

Written Testimony of Lauren Strawn, LISW-S

In Support of an Amendment to HB 96 to Increase Funding for the Ohio Brain Injury Program
May 15, 2025

Chairman Romanchuk, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Lauren Strawn, and I am a spouse of someone who experienced a brain injury in 2017. I'm here today to ask you to support an increase in the line item for the Ohio Brain Injury Program.

In 2017, my spouse experienced a severe traumatic brain injury due to a motorcycle accident that left him in a coma for over a week, and hospitalized for 2 months. After hospitalization he spent 2 more months in outpatient rehabilitation and has been seeing specialists since.

Since then, our lives have changed in ways we never expected. My partner lost his job, most of his friends, and hobbies and skills as a result of the damage to his brain. He experiences long and short term memory challenges, hearing challenges, emotional challenges, and I now have to support the 2 of us financially, something that rarely works out without significant financial struggle and strain.

The Brain Injury Association of Ohio has been a lifeline for us. Through their helpline, support groups, resource facilitation, and educational programs, we've found guidance, connection, and hope. But I know so many others are still struggling without access to these services.

Right now, Ohio only spends about **5 cents per resident on brain injury** — far less than what is needed to meet the real demand. The Brain Injury Association of Ohio reports their helpline calls have quadrupled in the past few years. This shows how many people are reaching out for help — and how important it is that we fund these services.

With increased funding, more people like me/my loved one could find mental health support and community, get financial and medical support, and even know they're not alone. Without these services, it's easy to get lost in the system or fall through the cracks.

Please invest in survivors. Please support increasing the funding for the Ohio Brain Injury Program. Your support can change lives — just like it changed mine.

Thank you for listening to my story and for caring about Ohio families like mine.

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