

This is the statement of Michele Burgess in support of SB700

I was a special education teacher at Salem Keizer School District for over 23 years. During that time I was the one who found and made eligible students who had brain injuries. Five years ago I had an accident at my work site, and fell backwards down 9 stairs, or so I have been told. I do not remember this event at all. I wound up at Salem Hospital for 11 days. I do not remember the first four days because I was in the intensive care sleeping I guess. I woke up four days later and was transferred to building B the rehabilitation building. I did not know why I was there or what had happened. I was informed probably in day 7 of my hospital stay that I had an accident at work. I had then been informed that I had a brain injury, which they would have to retell me often because I didn't remember. Through the entire time of trying to do physical, occupational and speech no time was spent on what it would mean to have a brain injury. When I was released from the hospital no time was spent on transition to real life and what that would mean. Ever since the accident nothing was done or help given to my family who had to become my caretakers, so for my ex husband there was denial that this accident had happened, and because of the way I coped he often didn't remember that I had a brain injury. I didn't know how to maneuver my way through the brain injury (tracking the injury, knowing who to contact, how to get support etc.), nor did I know what it meant to have a brain injury in how my daily function took place. I have been connected with Vocational rehab, but they haven't helped or trained me in anyway what daily living means, I haven't known what services to speak with to get support it is through my own tenacity that I have gotten anything done in this five years. I am in no means stupid, I have a masters degree in special education, I have a traumatic brain injury, that if I would have had someone to help my family and I with service coordination and skills training, as well as someone who could help my family and have my former job have increased awareness and understanding of issues and needs related to brain injuries, then I would be further along than where I am now.

signed: Michele Burgess

1111 North Water St.
Silverton OR 97381

micheleburgess610@gmail.com

503-990-5135