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Brain Injury Association of Maryland, Inc.
2200 Kernan Drive, Suite 810E
Baltimore, MD 21207

RE: IN FAVOR of Senate Bill 732

LETTER IN SUPPORT

The Brain Injury Association of Maryland (BIAMD) is a 40-year-old organization providing education, advocacy, and research. One of our primary missions is to operate an information and assistance hotline as part of the no wrong door system for accessing long-term care services. We respond to over 300 calls per month from individuals, family members, and professionals seeking information and assistance to help people living with brain injury. In addition, we provide resources, case management, trainings, events, and policy advocacy.

There are an estimated 605,000 Marylanders living with a brain injury. These individuals experience changes in their health, thinking, behavior, self-regulation, and social skills. These Marylanders deserve a seat at the table of the Maryland Commission on Disabilities. **SB 732** will provide those individuals that seat and the ability for their voice to be heard.

The Maryland Commission on Disabilities (MCOD) is an important advocate for individuals with disabilities in this state. It serves as the advisory body for the Maryland Department of Disabilities, which is charged with unifying and improving the delivery of services to people with disabilities. MCOD also plays an instrumental role in the development of the State Disabilities Plan, a comprehensive multi-year strategic plan that sets performance goals for all agencies in Maryland which serve people with disabilities. Individuals with brain injuries need to be given access to these important decisions, and SB 732 does just that.

The mantra, "Nothing about us without us" has been a rallying cry for the disability movement for over 50 years and expresses the ideal that individuals with disabilities know what it best for them. BIAMD is committed to the ideal that individuals with disabilities need to be front and center in all levels of the decision-making process and need to have a seat at every table where their issues are discussed.

We ask that this committee return a favorable report of SB 732.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bryan Thomas Pugh", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bryan Thomas Pugh
Executive Director
Brain Injury Association of Maryland