

Good morning, and thank you so much for the opportunity for me to speak today. This topic is something that I am unfortunately very familiar with. I have been through everything with pediatric cancer. I went through the moment of diagnosis at 10, I was there for the sympathy cards and the endless amounts of coloring books as gifts. I remember well the pain of driving to the ER with a fever over 100.4, and the side effects of a Neulasta shot. I rang the bell, and I have now been able to say I'm over five years cancer free. But in that time, I've also gone through the deaths of several of my friends. I am alive, but I have also been a speaker at a celebration of life for someone who was diagnosed around the same time as me. Who tried so many different treatments before she was out of options. Who never deserved to die in the first place. Which is the main reason why I'm here today.

This funding is incredibly important to me, not just because of what it can do now, but what it can spur in the future for Ohio. There tends to be a chain reaction when it comes to bills like this. Once people are made aware of the real issue at hand, they are more likely to have sympathy, and from that grows support, and that is what we need. In this case, we are discussing children. Children are helpless. Truly, I am helpless too, but I am standing in front of you now, terrified, doing what I can for the people who can't. I am here to speak for the kids still in hospital beds, hiding underneath silk caps and behind IV poles. I am at this microphone asking for you to help the kids recently buried with their favorite teddy bears and childhood blankets. I am earnestly requesting for more money to be given to the experts so that fewer kids are having poison from the '70's put in their veins until their bodies can't handle it anymore. I am pleading to you for reconsideration, for reconciliation, and for recognition of the kids that very well could have been me instead.

I understand that not everyone can get what they want. I understand that it is incredibly difficult to balance the budget between necessities and excesses. But I also firmly believe in good natured government, and I will never stop fighting or using my voice to push for what I and so many other children and teenagers deserve and wholeheartedly believe in. With all due respect, I am angry. I am tired, and I am exhausted just like so many others. And yet, I am here, waiting, hoping that there is a chance of reconsideration. Submitting my request the way our democracy allows. This world is built on money, power, and wealth, and I don't have any of it. All I can do is know that you do, and ask, kindly, for your help.

Thank you very much for your time.