

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2018

Remarks on Signing the Childhood Cancer, Survivorship, Treatment, Access, and Research Act of 2018 and an Exchange With Reporters

June 5, 2018

The President. Hello, everybody. Hi, Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters]. Hello, folks. See how nice they are? See? [Laughter] They're the nicest people in the whole world. Right? You think so. You know what? Believe it.

I'm pleased to sign into law the Childhood Cancer Survivorship, Treatment, Access, and Research Act of 2018. It's a big deal. Very important. The people up here have helped us so much.

I want to thank Secretary Azar for being here, along with the Members of Congress who are here with us, including Senators Shelley Moore Capito. Thank you, Shelley, very much.

Senator Shelley Moore Capito. Yes. Thank you.

The President. Dean Heller, who I hear is doing very well. Right, Dean?

Senator Dean A. Heller. Yes, sir.

The President. You'd better do well. Right, Dean? Representatives Mike Kelly, Michael McCaul. Thanks. Thank you, Michael.

Representative Michael T. McCaul. Sir, thank you.

The President. Great job you're doing. And Michael Burgess. Thank you, Michael.

Representative Michael C. Burgess. Yes, sir.

The President. Thank you, Michael. More than 15,000 children are diagnosed with cancer each year. Tragically, cancer is the leading cause of death by disease among American children and adolescents. So we have some wonderful stories of success with us today, most importantly.

This vital legislation will expand opportunities for childhood cancer research, enhance the quality of life for childhood cancer survivors, and increase pediatric expertise at the National Institute of Health. Very big deal. Very important to everybody here and, really, very important to the country.

With us are some of the very brave children who are currently battling cancer and doing really well. Olivia Egge is here with her family. Olivia, congratulations, darling. You're doing fantastically well. Right?

Arlington, VA, resident Olivia Egge. Yes. Thank goodness.

The President. They're proud of you. And Olivia has been a tremendous story of inspiration and that fighting spirit—it's a rare bone cancer—and we are very much impressed with your strength and thankful that you're recovering so well. I'm hearing great reports.

Olivia Egge. Thank you.

The President. So, good. Good, honey.

Jake Cunniffe is also here. Jake is a sarcoma survivor, and he has helped lead the effort to see this bill become law. Jake? Come here, Jake.

Sen. Capito. Look at that tie, Mr. President. Isn't that awesome?

The President. I like that tie. That's good. [Laughter] Sharp-looking guy, I'll tell you.

McLean, VA, resident Jake Cunniffe. Thank you.

The President. Good job, Jake. I also want to give you a little special—because I know how hard you work on—you've really been working on it individually. As a young guy, you have other things you could be doing, right?

Mr. Cunniffe. Yes.

The President. But you've really done a great job, Jake. I want to thank you.

I also want to commend Sadie Keller for her leadership of the bill and for helping to really work hard. And fellow childhood cancer survivors are very, very thrilled with the job you've done.

Lantana, TX, resident Sadie Keller. Thank you.

The President. You feeling good? I hear you're doing great. Right? Good, sweetheart. Thank you very much.

So Olivia, Jake, and Sadie, we're taking this action today in honor of the work you've done and the hard work. And it has been, in fact, hard. And you're really helping to positively affect lives in America, especially of young people.

We're going to be right there with you every step of the way. All of these incredible representatives—Senators and Congresspeople—you've been reading about people like this, right? Someday you'll be there. Maybe you'll be sitting right here. [Laughter] I don't know if you want to do it, but—[laughter]—you're better off doing what they do.

But we just want to thank all of you for being here. We want to congratulate you on doing so well in getting better. And you have helped a lot of people. So thank you very much. Thank you all. Thanks, Jake. Thank you very much, gentlemen.

Okay. Do you have anything to say, Shelley?

Sen. Capito. Well, I'm just admiring of the strength of these young people, but their families as well. As we know, families are affected. And this is about trying to find a cure, but it's also about survivorship and how you live your life and how, after you've had treatment, you can go on to have healthy and very productive lives.

And so, for me, as a mother and a grandmother, and for my Cancer Crusade kids from West Virginia, thank you. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Well, thank you. And you're doing a great job, and we appreciate it. You really do a fantastic job.

Sen. Capito. I appreciate that. Thank you.

The President. Thank you very much, Shelley.

Mike.

Representative George J. "Mike" Kelly, Jr. Yes, Mr. President. I just think there's nothing more precious to us than our children. And whenever one child is sick, we're all feeling the same way and we want to do everything we can to help out.

I know with—Mike McCaul and I have been working very hard on cancer. I will mention that the Hyundai Hope on Wheels—

The President. Right.

Rep. Kelly. ——this is our 20th anniversary, we will exceed \$140 million this year——

The President. Wow, that's fantastic.

Rep. Kelly. ——in the fight against pediatric cancer. And we're seeing so many children survive. And it just does your heart well to see these young Americans succeed.

The President. It does. Statistically, it's been incredible to see what's happened.

Thank you, Mike. Thank you, Shelley.

Michael McCaul.

Rep. McCaul. Thank you, Mr. President. This is the most comprehensive childhood cancer bill ever passed by the United States Congress. And it wouldn't have been possible if we didn't have the advocates strongly behind us, like St. Baldrick's. But the children are the best advocates. It took us 3 years to get there, Mr. President. But you know, they can say no to you or me, but I bring in little Sadie into the office—[laughter]—they can't say no to her and these other survivors.

This will help—it's survivorship, treatment, access, and research. And it's going to really move the cause and the movement to—forward in the right direction. So thank you.

The President. Thank you for the great job you do.

Rep. McCaul. Thank you.

The President. Dean Heller.

Sen. Heller. Mr. President, on behalf of thousands of childhood cancer survivors in Nevada, I'm here to thank you for your work and your effort. This doesn't happen without your leadership. And I want to thank these kids also for being advocates, as they are, and getting us to where we are today. Thank you very much for your hard work.

The President. Thank you.

Sen. Heller. You bet.

The President. Thank you very much.

My friend, come here.

Rep. Burgess. Yes, sir.

The President. Say a few words. You've been working so hard on this.

Rep. Burgess. Well, Sadie came into see me, I think, a Congress ago, and it was clear that she was pretty dedicated to this. At the time, she looked a little different, because she was in a different place in her treatment. But as Michael said, she's the best ambassador. And I think this builds on the work we did in 21st Century Cures and, quite honestly, the work you did last week with "right to try."

The President. Right.

Rep. Burgess. All of this works together, and it's for the betterment of American patients; you can't ask for more than that.

The President. Thank you very much. Great job. And "right to try" is something we're very excited about, where for years—and nobody knows why it was so tough to pass; I never could understand it. But it was a very tough one to get passed, and now people can stay, and we have drugs that are really—and treatments that are really advanced, but they won't be approved for another 3, 4, 5 years. And now, if somebody's in very bad shape, we can use them, and they're not going to be going to other countries to try and get a cure. And it's really hope.

But not only is it hope, a lot of people are going to be helped by this. So the "right to try," as difficult as that was to get approved and passed and now we're signed, we're very proud of that one.

Secretary Azar, would you like to say something?

Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex M. Azar II. Well, Mr. President, we just want to thank Olivia, Sadie, Jake, and, frankly, their parents and the—Danielle and others here who lost children to this battle against pediatric cancer. This legislation's going to be a material change in our ability to do research and to help kids survive cancer and survive cancer longer.

The President. That's great.

Secretary Azar. So thank you for signing it today.

The President. That's really great. Thank you very much. You maybe want to say something, because you've been so instrumental. That's right, Jake. [Laughter] Really, would you like to say something?

Mr. Cunniffe. No, thank you.

The President. Everybody should be just like him. [Laughter] You'd be a great politician. Would you like you like to say something, darling?

Sadie Keller. I'm just so honored to be here. And this is just such an amazing opportunity and just—thank you. [Laughter]

The President. Thank you, sweetheart. You're, very nice. So nice.

Olivia Egge. Yes, just like Sadie, it's so amazing to be here. I woke up this morning having no idea I was coming here today. So this is a really cool turn of events. And I'm just so grateful that this bill has been passed.

The President. Thank you very much. Great. I'm glad you're so much better. Thank you.

Arlington, VA, resident Sophia Egge. Same thing as Olivia. I'm just grateful that this bill can be passed to help future cancer patients and cancer patients now.

The President. Well, thank you very much. Would anyone like to say something here? Parents and representatives? Anybody?

Arlington, VA, resident Michael Egge. If I may, Mr. President.

The President. Yes, please.

Mr. Egge. I'd like to thank you. I'd like to thank the leaders in Congress that are here that sponsored this bill. I can tell you, as a father, hearing that the treatment for my daughter is 40 years old—we had to go to another country to get a treatment. The fact that there is a focus on

survivorship, on cures, is absolutely critical—because it's not a good place if we don't do and commit the funds and the effort to save children's lives. So I thank you.

The President. Yes, we've made a lot of advancements, really, in the last—you know, we're 500 days now, Shelley. Can you believe it? Five hundred—but we've done a lot of improvements, a lot of speed, too, where we're getting it done quickly. That's where "right to try" is so good, where we can get things that are so promising, but they won't be approved for another 3 or 4 years.

So thank you very much. Appreciate it.

Anybody? Would you like to say something?

Lantana, TX, resident Sarah Keller. I just want to thank you for passing this bill. I have seen firsthand how awful it is to watch my own child go through this. But we've also had many, many relationships of different childhood cancer fighters. And some have—are survivors now, and some have passed away. And you know, these things matter so much. And so we're just so grateful.

The President. Thank you very much.

Ms. Keller. So grateful.

The President. Thank you. Thank you very much. Okay, I'll sign. Are you ready? Are we all ready? [Laughter] We're all set? This is a big deal, now.

Okay. Thank you.

[At this point, the President signed a bill.]

The President. You ever seen a signature like that? [Laughter]

Sadie Keller. No. [Laughter]

The President. Okay. Whose pen is this? That's for you.

Sadie Keller. Thank you.

The President. And that's for you.

Mr. Cuniffe. Thank you.

The President. That's for you.

Olivia Egge. Thank you.

The President. That's for you.

Sophia Egge. Thank you.

The President. We've given you a few of them. Here we go. Come on. Here, Mike.

Rep. McCaul. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. You deserve it. Thank you, fellas.

Mr. Egge. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Okay. Mom?

Sarah Keller. Thank you.

The President. Michael?

Rep. McCaul. Thank you, sir.

The President. Dean?

Sen. Heller. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. My friend. Great job. Here you go, Mr. Secretary.

Rep. McCaul. Hey, thanks to Ivanka, too, for helping us with this. She's been great.

The President. Ivanka, if—I have a daughter. A really terrific person. She's worked very hard on this bill. This was very important. That's for the press.

Thank you all very much. Thank you very much. Appreciate it. Thank you.

North Korea

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. North Korea looks like it's moving along very well. A lot of relationship being built. A lot of negotiation going on even before the trip. But it looks like it's coming along fine. We'll see what happens. But very important. It will be a very important couple of days.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:37 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to and Assistant to the President Ivanka M. Trump. S. 292, approved June 5, was assigned Public Law No. 115–180. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the audio was incomplete.

Categories: Bill Signings and Veto : Childhood Cancer, Survivorship, Treatment, Access, and Research Act of 2018, signing remarks; Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters :: White House.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Azar, Alex M., II; Burgess, Michael C.; Capito, Shelley Moore; Cunniffe, Jake; Egge, Michael; Egge, Olivia; Egge, Sophia; Heller, Dean A.; Keller, Sadie; Keller, Sarah; Kelly, George J. "Mike," Jr.; McCaul, Michael T.; Trump, Ivanka M.

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