

Proponent Testimony: HB 33

Interested Party Testimony

Stephanie Ramsey
4797 Inisheer Court
Dublin, Ohio 43017
May 10, 2023

Presented to the Ohio Senate Finance Committee

Senator Huffman and members of the Committee:

My name is Stephanie Ramsey and I am coming to you to ask your support for the HB 33 amendment to the Ohio biennial budget which provides support for the Ohio Brain Injury Program.

I have been a volunteer, Board member, and president of The Brain Injury Association of Ohio over many years and have been committed to the Mission of the organization to serve the cause of brain injury prevention, treatment, education, research and advocacy. The Association has served this Mission for over thirty years and seen the steady increase in incidence of traumatic brain injury in Ohio over that period of time with little public policy attention or response. Whether that injury occurred in the field of sports, a fall (which is the most common cause), a motor vehicle accident, drug overdose or domestic violence, the outcome is still the same... damage to the organ that orchestrates the function of the entire body... our physical, intellectual, behavioral, emotional function has been put off course and who we are is changed. The effects are unpredictable and variable and that adds to the mystery, anxiety and fear. During my time of work with the organization I have seen first hand the pain and suffering as well as the human and financial cost of this injury to the people of Ohio.

Known as the "silent epidemic," TBI affects ALL demographic groups from babies to grandparents and shatters the lives of individuals and families often to the point of disintegration and, too often, leading to depression, withdrawal, substance abuse, isolation and homelessness. It is for this reason that the CDC ranks injury to the brain to be most likely to result in death or permanent disability and has properly identified traumatic brain injury as a chronic disease requiring a life-time of care and management. Quite simply this means that individuals and families face the challenges of life AFTER brain injury! We have mind-boggling medical services that save lives but what about the life AFTER brain injury? Life goes on.... But, that life is quite often very different from the life before.

PLEASE NOTE that the population of Ohioans affected is NOT small! Recent studies have shown that 1.8 MILLION adult Ohioans – MORE THAN ONE IN FIVE, have incurred at least 1 TBI in their lifetime that was severe enough to cause loss of consciousness. (Source: 2014 Ohio Department of Health Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System)

I come to you now to advocate for those Ohioans who are at risk , that is, all of us, or who have sustained traumatic brain injury to ask urgently for your support to the above referenced amendment. The need for this amendment is nothing short of urgent, not only for funding, which is vital, but for the strengthening of the charge to the Brain Injury Program of Ohio (ORC 3335.60) to develop and provide services and supports to the brain injured population of our state, their families and caregivers. Unfortunately, the funds connected thus far fall short of the need.

The amendment is a well-thought out plan developed by the Ohio Brain Injury Advisory Committee (ORC 3335.61) with components to provide services and supports to individuals and families who meet that reality. Right now, there are very few life-lines for them. It is painful to meet a family who searches for help and say that Ohio has nothing to offer them.

We ask your help in moving Ohio forward in the ranks of the many states who have already made a commitment to those among us who are “at risk”, i.e., ALL of us, for a better future for those who experience a brain injury in Ohio.

With deepest thanks,

Stephanie Ramsey, MPH, Immediate Past President Brain Injury Association of Ohio