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16TH DISTRICT, ILLINOIS

DEPUTY REPUBLICAN WHIP

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COMMITTEE ON  
ENERGY & COMMERCE

—  
COMMITTEE ON  
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Congress of the United States  
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Washington, DC 20515-1602

May 25, 2018

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The Honorable Francis Collins, M.D. Ph.D.  
Director  
National Institutes of Health  
900 Rockville Pike  
Bethesda, MD 20892

Dear Dr. Collins,

I write to respectfully request the National Institutes of Health (NIH) prioritize research intended to prevent, treat, and cure pediatric cancer. As you know, aside from accidents, cancer is the leading cause of death among children under the age of 14.

Recently, I met with my constituent, 16-year-old Megan Bugg from Coal City, Illinois. Megan, who just completed her Junior year of high school, found out in early 2016 that her Stage 4 Alveolar Rhabdomyosarcoma (ARMS) had returned. Megan has undergone 90 weeks of chemotherapy, over 100 radiation treatments, and three surgeries over the last three years. At a time where she should be focused on high school, extracurricular activities, and planning her future, Megan must face her teen years with memory issues — often called “chemo brain”— a lifetime of infertility, and an uncertain future.

Despite the challenges and uncertainty, Megan remains incredibly hopeful. Her passionate advocacy comes not from a place of anger or frustration, but from a sincere desire to make things better for young people like her. According to the American Cancer Society, in 2018, an estimated 10,590 children will be diagnosed with cancer and 1,180 will die from it. Megan has dedicated her time and efforts to raising awareness and fundraising for pediatric cancer research, with hopes to change these daunting statistics.

I believe hope is contagious and I implore you to show her there is hope by dedicating more NIH resources to researching pediatric cancers like hers. I have been proud to support increasing the NIH budget every year for the past three years, including the most recent \$3 billion increase through the FY18 Omnibus. I realize your organization is pulled in many directions, from research on mental health to Alzheimer’s Disease and beyond, but I encourage you to do all you can to prioritize pediatric cancer, which is a diagnosis a child receives, on average, when they are just six-years-old.

I appreciate the hard work you and your entire team at NIH undertake to advance medical research and help all Americans live longer, healthier lives. I hope stories like Megan’s inspire you and show you how important your work is to millions of Americans and their families. Thank you for your consideration of this request, your steadfast work to save lives, and your swift attention to the important matter of pediatric cancer.

Sincerely,



Adam Kinzinger  
Member of Congress