



October 5, 2011

Rep. Leonard Lance
U.S. House of Representatives
426 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Lance,

Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) is pleased to offer our support for H.R. 2600, legislation to enact the National Pediatric Acquired Brain Injury (PABI) Plan.

As of August 2011, 952,132 servicemembers aged 24 and below had served in OIF and OEF. Many people are surprised to learn that these physically strong and mature veterans have brains that are still developing and medically considered pediatric. Consequently, as unlikely as it would seem, a young SEAL or Marine with a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) can potentially benefit from the same research and treatment as an infant victim of Shaken Baby Syndrome or a teenager with a TBI from an auto accident.

Even though the focus of the National PABI Plan is pediatric, the target population encompasses more than 40% of those deployed in OIF and OEF. Clearly, The National PABI plan will yield benefits to many veterans, active duty servicemembers, and their families. In addition, shedding light on the pediatric brain and enlarging the sphere of knowledge about the brain, brain injuries, and possible courses of treatment will likely yield benefits for older populations as well.

PABI accounts for approximately 80,000 hospitalizations and 11,000 deaths a year of America's young people and TBI is one of the most common injuries to OIF and OEF veterans. It is estimated that over 320,000 troops have suffered from a TBI while on deployment. With 75% of injuries in Iraq and Afghanistan resulting from blasts, there may be many cases that are not yet diagnosed. In order to ensure proper care for America's youth, and our many youthful heroes, we must fund research that will increase medical professionals' knowledge and understanding of TBI. The National PABI Plan will help to achieve that goal.

IAVA believes that our injured warriors should be afforded every opportunity for help possible. IAVA believes that legislation on the National Pediatric Acquired Brain Injury Plan will fulfill this goal and we are proud to offer our support for this worthy goal. If we can be of any help, please contact Ramsey Sulayman, IAVA Legislative Associate, at (202) 544-7692 or ramsey@iava.org.

Sincerely,

Paul Rieckhoff
Founder and Executive Director
Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA)