

**DEB PATTERSON
STATE SENATOR/SENADORA ESTATAL
DISTRICT/DISTRITO 10**



OREGON STATE SENATE/SENADO DEL ESTADO DE OREGON

Chair Gelser Blouin, Vice Chair Robinson and Honorable Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Deb Patterson, State Senator from District 10.

In the 2021 session, when Senator Knopp introduced the concept behind this bill, I was happy to support the idea of helping folks living with brain injuries to navigate the resources which are available in our State. This type of service is available in the vast majority of other states across our nation, and it is an issue close to my heart.

My uncle, my Mom's brother, suffered a traumatic brain injury in a motorcycle accident at age 16, and helping him navigate available resources fell to my parents after the death of my grandma a few years later. I watched Uncle Jim struggle to understand what was happening around him, and my parents struggle to be sure that he remained safe, that his medication was appropriately managed, that he had vocational and recreational opportunities, a safe place to live, and transportation to medical and rehabilitation appointments. It was a herculean task, and there are many more individuals and families facing similar challenges.

It is estimated that every year approximately 17,000 Oregonians sustain a brain injury. Life after a brain injury is not only difficult for the individual who experienced the injury but also for their friends and family who are supporting them. Many don't know where to turn for support. 61% of Oregonians with brain injuries report feeling that they have not received needed services.

SB 420 would establish a brain injury resource facilitation program within the Department of Human Services to connect survivors of brain injury to appropriate, life-saving services and supports. Oregon is one of only 11 states that does not have a brain injury resource facilitation program. Thanks to the amazing work of Dave Kracke, Oregon's Brain Injury Advocate Coordinator, we know that leading with person-centered support services for brain injury survivors is the most effective way to properly support survivors of brain injury and this bill gives us a chance to do just that.

As mentioned, this bill has been introduced before with bipartisan support. I want to thank Dave Kracke and Megan Jones for their incredible advocacy on this issue as well as Senator Knopp and Senator Gelser Blouin who are championing this bill alongside me.

I urge the committee to move this bill forward.

Thank you for your time,

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