

GABRIELLE GIFFORDS  
8TH DISTRICT, ARIZONA

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Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-0308

May 20, 2011

WASHINGTON OFFICE:  
1030 LONGWORTH BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-2542

DISTRICT OFFICES:  
TUCSON OFFICE

3945 EAST FORT LOWELL, SUITE 211  
TUCSON, AZ 85712  
(520) 881-3588

COCHISE COUNTY OFFICE  
77 CALLE PORTAL, SUITE B-160  
SIERRA VISTA, AZ 85635  
(520) 459-3115

ONLINE:

WWW.GIFFORDS.HOUSE.GOV  
TWITTER.COM/REP\_GIFFORDS  
FACEBOOK.COM/GABRIELLEGIFFORDS

The Honorable Denny Rehberg  
Chairman  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health & Human Services, and Education  
H-307, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health & Human Services, and Education  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rehberg and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As you know, Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords is making tremendous progress toward her recovery from the traumatic brain injury she sustained just four months ago. Our office is grateful for the comprehensive, quality medical care that Congresswoman Giffords is receiving at TIRR Memorial Hermann Hospital, a TBI Model System (TBIMS) Center.

As you work to develop funding legislation for the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR), which supports the TBIMS program, I hope that you will consider what can be learned from the care Congresswoman Giffords and many others at TIRR Memorial Hermann receive and support the inclusion of report language in the fiscal year (FY) 2012 Labor, Health & Human Services, and Education Appropriations committee report that supports the TBI Model Systems (TBIMS) program.

The TBI Model Systems of care program is continuously developing best practices through longitudinal research that examines interventions, outcomes, and quality of life while treating patients. Congresswoman Giffords' family and staff have come to learn of the critical role of the TBIMS program in developing new treatment interventions for traumatic brain injury patients. The TBIMS program has improved the acute care and rehabilitation received by civilian and military populations alike who have sustained a TBI. In support of these Centers continuing to carry out this important work, I respectfully urge the Subcommittee to consider the following report language under NIDRR:

*The Committee strongly supports the Traumatic Brain Injury Model Systems (TBIMS) program funded by NIDRR. Almost 500 peer-reviewed publications have resulted from TBIMS research since 1987, bringing dramatic improvements to the treatment of TBI for both civilian and military populations. The Committee is aware that the TBIMS Centers will compete for new 5-year awards in fiscal year 2012. The Committee bill includes sufficient funds to support no fewer than 16 competitively-awarded Centers with adequate resources to meet the research objectives of the TBIMS program. The*

*Committee intends that funds provided will enhance the capability of Centers to conduct critical multi-center investigations, expand the Centers' scope of intervention studies, maintain the ongoing high quality of the Centers' longitudinal research while keeping pace with the increased number of participants followed, and promote continued collaboration to improve outcomes for civilians and service members with traumatic brain injury. The Committee also commends NIDRR for establishing collaboration between the TBIMS program and the Department of Veterans Affairs and encourages continuation of these efforts.*

We have been deeply moved by the outpouring of support for and attention to Congresswoman Giffords' recovery, but we remain cognizant that over 1.7 million other Americans will sustain traumatic brain injuries this year. We believe it is imperative that clinicians have the tools they need to continue to develop treatment interventions for TBI by studying patients throughout their lifetime. The TBI Model Systems allow this vital research to occur, advancing our knowledge of the care that makes recovery possible. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Pia Carusone', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Pia Carusone  
Chief of Staff to Congresswoman Giffords