

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 13, 2018

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, and Education
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, and Education
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

As you begin work on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill, we urge you to provide \$30 million to fund the childhood cancer programs established in the Childhood Cancer Survivorship, Treatment, Access, and Research (STAR) Act. This legislation recently passed the Senate unanimously, and given previous House passage, we have every expectation that it will be signed into law before the start of FY 2019.

While some progress has been made in pediatric cancer research – leading to a decline in childhood cancer deaths by almost 70 percent over the last four decades – cancer is still the leading cause of death by disease past infancy among children in the United States, according to the National Cancer Institute (NCI). And while survival rates for some forms of childhood cancer like leukemia have increased to greater than 85 percent, the median survival rate for other childhood cancers such as diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma is less than one year.

With the goal of raising overall survivorship rates, the Childhood Cancer STAR Act authorizes key research initiatives, such as biorepositories at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and surveillance at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), while focusing on some of the least-studied and understood childhood cancers.

Further, childhood cancer survivors continue to face significant health issues requiring specialized follow-up care for the rest of their lives. As many as two-thirds of childhood cancer survivors will develop a serious or life threatening condition, such as secondary cancers and organ damage. As a result, childhood cancer survivors often need advanced follow-up care long after battling cancer, and we need to ensure that health care professionals are equipped to provide that care for these kids in their adolescence and into adulthood.

As such, we ask that you also fully fund the Childhood Cancer STAR Act provisions to develop best practices for the treatment of late effects of childhood cancers, to improve collaboration among providers so that doctors are better able to care for this population as they age, and to create innovative models of care for childhood cancer survivors.

We greatly appreciate your support of the Childhood Cancer STAR Act this year to ensure that these efforts come to fruition.

Sincerely,

Jack Reed

Julius Brown

Ann Van Vleet

Edward J. Markey

Mary F. Ryan

Bob Anderson

Amy Klobuchar

Jeffrey A. Merkley

C. Murray

Bill Nelson

Richard Blumenthal

J. C. B.

Dianne Feinstein

Tammy Duckworth

Debbie Stabenow

Larry C. Peters

FY19 Childhood Cancer STAR Act funding

Read each pair from the top of the letter from left to right

Reed
Van Hollen

Brown
Markey

Bennet
Sanders

Klobuchar
Merkley

Murphy
Nelson

Blumenthal
Booker

Feinstein
Duckworth

Stabenow
Peters