

The Brain Injury Association of Arkansas'

Messenger

Grassroots Effort Required!

Representative Sandra Prater (District 42) is leading an effort to put together a draft Bill for the 2007 Session entitled "An Act to Establish the Arkansas Legislative Commission on Traumatic Brain Injury; and for other Purposes." The purposes of this act are:

- ❖ "To study the rates and severity of traumatic brain injuries in Arkansas;
- ❖ To project the incidence of traumatic brain injuries over the next ten (10) years;
- ❖ To develop a strategic plan to ensure an appropriately prepared workforce to treat traumatic brain injuries and provide for rehabilitation services to the extent possible; and
- ❖ To convene stakeholders from health care providers, the health care industry, business, the legislature, and the public."

The 2007 session will begin January 8th. We need your help finding co-sponsors in both the House and Senate. Please contact your Representative and Senator, and ask them to be a co-sponsor.

This piece of legislation is a MUST HAVE if we are to ever improve the support system that traumatic brain injury survivors desperately need in Arkansas. This bill provides the foundation upon which many of the other components will be built. Without the passage of this bill, many of the other components will not be possible.

How can you help? Contact your legislator! If you don't know who your Representative or Senator is, call the state Capitol or go online. For the House of Representative, call 501-682-7771. For the State Senate, call 501-682-6107. If you have Internet access, go to www.arkansas.gov. Select *Government*, then select *Legislative Branch* and then select *Legislative Search*. This will provide you with a map of the state of Arkansas. Pick your county and you will be provided with a list of your State Representatives and State Senators.

Once you determine who represents you, send them a letter, a postcard or an email asking them to be a co-sponsor and if not a co-sponsor, to at least support passage of the Bill.

What should your letter, postcard or email say? Something along the line of:

Why you are contacting them – You're asking them to co-sponsor and/or support the Bill.

The need – recovery from a brain injury is often slow and a lengthy, complex process. The effect on the survivor and family can be catastrophic; financially, physically and emotionally. Currently there are few resources available. We need a central commission to assist with coordination of resources.

The Impact of TBI – on you as a survivor or a family member or as a friend of a survivor.

Before the Bill can be voted on by the full House or Senate, it must first get out of the House and Senate Public Health, Welfare and Labor committees. We will need 11 favorable votes from House members and 5 favorable votes from Senate members. Committee members are listed below along with their district number and home town.

House Committee Assignments:

Pam Adock (35, LR)

Stan Berry (70, Dover)

Mike Burris (26, Malvern)

Eddie Cooper (71, Melbourne)

Dawn Creekmore (27, Hensley)

Sharon E Dobbins (39, NLR)

Marilyn Edwards (88, Fayetteville)

Stephanie Flowers (17, Pine Bluff)

Billy W Gaskill (78, Paragould)

Rick Green (73, Van Buren)

Willie R Hardy (5, Camden)

Eddie C Hawkins (47, Vilonia)

Johnny Key (81, Mtn Home)

Jim Medley (64, Ft Smith)

Daryl A Pace (100, Siloam Springs)

Sandra Prater (42, Jacksonville)

Roy Ragland (90, Marshall)

Gregg Reep (8, Warren)

Susan Schulte (48, Cabot)

Denny Sumpter (53, West Memphis)

Senate Committee Assignments:

Chairman: Jack Critcher, Vice-Chairman: Tracy Steele

Jack Critcher, (12, Batesville)

Jack Crumbly (16, Widener)

Barbara Horn (21, Foreman)

Randy Laverty (2, Jasper)

Percy Malone (26, Arkadelphia)

Bill Prichard (35, Elkins)

Tracy Steele, (34, NLR)

Hank Wilkins (5, Pine Bluff)

If one of these represents you or you know one of them, please contact them and ask that they vote favorably when the Bill comes before their committee.

To view a copy of the draft bill, visit our web site, www.BrainAssociation.org.

2007 Walk for Thought

We hope to build on our successful 2006 Walk and have an even more successful Walk For Thought in 2007. Please reserve Saturday, March 24, 2007, for our second annual walkathon.

For 2007 we plan to begin the walk at Pavilion 1 at Murray Park (in Little Rock), a little west of where we were in 2006. Walkers will again have a choice between a 1-mile and a 5k (3.1-mile) walk. The 5k walk will be up and over the new pedestrian bridge over Murray Lock and Dam (known locally as the Big Dam Bridge) and back. The walk will be wheel-chair accessible.

The walkathon serves as a public awareness event as well as a fund-raiser. Over the next couple of months we will be looking for event sponsors. These are usually individuals or businesses that are willing to make an upfront donation. They will be recognized for their support in various ways, depending on their level of support. Event sponsorship is available at various levels, beginning at \$300. Deadline for applying to be an event sponsor is February 1, 2007.

If you are interested in helping find an event sponsor, please contact Gary Low, by phone at 501-416-4742 (Little Rock) or toll-free at 800-497-4387 or by email at gary@glowar.com for more information.

More information on the Walk and how your can help raise awareness and raise money individually will be sent out about February 15th.

Association Update

At the December 9th General Membership meeting, new Board members were elected. Gary Low (Little Rock) was elected to the Board. Ann Fullerton (Little Rock), Jim Hamilton (Little Rock) and Bill Hartley (Hot Springs) were reelected to the Board to serve a second three-year term. Rene Boucher whose first term expired did not seek reelection as he will be moving out of state later in 2007.

Following the General Membership meeting, the Board met and elected officers for 2007. They are:

President: Teresa Belew (Little Rock)

Vice President: Dana Gonzales, PhD (Little Rock)

Secretary: Deborah Gangluff, ScD (Conway)

Treasurer: Gary Low (Little Rock)

Contact us by phone at 501-374-3585 (Little Rock) or toll Free at 800-235-2443 or by e-mail at info@BrainAssociation.org.

Visit our Web Site: www.BrainAssociation.org

Brain Injury Association of Arkansas

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