

May 31, 2007

The Honorable Edward M. Kennedy
Chairman
Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The undersigned organizations urge the HELP Committee to consider and recommend passage of the Reauthorization of the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Act, S. 793, as soon as possible. The TBI Act is the only federal law that provides federal and state government funding to better address the needs of individuals with TBI, which is the leading cause of death for Americans between birth and age 44. While the major domestic causes of brain injury are motor vehicle crashes and falls, it is also becoming the signature wound of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Returning servicemen and women are now calling on federal, state and local government and organizations to help with information and referral to services, including family support, assistance to obtain benefits, counseling and community and long-term services and supports.

Since 1997, the TBI Act has authorized funding to the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to help states to develop infrastructure needed to respond to individuals with traumatic brain injury and their families. As the result of the 2000 reauthorization, funding has also been made available to HRSA to provide state Protection & Advocacy (P&A) Systems to expand advocacy to include individuals with traumatic brain injury. Furthermore, it authorizes:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to conduct surveillance, prevention and public education programs; and
- National Institutes of Health (NIH) to conduct of basic and applied research in brain injury.

Our organizations recognize that you have been instrumental in furthering the ability of federal, state and local agencies and organizations to better respond to the needs of individuals with TBI and their families. We are looking to your support to make the reauthorization of the TBI Act happen this year. Please do not hesitate to contact us at any time if we may be of assistance.

Sincerely,

American Brain Coalition
American College of Surgeons
American Counseling Association
Brain Injury Association of America
Coalition for American Trauma Care
Epilepsy Foundation

Page 2
May 31, 2007

Iraq & Afghanistan Veterans of America
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators
National Brain Injury Research Treatment Foundation
National Disability Rights Network
North American Brain Injury Society
The Arc of the United States
United Cerebral Palsy

cc: Senator Orrin Hatch