



**February 17, 2015**

**Committee on Veterans' Affairs Public Hearing Testimony**

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

I am submitting this testimony today representing the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut in support of ***SB 905: An Act Requiring the Department of Public Health to Study the Implementation of a Program for the Treatment of Veterans with Traumatic Brain Injuries and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.***

For over 30 years, the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut (BIAC) has been the only non-profit organization in the State exclusively dedicated to providing individual consultation, resources, and support services to brain injury survivors, their families, their caregivers, and the professionals who serve them. BIAC's services for veterans include a toll free helpline staffed by trained brain injury specialists, a database of resources, combat veteran support groups, and workshops at BIAC's Annual Conference.

As you know, TBI is the signature injury of the current conflicts. The DOD has reported that over 60% of all wounds sustained in theatre involve head injury. According to the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center, "TBI is a significant health issue which affects service members and veterans during times of both peace and war...service members are at increased risk for sustaining TBI compared to their civilian peers". While the focus has been on combat concussions, it should be known that many brain injuries occur outside of combat and often later in life.

As a member of the Connecticut Jail Diversion and Trauma Recovery Services for Veterans Statewide Advisory Board since its inception, we have seen clearly the need for a comprehensive plan, based on best practices and evidence-based protocols to best treat veterans with brain injuries in our state.

An important first step for Connecticut is for the Department of Public Health to study how to best meet the needs of those who have served our country with such dedication. Please pass this important legislation.