

SENATE HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND SENIOR
CITIZENS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 1431

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 9, 2021

The Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 1431.

This bill establishes the “New Jersey Pediatric Cancer Research Fund” and provides for a designation on the State gross income tax return that will permit taxpayers to make voluntary contributions to the fund to support pediatric cancer research projects that are approved by the New Jersey State Commission on Cancer Research.

The incidence of pediatric cancer is ever increasing, and its impact on society and the families of those affected, devastating, yet surprisingly little progress is being made toward uncovering the causes of childhood cancer and finding new and targeted therapies. Cancer is the leading cause of death by disease in children under the age of 15 in the United States, and every year, approximately 13,500 children and adolescents under age 20 are diagnosed with cancer. More children lose their battle with cancer each year than to AIDS, asthma, cystic fibrosis and diabetes combined. The majority of those children that survive childhood cancer go on to experience chronic medical problems as a result of their treatment, detracting from their quality of life and diminishing their ability to contribute fully to society.

Pediatric cancer encompasses multiple types and subtypes of cancers, the causes of which are largely unknown. Unlike certain adult cancers, pediatric cancer is not strongly linked to lifestyle and strikes randomly, across all ethnic groups, socioeconomic class and geographic regions. Currently, less than 5 percent of federal funding for cancer research is dedicated specifically to understanding and seeking cures for pediatric cancer, and only two drugs specifically targeting childhood cancer have been approved in the past 20 years.

This bill is in honor of Aaron Newton, a young boy in West Milford, who recovered from cancer and whose parents, Kerrie and Scott, advocate for awareness surrounding childhood cancer.