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Human Services Committee Public Hearing Testimony
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Good afternoon Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie and Members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Julie Peters, Executive Director of the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut I am submitting this testimony in opposition to the Governor's proposed repeal of Connecticut General State Statute Sec. 17b-8; the statute that states that the Commissioner of Social Services shall submit an application for a federal waiver and any proposed amendment to the Medicaid state plan to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly (Human Services and Appropriations).

This statute assures that, in addition to legislative review, there is to be a public hearing. **BIAC vehemently opposes the repeal of this statute.** If 17b-8 is repealed, the voices of the citizens of Connecticut are silenced. It essential that the public have the ability to give input about the very services and programs they utilize.

This is especially true for the ABI Waiver program which is grounded on a fundamental model of person-centered planning and choice. The needs of those with brain injury are complex, multi-faceted, and unique. The individuals who receive these services and those who advocate for their needs are best equipped to offer input into what works best for those served.

In addition, if it weren't for parents and advocates, there would be no ABI Waiver in Connecticut. It is only through the hard work of many in the community that DSS introduced the ABI Waiver in the first place. In the early 90's, it was parents and advocates who demanded that individuals with brain injuries receive appropriate services. It is those voices which are essential to understanding the needs of the community the Waivers serve.

I am sure it would be much easier for the State and the Department of Social Services to avoid the legislative process. It would save time. But it is not how we do things in this state. The legislature, and, in turn, the public have the right and obligation to provide input on any Medicaid Waiver bill or amendment. I urge you to do the right thing. Please reject the Governor's proposed repeal of Section 17b-8 and let the critical voices be heard.