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I respectfully submit my testimony today to the Appropriations Committee to express my concerns about the proposed 13-14 FY Budget, especially for those individuals and families who have known the tragedy of dealing with a brain injury.

For years, the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut (BIAC) has served those in our state who know the challenges that come from living with a brain injury. The Department of Social Services (DSS) does not have the resources to help these individuals with their daily struggles. DSS, recognizing this, contracts with BIAC to meet the needs of this underserved and often overlooked group. In fact, every March DSS proudly displays a banner across the street from the capitol in recognition of Brain Injury Awareness Month. The contact information on the banner does not go to a DSS office or staff member. It goes directly to BIAC.

BIAC responds to more than 4,000 inquiries each year from brain injury survivors, family members, caregivers and professionals looking for brain injury-related resources or information. They help them connect with potentially life-changing resources that are often difficult, if not impossible, for them to find on their own. Without BIAC, these individuals would have nowhere to turn.

In January of this year, as part of the budget rescissions, the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut's small \$126,352 grant was cut by over 10%.

For FY 13-14, the entire Services for Persons with Disabilities Line Item was removed and moved, in part, to the Community Services line item. It is impossible for the average person to know which funding remains included in that line item. Without this information, I am concerned that the small yet critical funding previously allocated to BIAC has been reduced or, even

worse, eliminated. Either scenario would be devastating for the organization and would directly and negatively impact thousands in the state who rely on them for services.

It is important to note that BIAC meets the needs of the State's brain injury survivors on behalf of DSS as effectively as it does efficiently.

- BIAC provides all services at a fraction of what it would cost DSS to provide these services
- BIAC's work on behalf of DSS reduces the brain injury-related workload at DSS
- BIAC provides critical training and consultation to most of the State key agencies- including DSS, DCF, VA,DPH, DOE, DOC, DMHAS, DDS, and BRS

I ask you commitment to funding \$150,000 for the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut within the Community Services line (with specific language referencing said grant in back of budget).

Despite an increase of over 600% in calls to BIAC's helpline, BIAC has not received an increase in this grant in over 10 years, and, in fact, has only seen cuts. Your commitment will be greatly appreciated by the thousands of Connecticut residents and returning veterans who are already dealing with the life-shattering experience of brain injury, by those destined to join them — and by Connecticut's taxpayers.

Thank you.

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