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November 19, 2013

The Honorable Fred Upton  
Chairman  
Committee on Energy & Commerce  
United States Congress  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Henry Waxman  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Energy & Commerce  
United States Congress  
2322A Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington DC 20515

Dear Chairman Upton and Ranking Member Waxman:

I write today on behalf of the National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities (NASUAD), to encourage you to reauthorize the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Act, as outlined in the Traumatic Brain Injury Reauthorization Act of 2013 (HR 1098).

*President*  
**Gloria Lawlah**  
Maryland

*Vice President*  
**Jay Bulot**  
Georgia

*Secretary*  
**Lora Connolly**  
California

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NASUAD represents the 56 officially designated state and territorial agencies on aging and disabilities. Each of our members oversees the implementation of the Older Americans Act (OAA), and many also serve as the operating agency in their state for Medicaid waivers that serve older adults and individuals with disabilities. Together with our members, we work to design, improve, and sustain state systems delivering home and community based services and supports for people who are older or have a disability, and their caregivers.

Each year, approximately 1.7 million Americans are treated through emergency departments and in-hospital stays due to TBI, which is the leading cause of death and disability in children and young adults. Troublingly, the number of Americans sustaining TBI is increasing, both as the result of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and due to fall-related injuries among the nation's rapidly growing senior population.

First signed into law in 1996, the TBI Act is the only federal law that addresses the unique issues facing, and complex service needs of, individuals with TBI and their families. The Act's timely reauthorization is necessary to ensure the continued success of these programs, on which an increasing number of Americans rely to remain healthy and in their communities.

On March 12, 2013, Reps. Bill Pascrell, Jr. (D-NJ) and Tom Rooney (R-FL) introduced HR 1098 to reauthorize the TBI Act through 2018. NASUAD is pleased to support this bipartisan legislation, which we believe will improve both access to and the delivery of services, in part by expanding the current system's capacity to assist individuals with TBI obtain the services and supports they need.

Further, NASUAD supports HR 1098's proposed interagency transfer of the Federal TBI State Grant Program and the Protection & Advocacy (P&A) TBI Program. Though the bill

leaves the placement of these programs within HHS to the discretion of the Secretary, NASUAD recommends they be realigned as part of the Administration for Community Living (ACL).

Created in 2012, ACL serves as the federal agency responsible for increasing access to community supports while focusing attention and resources on the unique needs of older Americans and people with disabilities. Shifting the administration of these TBI programs from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to ACL would facilitate greater collaboration between these and other aging and disability programs involved in service delivery across the lifespan at the federal, state, and local levels.

Reauthorization is an opportunity to prioritize and strengthen the TBI Act. To this end, we urge you to advance HR 1098. Thank you for your leadership on these critical issues, and we look forward to further collaboration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Martha A. Roherty". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Martha A. Roherty  
Executive Director  
NASUAD