Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 15, 2015

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense
H-405 U.S. Capitol Building

The Honorable Peter Visclosky
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense
2328 Rayburn House Office Building

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Visclosky:

Since 2009, the Peer Review Cancer Research Program (PRCRP), part of the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program administered by the Department of Defense, has supported innovative research in cancers specifically designated by Congress as relevant to military service and their families. From 2009 to 2014, pediatric brain tumor research was one of the listed categories eligible for that funding. Unfortunately, pediatric brain tumor research was dropped as an eligible category in the FY 2015 budget and we are now asking that it be restored.

Currently, there is no cure for pediatric brain tumors. Of the treatments available, few are able to extend survival for aggressive brain tumors in children. Malignant brain tumors are the leading cause of cancer-related deaths in children under 14 years old. In cases where treatment is available, long-term adverse effects that forever alter the course of the child's life is the norm.

Funding through PRCRP can have a profound and positive effect on the development of new treatments and ultimately potential cures for a population with no current standard of care and dismal survival rates. When it was a listed research topic from 2009 to 2014, program funds went to vital research at cancer centers nationwide and these funds resulted in research advancements to develop the pre-requisites for clinical research such as pre-clinical drug testing, and better understanding of key pediatric brain tumor mutations.

We ask that pediatric brain tumors be restored as a research area in the Peer Review Cancer Research Program. While Congress faces many difficult funding decisions in the FY 2016 appropriations process, listing pediatric brain tumor research in the program has no cost. Pediatric brain tumors would simply be restored as an eligible research category. While this request doesn't guarantee funding for this type of research, simply getting reinstated as part of PRCRP is a crucial step to continuing this valuable, life-saving research.

We hope you will join in supporting the effort to continue research for pediatric brain tumor care. With the right support, we can give children a greater chance to combat this disease. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Respectfully,

Michael McCaul
Member of Congress

James R. Langevin
Member of Congress

Chris Van Hollen
Member of Congress

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