

Chairman Lampton, Vice Chairwoman Craig, Ranking Member Tims, and House Insurance Committee,

Good morning. Thank you for allowing me to speak today. I'd like to especially thank my own House Representative, Representative Jarrells, for cosponsoring HB 33.

My name is Laurie Palmer. I am a 16 year breast cancer survivor and carry the hereditary cancer gene BRCA 2. I am a volunteer with FORCE, which stands for "Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered." FORCE is a national nonprofit that advocates for people facing hereditary cancers. The majority of our constituents carry a genetic mutation that significantly increases their risk of developing cancer. These cancers include breast, ovarian, pancreatic, gastric, endometrial, colorectal and prostate.

Gene mutations are passed from one generation to the next generation. Mothers and Fathers pass the mutation to Sons and Daughters. For example, my Father was diagnosed with breast cancer at age 50. He most likely carried the BRCA 2 mutation and passed the gene to me. My Father actually survived breast cancer due to early detection. He passed from prostate cancer 25 years later.

I was diagnosed with breast cancer at age 50 and received genetic testing due to my age and family history. Due to the BRCA 2 diagnosis, I received additional treatments to reduce my risk of further breast and ovarian cancers. I also have yearly screenings for melanoma and pancreatic cancer. I am grateful to be alive today.

I have 2 sons in their mid 30s. They each have a 50% chance of having my mutation. Should they be BRCA 2 positive, my sons would be considered high risk for prostate cancer. This Bill would provide the means for them to receive medical care to detect early prostate cancer. This Bill could save their lives.

Why else is it important to screen for high-risk groups like Black males at age 40? Black men are disproportionately affected in terms of both diagnosis and morbidity. Screening provides an opportunity to find and treat prostate cancer at an earlier stage. This Bill will save lives. Why else is it important to screen for prostate cancer in high-risk groups, like black males at age 40? A man diagnosed with prostate cancer at a young age would be recommended to receive genetic testing. If the gene mutation is found, his Mother, Aunts, siblings and cousins may choose to be tested. Positive cancer hereditary mutations carry screening and life saving surgery recommendations for women and men, alike.

Screening provides Knowledge. Knowledge is Power. Early Detection Saves Lives.

Thank you to the Committee for the opportunity to share my story with you today. This Bill is important to me, my family and my community.