



February 14, 2014

Appropriations Committee Public Hearing Testimony

Sarah Raskin

Good evening Chairpersons and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Sarah Raskin and I am a neuropsychologist and faculty member at Trinity College. My work involves research into ways to improve the lives of people with brain injury. I have had the honor of facilitating a support group through the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut for 15 years and am currently serving on the Board of Directors. I would like to submit testimony against [**H.B. No. 5052**](#), AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAMS. With this budget proposal, the Governor is recommending the elimination of the Services for Persons with Disabilities line item, which includes funding for the Brain Injury Alliance of CT to provide critical services to CT citizens.

Over the past 20 years, I have witnessed services for people with brain injury dwindle. Twenty years ago the average stay for on a

rehabilitation hospital unit for person after a traumatic brain injury was six months. It is now 20 days for acute care and 30 days for rehabilitation care. The vast majority of those with injuries are sent home with no further treatment. The severity of impact of these injuries has not changed, however. These include children, veterans, mothers, fathers, and other hard-working people.

So, what happens, then, when people go home after having a brain injury? Typically they are in need of considerable services, including rehabilitation and counseling. Frequently they are unable to work and personal relationships are strained. There is nowhere for them to get information about their condition, find out about what services are available, or talk to others in similar situations, nowhere other than the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut. Without the Brain Injury Alliance, I have no doubt that rates of re-hospitalization and re-injury due to unresolved physical and cognitive conditions will go way up, leading to much greater costs to the state.

The Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut is the first, and often, the only source for information and services. I have seen first-hand many individuals for whom the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut was their only hope, their only guide through a long and difficult process. Brain injury affects not just the body but also a

person's ability to think, remember, pay attention or problem-solve. It can affect one's very personality.

I have worked with a young veteran who needed help obtaining special services when he returned to college, a young woman who needed to be retrained for return to work, and an older man trying to understand his benefits all find the help they needed from the Brain Injury Alliance. If BIAC's contract with DSS would end, DSS would no longer have the mechanism to provide these essential services required as part of the ABI Medicaid Waiver.

As veteran's return from combat, an aging population experiences strokes and falls, and rates of motor vehicle related injuries continue to climb the need for the services provided by the Brain Injury Alliance are apparent each and every day.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah A. Raskin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S' and 'R'.

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