

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 19, 2008

The Honorable David Obey  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health and Human Services  
Education and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
2358 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James Walsh  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health and Human Services  
Education and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Walsh:

The undersigned members of the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force, and other members of Congress, respectfully request your support of \$30 million for FY 2009 to fund the Department of Health and Human Services programs authorized by the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Act. Further, we respectfully request that Congress provide sufficient funding in FY2009 to enable the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) within the Department of Education to sustain and increase its medical rehabilitation research portfolio and to continue its annual allocation of at least **\$8.3 million** to fund 16 TBI Model Systems research centers.

With regard to the TBI Act programs, we specifically, we request:

- **\$9 million** for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention TBI Registries and Surveillance, Prevention and National Public Education/Awareness
- **\$15 million** for the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Federal TBI State Grant Program
- **\$6 million** for the HRSA Federal TBI Protection & Advocacy (P&A) Systems Grant Program

Funding for the TBI Model Systems is urgently needed to ensure that the nation's valuable TBI research capacity is not diminished, and to maintain the 16 TBI Model Systems research centers around the country. The FY2008 Defense Authorization bill, which was recently signed into law, includes specific language directing new TBI research efforts within the Department of Veterans Affairs to collaborate with NIDRR TBI research programs, such as the TBI Model Systems of Care. The TBI Model Systems of Care program has established a vital national network of expertise and research in the field of TBI, and weakening this program would have deleterious effects on both military and civilian populations.

While Congress and the media have acknowledged that Traumatic Brain Injury is the signature war injury, many of these returning service members are undiagnosed or misdiagnosed. Subsequently, these military members, especially the National Guard and the Reserves, and their families look to community and local resources for information to better understand symptoms that may be related to roadside bombs and blasts that often occur without the service member even being aware of the consequences.

For the past eleven years Congress has provided minimal funding through the HRSA Federal TBI Program to assist States in developing services and systems to help civilians with a range of

service and family support needs following their loved ones' injuries. Similarly, the grants to state Protection & Advocacy Systems to assist individuals with traumatic brain injury in accessing services through education, legal and advocacy remedies are woefully under funded.

Rehabilitation, community support and long-term care systems are still developing in many States, while stretched to capacity in other States. Additional numbers of individuals with traumatic brain injury as the result of war related injuries only adds more stress to these inadequately funded systems. We, therefore, request that we give States and state P&As the resources they need to address both the civilian and military populations who look to them for much needed support in order to live and work in their communities.

We ask that you consider favorably these requests for the HRSA Federal TBI Program, for Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to gather needed data, public awareness, education, and prevention programs; as well as the TBI Model Systems that conduct vital research.

Sincerely,

Bill Pascoe Jr.

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