

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1848

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Early Learning & Human Services

**Title:** An act relating to services and supports for individuals with traumatic brain injuries.

**Brief Description:** Concerning services and supports for individuals with traumatic brain injuries.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Doglio, Goodman, Parshley, Salahuddin and Wylie.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Early Learning & Human Services: 2/14/25, 2/19/25 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Increases the traffic infraction fee that is deposited in the Traumatic Brain Injury Account (Account) from \$5 to \$10 per infraction.
- Requires that the Washington Traumatic Brain Injury Strategic Partnership Advisory Council sponsor an annual statewide traumatic brain injury conference.
- Requires that at least 30 percent of the annual expenditures from the Account be used exclusively for in-person support groups for individuals with a traumatic brain injury and their families, programs designed for social integration, peer-to-peer mentoring, and equitable geographic access to programs.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & HUMAN SERVICES

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Bergquist, Chair; Cortes, Vice Chair; Eslick, Ranking Minority Member; Burnett, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bernbaum, Dent, Goodman, Hill, Ortiz-Self, Penner and Taylor.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Staff:** Luke Wickham (786-7146).

**Background:**

*Traumatic Brain Injury.*

A traumatic brain injury is an injury to the brain caused by an external force. The causes of a traumatic brain injury include falling, car accidents, and violence, among other things.

*Washington Traumatic Brain Injury Strategic Partnership Advisory Council.*

The Washington Traumatic Brain Injury Strategic Partnership Advisory Council (Council) is responsible for coordinating with the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) on a comprehensive statewide plan to address the needs of individuals with traumatic brain injuries, providing recommendations to the DSHS on criteria used to select support group programs that receive support from the Traumatic Brain Injury Account (Account), and reporting periodically to the Legislature and the Governor.

Council membership includes gubernatorial appointees and representatives of state and nonprofit agencies.

*Traumatic Brain Injury Account.*

The Account is an appropriated account administered by the DSHS. The Account is funded by a \$5 fee imposed on traffic infractions. Funds from the Account may only be used:

- to support activities listed in the statewide traumatic brain injury comprehensive plan;
- to provide a public awareness campaign and services related to traumatic brain injuries;
- for information and referral services; and
- for costs of the DSHS staff providing support for the Council.

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**Summary of Bill:**

The traffic infraction fee that is deposited in the Traumatic Brain Injury Account (Account) is increased from \$5 to \$10 per infraction.

The public awareness campaign to persuade Washington residents of the issues facing individuals with traumatic brain injuries is expanded to include information on the availability and benefits of in-person peer support groups, community integration programs, and other services designed to assist individuals with traumatic brain injuries and their families.

*Statewide Annual Traumatic Brain Injury Conference.*

The Washington Traumatic Brain Injury Strategic Partnership Advisory Council (Council) is required to sponsor an annual statewide traumatic brain injury conference. This event must provide opportunities for education, networking, and collaboration among survivors,

caregivers, medical professionals, and community organizations to improve knowledge of traumatic brain injury issues and available resources.

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) must allocate a portion of funding from the Account to support the planning and execution of an annual traumatic brain injury conference. The Council must provide recommendations on the content, structures, and speakers to ensure a comprehensive approach that includes survivor experiences, professional training, and policy discussions.

*Traumatic Brain Injury Account.*

At least 30 percent of the annual expenditures from the Account must be used exclusively for:

- establishing and maintaining peer led and community-based in-person support groups for individuals with a traumatic brain injury and their families;
- developing structured skills-building programs designed to promote social integration and functional recovery for individuals of all ages, including pediatric-focused initiatives;
- supporting initiatives that provide direct peer-to-peer mentoring and navigation assistance for newly injured individuals and their families, including hospital-to-community initiatives; and
- ensuring equitable access to support groups and community-based programs across urban and rural regions.

The DSHS must ensure that funds dedicated to in-person support groups, the expansion of structured programs that facilitate direct peer-to-peer connection for individuals and family members impacted by traumatic brain injuries, and community integration programs prioritize peer engagement and are not disproportionately allocated to virtual-only support structures.

*Federal Funding.*

The DSHS must proactively seek, apply for, and secure federal funding opportunities. These efforts shall be conducted in coordination with the Council. Federal funds obtained pursuant to this subsection must supplement the traffic infraction fee amounts collected and must be deposited into the Account. The DSHS shall ensure that any federal funds received enhance, rather than supplant, existing state funding dedicated to in-person support groups, community integration activities, and peer-to-peer recovery initiatives.

The DSHS must make every effort to disburse revenue that is the result of the traffic infraction fee or federal funds in a diverse manner to include rural areas of the state.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBIs) can be debilitating injuries, but people can make a full recovery from these injuries.

The traffic infraction fee was increased about five years ago from \$1 to \$5 and now there is a request to increase that fee to \$10. The reason for this fee increase is based on inflation and the rise in electronic ticketing, which does not incur this fee.

Many TBI support groups during COVID were moved to remote. In-person events were very important for everyone, but particularly for people with TBI. There also had been a statewide TBI conference and this bill would revive that conference.

Brain injuries are debilitating and isolating injuries that can lead to social isolation. There are mental health benefits related to in-person support groups for people with TBI and their families.

For years, these in-person support groups have received funding, but this funding went away. Support groups need funding to keep these meetings going and keep them accessible.

Before COVID, the TBI community was flourishing with support with in-person support groups and an annual conference. Now the funding has gone away. It is only through determination that some of these support groups have remained, but many of the support groups have gone away.

The TBI community is constantly growing and so is the need for support groups.

Many young people with TBI question whether their life is worthwhile. These in-person support activities give those people an opportunity to relearn social skills in their own communities and experience life. These activities were frequent and well attended before COVID, but are few and far between now.

Health is created by local connection and the relationships that people have, not just what happens in a hospital.

This bill would increase the funding to the TBI account. These support groups are sometimes referred to as gripe groups. These groups are used to talk about the shared challenges of people with TBI and their families.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Representative Beth Doglio, prime sponsor; Serry Bauer; Laura Dahmer-White; Desiree Douglass, HeadStrong; JP Anderson, Community Health Organization Improving Care and Equity; and Scott Yoos, T.B.I. Support Group.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** Janet Novinger, Imaginal Network; Pranav Anumolu; Kristen Christiansen; Barb George; and Jennifer McCarthy, Facilitator of the Moses Lake Brain Injury Support Group.