



PETITION TO INCREASE FEDERAL FUNDING FOR CHILDHOOD CANCER RESEARCH

Gabi Hornsby was diagnosed with Optic glioma at the young age of 2 years old. Optic glioma is a slow growing brain tumor in or around the optic nerve. As the tumor progresses, it presses on the optic nerve, causing vision problems. They make up half of all primary optic nerve tumors and between 1.5 and 4% of all orbital tumors. The common symptoms of this kind of tumor are nausea and vomiting. Other symptoms can include involuntary eye movements, memory impairment, daytime sleepiness, loss of appetite and growth delays. Optic nerve glioma accounts for five percent of all childhood brain tumors. Nearly 75 percent of optic nerve gliomas, which may affect one or both eyes, occur in children younger than ten years old. Most children are younger than five years old at the time of diagnosis. Blindness occurs in approximately five percent of cases. Sadly, Gabi lost her sight only 3 days after learning she had brain cancer. It was such a devastating blow to my husband and I. She was our only child, the only child we would ever have.

Chemotherapy and other treatments were grueling for Gabi. After multiple rounds of chemotherapy, proton beam radiation, several major surgeries and a few minor surgeries, she suffered five strokes. This caused her to lose her speech, feeling in her hands and her mobility. All we could do was sit by and watch as she suffered. It saddened us not to be able to take away

her pain and fear. As a parent that is what we are meant to do, protect our children. Cancer took so much away from our daughter. Her quality of life was extremely poor and she had to depend on her father and I to do everything for her. This caused immense stress on not only us but on her as well. No child wants to rely completely on their parents or anyone else for that matter. Our sweet girl was a warrior in every way. She fought with a vengeance for 15 years. She spent 2 years of those years in hospice care and passed away on April 14, 2020. That day I continually relive in my mind. I cannot begin to tell you how much we miss Gabi. She was such a bright light in our lives. Cancer took our daughter away and we can never get her back. Losing her was the hardest thing we have ever had to go through.

The treatments are so tough on our children but agonizingly we have no other options. Chemotherapy alone causes fatigue, hair loss, easy bleeding and bruising, nausea and vomiting just to name a few. Treatments can also cause Anemia and even infection which can potentially put your child at an even higher threat for complications. Low blood cell count is the most common and most serious side effect of chemotherapy. When this happens, the level is adjusted right away or chemotherapy may have to be stopped temporarily. Low white cell counts increase the risks for infection. A child's appetite can even be affected due to taste changes during treatment. These medicines that are being placed into our children's bodies can damage the cells inside the throat and mouth. This causes painful sores in these areas, a condition called mucositis which can become infected. We desperately need other choices for our children. This is why I am so passionate about helping spread awareness on childhood cancer.

Each year in the United States, there are approximately 15,780 children between the ages of birth and 19 years of age who are diagnosed with cancer. Approximately 1 in 285 children in the U.S. will be identified with cancer before their 20th birthday. Globally there are more than 300,000 children diagnosed with cancer each year. Every 3 minutes, somewhere in the world a family hears the catastrophic words that their child has been diagnosed with

cancer. This is absolutely alarming. Right now, the federal government is allocating a trifling 4% toward funding for childhood cancer research and this is in no way enough. We would like to see the percentage at least to 8%. By signing this petition, you will be assisting to help facilitate lobbying and the advance of a healthcare policy that will designate a higher percentage of resources for childhood cancer research. Our children need to be heard so we need to come together and be their voices. Please join us by signing and sharing this petition, it could save a child's life.

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