

**House Human Services Committee
Senate Bill 1418 – February 1, 2023
Denise Harvey, P&A Director of Program Services**

Chairman Weisz and members of the House Human Services Committee, I am Denise Harvey, Director of Program Services for Protection & Advocacy (P&A). P&A protects the human, civil and legal rights of people with disabilities. The agency's programs and services seek to make positive changes for people with disabilities where we live, learn, work and play.

While Protection & Advocacy supports the proposed addition of two new non-voting positions on the Brain Injury Advisory Council, a representative from adults and aging services and a brain injury advisory organization, P&A respectfully requests an amendment to the bill. While P&A respects and appreciates the knowledge that persons in these proposed new positions can bring to the council, it is requested that upon adding additional professional positions to the Brain Injury Advisory Council, that an equal amount of positions be added where the role of person is to solely represent an individual with a brain injury. It is best practice for these types of boards/councils to have a majority of members be persons with disabilities. As an advocacy organization P&A highly values the input and expertise offered by individuals with disabilities. Individuals with Brain Injury are able to share their stories of how brain injury has impacted their lives, can provide valuable input regarding services and truly have the best understanding of brain injury that is so needed to address issues related to individuals with brain injury.

Currently the Brain Injury Advisory Council has membership of: at least one brain injury survivor, nominated by the council; and at least one family member of a brain injury survivor, nominated

by the council. There are currently 12 additional required positions on the council in various professional positions, some of whom may also be a brain injury survivor or a family member of a brain injury survivor, though for the most part represent their professional positions. In addition, the governor also has the option to appoint an individual representing stroke health.

Adding two additional professional positions will bring the requirement for appointed council membership of professionals up to 14 or 15. Protection & Advocacy's request for these two additional voting positions to be filled by persons with brain injury would bring the number of appointed persons with brain injury on the council to be at least 3 persons. Thank you for your consideration.

I am glad to answer any questions.

Denise Harvey, Director of Program Services
Protection & Advocacy