

**BIAA Letter to the Editor for The Washington Post DRAFT #2**  
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To The Editor:

In her Feb. 14 article, “Bush Budget Would Cut Popular Health Programs, Ceci Connolly mentions the proposed elimination of ‘centers for traumatic brain injuries.’ The Federal Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Program Connolly refers to is not just ‘popular,’ it is essential.

According to the CDC, there are *at least* 5.3 million Americans with lifelong TBI-related disabilities from falls, car crashes, assaults, and other means, including improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Every 23 seconds, someone else in this country will sustain a TBI—it could be any one of us at any time. We’ve just added 1,700 soldiers to the TBI rolls—make that 1,702 counting ABC journalists Mr. Woodruff and Mr. Vogt.

Since 1997, the Federal TBI Program, administered by the Health Resources and Services Administration’s Maternal and Child Health Bureau has awarded competitive, time-limited grants to 48 States, two Territories and the District of Columbia. With these funds, local governments have expanded services to include children, seniors, victims of domestic violence, minorities and others. They’ve transitioned people from hospital to home; trained families, teachers and communities how to care people with TBI; and protected the rights of TBI victims nationwide.

Last year, the federal government invested \$9 million in the Federal TBI Program. That’s only about \$1.70 per person to ensure their access to rehabilitation, community and family support, education, employment, long-term care and other services. Let’s hope that, just like last year when President Bush proposed the Program’s elimination, Congress will again have the good sense to restore this funding. Surely the people defending our country, those reporting the war and the rest of us are worth \$1.70 and more.

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