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HB Comm Services

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Madam Chair and members of the committee, my name is Lois McElravy. I am from Missoula, Mt.

Seventeen years ago, I was drafted into a special club, without any warning, and without my permission. Brain Injury Survivor was not anywhere on my "who I want to be when I grow up list.

"Minor" Brain Injury is an oxymoron. Brain injuries destroy lives and shatter families ... BUT they don't have to. However, it takes regular, on-going, services for brain injury survivors to learn how to manage the many challenges. As well, family members also benefit from therapy + counseling to adjust to their "new reality".

Because the rehab process for brain injury is life long + requiring constant adjustment as one's life evolves, and not a temporary setback like other physical injuries, it requires professional assistance to maintain a survivors health + ability to function at an acceptable level + be safe. Brain Injuries never go away! Families get burnt out [illegible] abandon the survivor to preserve their sanity.

The RFS has the potential to make a measurable impact on the recovery of brain injury survivors and also preserve families.

Doctors told me that 2 yrs post injury was the best I could hope for my brain to recover - I had 4 miserable - want to go to sleep + never wake up, years. I had 8 - existing but not really living years. Four years ago, when I was 12 yrs post injury, my brain started to function at a higher level.

Doctors explain these continued improvements are the result of continual - daily - efforts of many small things over a long time period - Therapies, counseling, support groups, medications, supplements, healthy lifestyle, cognitive retraining, coping and adapting strategies, respecting limits + last but not least - ASKING + receiving the assistance of others.

Presently I am enrolled in the ticket to work program. I am building a business as a freelance writer and motivational speaker. My marriage is intact - My children are grown. Overall my family has survived + we are healthy and happy.

Many, many others who have been affected by Brain injury are not so fortunate as ~~[illegible]~~ my family and I.

Please give others the same opportunity to commit to recovery through funding the RFS.