

Submitter: Jessa Reinhardt

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services

Measure: SB420

Chair Gelser Blouin and members of the committee, I am writing in favor of Senate Bill 420. The Centers for Disease Control estimates 1.5 million Americans suffer a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) each year in the United States with around six percent experiencing long-term disability from their injuries. Unfortunately, the majority of those experiencing physical or mental disability from their injuries are left with little support. Each person who has experienced a TBI has a unique symptom profile, some may face challenges with movement and coordination or motor planning, others may experience decreases in memory, language, or decision-making. Those with TBIs are faced with stigma, often being misunderstood and assumed to be on illicit substances while receiving little to no ongoing support. Instead, they are placed in this void of services between medical care and mental health. We must do better for our citizens with TBIs, many of whom end up homeless or incarcerated. I have witnessed the depths families have searched for support for their loved ones, transferring them from state to state in order to find adequate care and support only to realize there really was nothing out there for them. Providing services such as service coordination, resource navigation, and advocacy is the right first step of a needed expanded support model.

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