

## **Oral Testimony in Support of House Bill 672**

### **Ruth Hoffman, CEO, American Childhood Cancer Organization**

Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of the Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Ruth Hoffman, and I am here as the CEO of the American Childhood Cancer Organization (ACCO).

In 2018, ACCO conducted a national analysis and found that only two states funded childhood cancer research, while nearly every state appropriated significant funding for adult cancer research. This gap exists despite the fact that pediatric cancer is the leading cause of disease-related death among children.

That analysis led ACCO to work state by state to change this disparity. To date, we have helped secure more than \$120 million in funding for childhood cancer research across seven states. Maryland has been a national leader in this effort, with \$5 million already appropriated.

House Bill 672 builds on that leadership by clarifying Health General §20–120 to its original intent—ensuring that research dollars are distributed in a timely manner to nonprofit institutions that actually conduct the childhood cancer research here in Maryland, including our academic children’s hospitals. These institutions rely on grant funding and are prepared to translate it into safer, more effective treatments without delay.

But I am also here today as a mother.

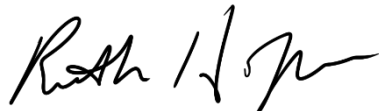
In 1987, my daughter was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia. She became one of the first children to survive a bone marrow transplant, enduring toxic chemotherapy and total body radiation. But survival came with a cost. She has faced a secondary cancer, endocrine dysfunction, chronic lymphedema, and is now in heart failure as a direct result of the treatments used to save her life.

It has been 38 years since her transplant, and treatment for pediatric AML is still largely the same. In the past 30 years, only seven new drugs have been approved by the FDA to treat childhood cancer, compared to more than 220 for adult cancers.

Children facing cancer have courage, love, and resilience. What they do not have is time.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable vote on House Bill 672. Thank you for your leadership.

Ruth Hoffman

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ruth Hoffman", written in a cursive style.