

Press Summary

The DIPG Awareness Resolution in the US House of Representatives, and Senate

From: H. Res. 404

(117th Congress, awaiting introduction in the 118th C)

“Expressing support for the designation of the 17th day in May as “DIPG Awareness Day” to raise awareness and encourage research into cures for diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma (DIPG) and pediatric cancers in general...

...encourages all people of the United States to become more informed about diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma (DIPG) pediatric brain cancer, and the current challenges to the medical research system in designating sufficient research funding for pediatric cancers...

...encourages public and private sources of research funding to elevate their consideration of the mortality rate of a type of cancer, as well as the life-years lost, as significant factors to be considered during the grant application process.”

General Description

Despite its consistent death toll as the leading cause of disease-related childhood mortality in the US, childhood brain cancer, of which DIPG (diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma) is the 2nd most common type and the deadliest, has seen no significant change in the standard treatment protocol nor prognosis of the worst variety since Neil Armstrong’s daughter died of it in 1962. DIPG exemplifies in a powerful way the challenges in treating pediatric cancer and the daily tragedies which ensue from the general lack of solutions our medical research industry has for deadly pediatric disease. **As such the resolution is meant to increase public awareness for childhood brain cancer, DIPG, and expedite research funding into cures for pediatric cancers in general.**

The DIPG Awareness Resolution was first introduced to the US House of Representatives (114th Congress) in 2016 requiring only a House vote to pass; it is not a law. It is apolitical with no direct funding authorization. It does, however, suggest that for any given cancer type, that the years of human life lost associated with it as well as the mortality rate be given elevated consideration in the research grant process with public and private funding sources. **It shines a national spotlight on an issue of human suffering which has remained in obscurity for decades.** To date, a similar resolution has been introduced four times in the Senate, passing with unanimous consent in 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, with plans for a 2023 resolution.

History

The DIPG Awareness Resolution has its origins in the 2014 California Legislature, with the first state resolution designating the last week in May, Brain Tumor Awareness Month, as “DIPG Awareness Week.” It was introduced by CA State Assemblyman Scott Wilk, who is the current State Senator. Steve Knight, CA-State Senator 2012- 2014, was elected Congressman in Nov. 2014 for the 25th District of California. In September of 2015, his constituent Janet Demeter with the foundation Jack’s Angels, instrumental to the 2014 California Resolution, worked with his office to introduce the first DIPG Awareness Resolution to the 114th US Congress on January 13, 2016, also designating the final week of May. The co-lead for H. Res. 586 was Debbie Dingell (D-MI-12), in honor of Chad Carr in Ann Harbor, MI. Exclusive to the first introduction, the original resolution was referred to as “Chad and Jack’s DIPG Awareness Resolution” honoring Chad Carr and Jack Demeter of Agua Dulce, CA, respectively.

In 2016, the Michael Mosier Defeat DIPG Foundation in Bethesda, MD (now merged with ChadTough Defeat DIPG Foundation) began a campaign to encourage as many states as possible to commemorate DIPG children on the 17th day of May, as the inspirational Michael Mosier, a record-breaker for raising funds with Team Big Hero 6 for the National Brain Tumor Society’s event “Race for Hope”occurring annually on the first weekend of May, Brain

Tumor Awareness Month, tragically lost his life to DIPG on May 17 2015. Having followed Michael's journey, Janet Demeter worked with her Congressman to change the national Resolution, which was reintroduced in January of 2017 to the 115th Congress as H. Res. 69, to designate May 17 as part of its language for greater solidarity and awareness of the project in the childhood cancer community and to help ensure its success. To date, over 34 states have recognized DIPG Awareness Day, May 17th, either by gubernatorial proclamation or by the state legislature.

Subsequently H. Res. 69 finished the 115th Congress with over 50 cosponsors, and then in the 116th Congress, H. Res. 114, the resolution gained the support of nearly half the House with 215 signatures recorded, and again without regards from House Leadership for a floor vote. On May 17, 2021 the resolution was introduced for a fourth time, with Congresswoman Debbie Dingell (D-MI-12), and Congressman David Joyce (R-OH-14) leading in the 117th Congress. The resolution achieved an unprecedented House Majority of signatures for floor consideration, which it was ultimately denied despite hopeful steps achieved toward that process.

House Rules History for "Commemoratives"

It is important to note that "commemorative" resolutions were restricted in the 1990's due to excessive overuse at the time, taking valuable floor-time away from matters of import to the People's House of Representatives. However, an exception protocol was added to this rule in 2016 for matters of bereavement and/or requiring certain remedial action, to make way for the Patriot's Day Resolution. DIPG Advocacy Group's directive throughout the 114th-117th Congress was to represent an urgent unmet need of the American people demanding greater exposure; children suffering and dying from cancer mainly due to lack of investment into cures, exemplified by the horrific yet not uncommon experience of DIPG, indeed ought to merit the simple consideration of House Leadership for time on the floor of the People's House. We maintained that, as brain cancer leads in childhood cancer incidence and childhood cancer deaths in America, this rule from another time, place, and circumstance ought to be reviewed for relevance, and given consideration with the exception protocol, "A resolution of bereavement, or condemnation, or which calls on others to take a particular action, is eligible to be scheduled for consideration." * However, we reached a final impasse in December of 2022 when it was made clear that this consideration would never be given by the leadership of the House of Representatives. And so, henceforth, the resolution will be introduced for symbolic and educational purposes to support legislation bringing more appropriate funding to the pediatric space.

***In the Senate: DIPG Pediatric Brain Cancer Awareness Resolution**

The resistance to consideration for the DIPG Awareness Resolution in the House to be scheduled for a vote inspired the quest for a Senate Resolution. DIPG Advocacy Group (Janet Demeter Agua Dulce, CA and Paul Miller, Littleton CO, co-founders), more officially founded in the fall of 2017 for this purpose, began to pursue a Senate resolution with advocates Wendy Fachon (Greenwich, RI) and Kirsten Finley (Ormond Beach, FL), as Senators Rubio (FL) and Reed (RI) were the original leading sponsors for four consecutive Senate resolutions. The process being much more favorable to success in the Senate, the 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022 resolutions passed with unanimous consent, with similar though more abbreviated language, and designating May 17th as National DIPG/Pediatric Brain Cancer Awareness Day. The process involves a unanimous "hotlined" vote and must be repeated yearly, as the commemorative language of Senate Resolutions recognize one specific date or period of time only. Talks beginning in March 2023 are underway to plan the 2023 Senate Resolution.

DIPG Advocacy Group pursues the educational and awareness raising benefits of the resolutions for pediatric brain cancer, to attract a cure more quickly to save lives and reduce unnecessary suffering. Our motto, "every child is a life not a number" speaks to the deeply rooted resistance in our society today to acknowledging that childhood cancers are technically neglected diseases in the wealthiest country in the world. For the thousands of children

who never have had the chance to live, and equally for their devastated families and communities, finding effective treatments for this torturous death sentence which is DIPG and the children who continue to suffer this tragedy unseen and unheard, would veritably constitute a “Moonshot for kids” fulfilled. #Moonshot4Kids.

*<https://www.majorityleader.gov/schedule/floor-protocols.htm>

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