

Statement in Support of House Bill 1187

My name is Kelley Halloran Cotton and I was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2021. At that time, there was a grant available that helped share the cost of the cold cap and therefore I was able to take advantage of using the system. Without the grant, I would not have been able to afford to cold cap.

I did not lose all my hair. I was more comfortable wearing a hat rather than an itchy wig and had a few of my own hair strands that would poke out the sides of my hat, in little curls. Some people didn't even realize I was "sick", and it was nice to go through my day out in public without being noticed only for my cancer.

I work in a high school, and there were probably many students who also did not necessarily know that I had cancer. I could come to work and just be me and concentrate on my job instead of always thinking about fighting cancer. That was very helpful for my mental health and the mental health of my three boys. Mom looks good in her hat, and is going to work, she must be okay.

In addition to being able to keep a little of my hair during treatment, that made a huge difference for my mental health, my hair grew back in quickly and strong and healthy. My hair started growing back during my Taxol chemotherapy which means my hair was growing before chemotherapy even ended! That was SUCH an encouraging movement forward after losing a lot of hair during the AC chemotherapy. My hair is now longer and healthier than it was even before treatment.

Today, I am passing my cold cap to my friend who was diagnosed last week at the age of 39, with two little boys. Her young boys are not going to understand Mommy losing her hair and it will change their life. My friend can't afford to pay for the system as both she and her husband are teachers.

I am thankful I can pass her my cold cap, but there is a small portion of my brain that hopes that if my breast cancer returns, that I will be able to afford to replace it and be able to cold cap again. My heart fully supports my friend, but unfortunately once you have cancer, your brain is always afraid it will return.

As a cancer patient who has benefited from the cold cap system, I strongly support HB 1187 and urge its passage to ensure that insurance coverage includes this vital option for patients facing chemotherapy. The mental health of these patients directly affects their physical health.

Sincerely,

Kelley Halloran Cotton