

Written Testimony of Philip Crippen
Board Member for Brain Injury Association of Ohio and Parent of a TBI Survivor
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 the opportunity to provide testimony today supporting
an amendment to the state budget that would increase funding for the
Ohio Brain Injury Program.

My name is Phil Crippen, and I am here today both as a board member
of the Brain Injury Association of Ohio and as a parent of a brain injury
survivor—or, as Conor likes to say, a brain injury thriver.

My wife and I raised our three children in Dayton, living what most
would consider a normal and blessed life. Our middle son, Conor, was
an exceptional young man—intelligent, athletic, and outgoing. He
attended Loyola University in Chicago and was studying to be a
neurologist.

On the evening of March 16, 2013, Conor was struck by a drunk driver
while crossing the street. When the ER doctors called us, they said he
had one of the worst brain injuries they had ever seen and did not
expect him to survive the night. The medical team worked tirelessly,

and Conor survived. He remained in a coma for over three weeks and spent five weeks in the ICU.

Eventually, Conor was able to come off life support, but he had physically and mentally regressed to infancy. He couldn't walk, talk, eat, or control his actions—he had to relearn everything. Unlike many others, we were fortunate that my wife could take time off to be with him full-time.

Before the accident, I barely knew what TBI stood for, let alone how to help my son. My wife and I entered a world we knew nothing about, with no clear direction on where to turn for help. Conor began rehabilitation, but progress was slow. We constantly had to advocate and plead for continued support, knowing his potential was greater than what many assumed. We were unaware of any advocacy programs in Ohio and, only through hours of research and some luck, were able to find organizations and individuals that provided support and guidance.

It has been 12 years since Conor's accident. His recovery has been remarkable, far exceeding expectations. Today, he works at Trader Joe's, is a wonderful uncle to our grandchildren, teaches us daily about the power of hope, and gives presentations to medical students across Ohio to help them understand brain injury from the patient's

perspective. He still faces challenges with memory, balance, and loneliness. The journey to help Conor has not stopped as we continue to look for new therapies to help him.

There is a common phrase in the TBI community: “If you’ve seen one brain injury, you’ve seen one brain injury.” The spectrum of brain injuries is vast and varied—no two individuals are alike. The programs we seek support for will help address these individual needs. For example, we want to implement a proven program called Brain Steps, which educates teachers, parents, and students about brain injuries and helps students with an injury reintegrate into school. A program like Brain Steps would help the patient integrate faster and with less stress.

Without proper support, survivors and their families face significant barriers to recovery, employment, and independent living. Increasing funding for the Ohio Brain Injury Program presents an opportunity to make a meaningful impact on thousands of Ohioans.

I urge you to support this amendment. Thank you for your time and consideration. Conor would now like to share a few thoughts.

Conor: Thank you to the committee for your time. As my dad shared, I had a great life before my accident. I was ready to conquer the world

and thought I was invincible, until I wasn't. Brain injury can happen to anyone, at any time, from any walk of life.

Through hard work, opportunity, and being surrounded by caring people, I can stand before you today. Treatments for brain injuries are continuing to advance. Everyone must have a chance to rehabilitate. We need to treat TBI individuals as if they have unlimited capacity. This funding will help us share valuable information with the caregivers.

I was lucky enough to be born twice...so can others. There is always hope.

Thank you for your time.

We are happy to answer any questions.