

**House Finance Committee – H.B. 33- Proponent Testimony**

**Lauren Holly, Executive Director, Brain Injury Association of Ohio**

**April 20, 2023**

Chairman Edwards, Vice Chair LaRe, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on House Bill 33, the state main operating budget for fiscal years 2024 and 2025.

My name is Lauren Holly and I am the Executive Director at the Brain Injury Association of Ohio (BIAOH), a statewide non-profit organization that serves brain injury survivors and caregivers across the state. BIAOH's mission is to

In the State of Ohio, 1 in 4 adults has sustained at least one traumatic brain injury in their lifetime. That amounts to almost 2 million people in Ohio. Brain injury is a hidden epidemic in Ohio that has gone misunderstood and under treated. Likely everyone in this room has known at least one individual that has suffered a concussion, a stroke, a drug overdose or a brain tumor that has resulted in a brain injury. Brain injury often results in long term chronic implications that affect an individual's ability to live independently, work, go to school and maintain relationships. While there are programs, services and therapies that can work to improve those outcomes for Ohioans, they are limited, difficult to find, and underfunded. In the last biennium budget, we received a small increase of \$425,000 in funding to expand services. With this increase we were able to add three new programs; including our monthly webinar series, our health and wellness programming and our transition program. We also were able to expand our helpline capacity by 100%, reaching more Ohioans than we had in years. Also with that increase, the Ohio Brain Injury Program added their brain injury connection program and expanded training opportunities for professionals across the state.

In the State of Ohio, our current investment in brain injury services amounts to 5 cents per resident of Ohio. In comparison, Pennsylvania has an investment of \$21.92 per resident, Kentucky has an investment of \$10.74 per resident and West Virginia has an investment of \$1.27 per resident. The difference is a stark reality that we see play out every day on our HELpline, we are often forced to encourage people to cross state lines to obtain services, because they simply don't exist in Ohio.

This lack of funding and resources not only impacts an individual's quality of life and ability to succeed after brain injury. It also effects our state's burden of care, when individuals do not have access to appropriate resources, supports, and therapies they more often need to seek support from state-based assistance programs such as Medicaid waivers, unemployment, nursing home placement, and more. According to the 2019 Biennial Report on the impact of traumatic brain injury on the people of Ohio, traumatic brain injuries that occurred in 2017 in Ohio will have lifetime costs of \$6 billion in medical expenses and lost wages.

There is a solution, and by increasing funding to brain injury services in this biennium budget, you are investing in that solution. We know from research studies such as the work done by Lance Trexler at Indiana University that for those receiving community-based support services, 64% returned to work after brain injury, versus 40-50% who did not receive those same supports. The research done by Dr. John Corrigan at Ohio State University has shown that individuals living in states with better long-term services and supports had significantly more community involvement and achieved a higher level of life. The increased funding allocated to brain injury services in the amendment to the biennium budget will be used to create a more robust community-based support structure for brain injury survivors that will allow us to support people in achieving better outcomes, gaining higher levels of independence and will save state dollars.

We thank you for the inclusion of this funding increase in the proposed amendments and we would greatly appreciate the committee's support for Brain Injury Services in HB3.

Chairman Edwards, thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts regarding House Bill 33. I appreciate your attention and will be happy to address any questions the committee may have.