

**COMMENTS BY SUSAN H. CONNORS, PRESIDENT/CEO,
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Kessler Institute For Rehabilitation

News Conference on Changes to the TBI Act of 2005

I am Susan Connors, president/CEO of the Brain Injury Association of America. I am honored to be here today to celebrate and thank Congressman Bill Pascrell for his tireless efforts on behalf of individuals who have sustained a brain injury and their families.

Brain injury is the last thing on your mind until it is the only thing. The injury can change how you walk, talk, think and feel. It can turn your world upside down. Imagine not knowing the difference between a hairbrush and a toothbrush or which goes on first, your shoes or your socks.

More than 1.5 million Americans are injured each year. When they don't get proper medical care or necessary supports, survivors and families spiral into joblessness, homelessness, depression, drug abuse, incarceration and death.

Congressman Pascrell founded and has served as co-chair of the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force since 2001. Under his leadership, the Task Force has promoted expansion of research and services within the Departments of Defense, Health and Human Services, and Veterans Affairs and has guided these agencies on policies and proposed rulemakings related to brain injury.

For more than a decade, the Task Force has hosted the annual Congressional Brain Injury Awareness Day on Capitol Hill. From the battlefield to the football field, Congressman Pascrell has helped focus the nation's attention to brain injury.

This year, he introduced the TBI Act, H.R. 4238, which will make treatment available to more Americans who have sustained a brain injury.

So, on behalf of the Brain Injury Association of America and the millions of people living with brain injury, I thank you, Congressman Pascrell, for all you have done to advance brain injury prevention, research, treatment and the quality of lives that are changed in an instant.