIAC sponsored support groups. These support groups are open to traumatic brain injury survivors, their families and their caregivers. Three support groups specifically meet the needs of Combat Veterans returning from war. All thirty support groups serve an important role in the re-integration of TBI survivors into the community. Without the funding BIAC receives through DSS, the existence and continuation of these support groups is at risk.

Because the only cure for a brain injury is prevention, BIAC's education and outreach programs are critical to helping prevent brain injuries from occurring, and thus saving the state of Connecticut from the enormous costs of medical care and lost productivity which a brain injury can cause.

BIAC is the only non-profit organization in the State to offer a diverse series of educational and training presentations devoted solely to brain injury prevention and awareness. In 2012, over 8500 people were reached through BIAC's unique programs which include BIAC's critical training and consultation to most of the key State agencies- such as DSS, DCF, VA, DPH, DOE, DOC, DMHAS, DDS, and BRS - to assure that all those who work with an individual with a brain injury understand the challenges they face. In the process, we have helped to foster greater collaboration between these agencies, so that individuals are better identified and served. There is no other organization in the State of CT that offers the trainings BIAC offers, without charge, and we have been contracted by the State of Connecticut to do so for almost 30 years.

In summary, **BIAC is seeking your commitment to funding \$150,000 for the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut operating grant, which we receive through DSS, within the Community Services line item.** BIAC's continued subsistence and vitality is necessary to ensure that brain injury survivors, their families and their caregivers receive support, and that brain injury prevention education programs which are not available elsewhere in the State remain in place. We must ensure that these services are not reduced or eliminated altogether, in order to reduce the number of survivors turning to the State of Connecticut for help in the future.

Thank you.

Deb Shulansky

Deb Shulansky, JD

Director of Community Outreach and Support

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Connecticut's partner in brain injury prevention and recovery for 30 years.

Upcoming Events:

2013 Annual Conference, Friday, March 1st

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