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Solis Introduces Childhood Cancer Survivorship Bill

Washington, D.C. - Today, Congresswoman Hilda L. Solis (D-CA), a member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Health and Chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Task Force on Health and the Environment, joined Congresswoman Mary Bono (R-CA), a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, in introducing the Pediatric, Adolescent and Young Adult Cancer Survivorship and Quality of Life Act. This bipartisan legislation, otherwise known as the Childhood Cancer Survivorship Act, will improve and expand the delivery of medical and psychosocial care to survivors of childhood cancer.

"A diagnosis of cancer is only the beginning of a life-long battle for a child with cancer," said Solis. "Even after receiving treatment, childhood cancer survivors, especially children from underserved communities, face tremendous health challenges and continue to fight for the ability to live a long, healthy, and happy life. I am proud that this legislation will improve access to medical and psychosocial care for childhood cancer survivors."

Nearly 20,000 children under the age of 21 receive a diagnosis of cancer each year in the United States. The successful treatment of childhood cancer has resulted in more than 270,000 childhood cancer survivors, and that number is expected to grow drastically in the next decade. However, according to the Institute of Medicine (IOM), more than two-thirds of childhood cancer survivors experience "late effects" of the disease or its treatment. These late effects include complications, disabilities, or adverse outcomes and can significantly impair survivors' health and quality of life.

"Surviving cancer is an ongoing process that goes far beyond being declared 'cancer free'," said Bono. "Cancer treatment for all ages often has serious residual effects, including significant emotional and physical challenges such as learning disabilities, growth impairments, hearing and vision loss and even second cancers. Continual follow-up care is critical, especially for young survivors. I am pleased to join with my colleague, Congresswoman Hilda Solis, in introducing this important legislation that will address these challenges for an often overlooked population of brave survivors – our children."

The Childhood Cancer Survivorship Act adheres to the IOM's recommendations to enhance the delivery of follow-up care, increase education and training for health care providers, and expand research to improve the lives of childhood cancer survivors. The legislation would:

- Expand cancer control programs, including surveillance programs and comprehensive control programs of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to improve the health status of childhood cancer survivors;
- Establish grants at the National Institutes of Health to conduct research on disparities in survivorship, train health professionals in the delivery of follow-up care to childhood cancer survivors, and develop model systems of monitoring and caring for cancer survivors;
- Create grants to establish and operate childhood survivorship clinics for comprehensive long-term follow up services for childhood cancer survivors; and,
- Establish grants for childhood cancer organizations to improve physical and

psychosocial care for childhood cancer survivors.

“When a child is diagnosed with cancer, the fight for survivorship is a battle the entire family takes on. For a Latino family, the battle for long term survivorship is often met with many obstacles,” said Elvia Barboa, executive director, *PADRES Contra El Cáncer*. “Latino families typically understand 50 percent less than non-Latino families about childhood cancer and survivorship due to language barriers, cultural barriers, and lack of bilingual educational materials. We are proud to support this bill and other legislation that helps underserved families access necessary health education, emotional support as well as vital health services.”

The Childhood Cancer Survivorship Act is supported by the Lance Armstrong Foundation, *PADRES Contra El Cáncer*, Children’s Cause for Cancer Advocacy, City of Hope National Medical Center, Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, American Society of Clinical Oncology, American Society of Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology, and American Psychological Association.