

February 11, 2016

Appropriations Committee Public Hearing Testimony
Renée East-Fernandez
Hamden, CT

Good Evening Chairpersons and Members of the Appropriations Committee. I am submitting this testimony in opposition to THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAMS. In his proposal, the Governor seeks to reduce or eliminate funding for important core services of the Department, including funding for the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut.

As an administrator of human services programs and services for individuals with disabilities, I urge you to please create a line item for the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut for at least \$150,000. These funds are vital to provide services in the state that would not otherwise be offered. BIAC provides critical training and consultation to most of the key agencies in the state, including DSS, VA, DCF, DPH, DOE, DOC, DMHAS, DDS, and BRS and has been in operation for more than 30 years. BIAC has touched and transformed the lives of countless individuals and families through training, support groups, advocacy efforts all completely free to those in need. BIAC has been a constant resource and advocate for individuals and families affected by acquired and traumatic brain injuries, it's very existence continues to save the state of Connecticut lives and money.

If the funding for this program is further reduced then DSS federal compliance may come into jeopardy due to the fact that BIAC's current relationship with DSS meets mandated federal compliance of the ABI Waiver, as overseen by CMS. DSS contracts with BIAC to provide services required as part of the Medicaid ABI Waiver program and is the only service of it's kind in Connecticut. It CANNOT be further reduced. PLEASE reinstate full funding for the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut so that they can continue to meet contract obligations and continue to serve the state as a highly sought-after resource.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

Renée East-Fernandez