



Maryland House Health and Government Operations Committee

Chair: Delegate Pendergrass

Vice Chair: Delegate Pena-Melnyk

I am writing to you today regarding childhood cancer in Maryland and I am representing the American Childhood Cancer Organization - known as ACCO which is a national childhood cancer organization based right here in Maryland. I am also here on behalf of the childhood cancer community. On April 8th 2018 my family was not a cancer family. On April 9th 2018 it was, when my then 9 year old daughter, Grace, was diagnosed with a brain tumor. She traded in her softball glove for many rounds of chemotherapy and radiation. She is currently showing no evidence of disease and I am dedicated to helping other warriors and families in this fight.

Cancer is not something you want in your vocabulary, in your home or with a child. The majority of spending at the federal level for cancer research is dedicated to adults. We ask the question, **What about kids? Pediatric cancer is the number 1 death by disease for children in this country.** Maryland is number 13th in the country for incidence rates of childhood lymphoma. Three Maryland counties are showing higher mortality rates for pediatric cancer than the national average (Anne Arundel, Baltimore City and Prince Georges according to cancer.gov).

States have the opportunity to make up the disparity in pediatric cancer research funding. ACCO is taking the lead on securing state funding, We have successes in PA, NJ, KY. The money raised at the state level stays in the state and benefits hospitals doing research in MD. The appropriations that ACCO has secured in the last year in the 3 states equates to the \$30 million Federal through STAR Act.

I know this state can lead this country in implementing state funding for pediatric cancer research. Together we can make a difference for kids with cancer and fund more research so there are less toxic treatments and more survivors. We can also protect those that survive from a lifetime of side effects.

My life is marked by before pediatric cancer and after. I am thankful that my daughter gets an after and I am determined to make an impact for those fighting today and those that will be in the fight in the future. I am here for Grace and Mason and Sully and Naomi and Evan. This is the approximate number of kids that will be diagnosed with childhood cancer this week in Maryland. **Let's make a difference for them with Bill HB0775.** Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best,

*Aubrey Reichard-Eline*

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