Brain Injury Association of Virginia
Virginia Alliance of Brain Injury Service Providers
2020 Legislative Needs Statement

WHAT:

$1,000,000 to provide supported living services to clients of state funded community based brain injury programs, and to establish a housing policy specialist for the brain injury community

PATRONS AND ITEM NUMBERS:

- Del Sam Rasoul: HB30; Item 339#3h
- Sen Jennifer McClellan: SB30; Item 339#6s

WHY:

Despite facing the same needs as those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, people with brain injury have little to no residential service options available to them within the Commonwealth. As a result of physical and cognitive challenges, people with brain injury often require support from a few hours per week up to 24 hours a day; the support includes assistance with basic and community based activities of daily living. The shortage in housing and support options for individuals with disabilities has reached crisis proportions, according to **Mary O'Byrne and Stephen W. Dale** of the Special Needs Alliance. Any investment in housing supports will be less expensive per person than any sort of institutional placement. Affordable, accessible, and appropriate housing is critical and integral to make community living a reality, and Virginia must create capacity to provide residential support services to those with brain injury.

HOW:

The appropriation would be provided to DARS to fund 1 FTE for each current state funded community based brain injury services program; the position would focus on providing supportive living services to enable their clients to live safely, securely and stably their respective service areas. It would also provide funding to the statewide advocacy organization to engage in policy and systems analysis and advocacy to effect change statewide; it will entail exploring the potential to expand more deeply into residential services with an informed approach that identifies how they could be funded, what policy/legislative barriers may exist, and what policy/legislative solutions could be developed.