

Dear Representative or Senator _____

In the next few weeks Congress will be making decisions about the 2016 budget for the National Institute of Health (NIH) and the National Cancer Institute (NCI). Although they have requested a \$1 billion increase to their budget to support Alzheimer's, the Brain Initiative, AIDS research, etc., they have requested no increase for childhood cancer research.

I am writing to you to ask Congress to make childhood cancer research a priority in the Federal budget, and especially in the NIH budget request. Childhood cancer is the #1 disease related killer of children in this country, we lose thousands of children year in and year out. Little to no research funding is provided to the deadliest childhood cancers. This picture is not improving and while the brilliant work done by NIH leads to an "AIDS free generation," we continue to lose and maim children with antiquated treatments due to the lack of research. We lose 27,000 children each decade to childhood cancer, tens of thousands more suffer life-altering impacts of treatment, 1 in 285 children will be diagnosed with cancer. I personally don't like these numbers or consider it rare.

NIH cites many reasons for their lack of investment – stating that research in adult cancers brings benefits to childhood cancer, childhood cancer is rare, there are insufficient resources to increase funding levels for childhood cancer research, if they had more money, they could do more. This is not a matter of more money, but a matter of priorities. Many scientists and StandUp2Cancer dispute the idea that adult cancer research brings the needed results for childhood cancer research noting, "Children are not simply smaller versions of adults, and childhood cancers are very different from cancers that strike adults." The NIH director talks about the loss of "innovative, talented research proposals" because of lack of funds. I believe there are many childhood cancer research proposals lost because childhood cancer research receives only negligible research funding. An article from The Atlantic in January 2013 talks specifically about the lack of funding for childhood cancer research, noting that 96% of childhood cancer grants don't get funded because of the lack of funds and that it is driving people out of the childhood cancer field.

Congress has suggested that NIH increase funding levels for childhood cancer research over the past several years, they have mostly chosen to ignore this "suggestion." I ask Congress to legislate that NIH significantly invest in childhood cancer research, funding that will provide the opportunity for some of those talented childhood cancer research proposals to turn into cures for kids. I think all Americans understand the budget dilemma but again this is a matter of priorities, not more money. Personally I would like to see Congress designate the \$1 billion increase for childhood cancer research or require that NIH tap every line item by 3% to come up with a significant increase for childhood cancer research. Our children deserve the best we can give them.

Thank you for your work on behalf of the American people. I look forward to your response on this issue.

Sincerely,