

## TESTIMONY



Testimony  
By  
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Los Angeles, CA

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On Behalf of

**Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International**  
**Regarding Federal Support of Juvenile Diabetes Research**  
Before the  
**Senate Permanent Subcommittee on**  
**Investigations**

Tessa and I have been friends since we met on the set of my movie, *Stuart Little*, three years ago. Tessa and I are both 10 years old and in a lot of ways, we're very much alike. We both go to school, love movies and like to play sports and games. We have good friends and loving families. We both have big dreams for our future.

But Tessa happens to be different from me in one important way. In January of 1999, a doctor told her that she had juvenile diabetes, and a lot of things in her life would have to change just so she could stay alive. Every day she would have to prick her finger 4 or 5 times to check her blood glucose levels. Every day she would have to be given 2 or 3 injections of insulin.

Tessa was diagnosed with diabetes about two and a half years ago, so that means she's already had to take more than 2,738 insulin shots and that she's pricked her finger to check her blood sugar level about 4,563 times.

For two and a half years, Tessa hasn't been able to have a normal childhood. It's been weighed down by all the burdens of juvenile diabetes. Everywhere she goes, she has to bring a blood sugar testing kit with her, and also shots and sugar just in case she goes low. Like all kids our age, Tessa wants to be independent and go to sleepovers or on class trips without her parents. But both Tessa and her parents worry when she is

away from home. When Tessa goes to sleep at night, she is frightened that her blood sugar could drop so low in her sleep that she will have a seizure. Many nights she asks her mom to wake up at 2:00am to check her blood sugar, just in case.

When I am with Tessa, sometimes I forget that she has juvenile diabetes. It is easy to do. She looks and acts like any other kid my age. But she can never forget that she has juvenile diabetes. If she does, she would be risking her life.

I am here today because I don't want Tessa or any of the 200 kids in this room with diabetes to live the rest of their lives like this. It's not fair that they don't have the same chance as other kids to live long, healthy lives and achieve all of their dreams.

Recently, I was happy to have the opportunity to meet President Bush. I was so glad to hear that he and Mrs. Bush are the Honorary Co-Chairs of the Children's Congress this year. I hope that they will also promise to remember all children with juvenile diabetes when they make decisions that will affect research.

I know that I'm lucky that I don't have this terrible disease, but I also know that that anyone could get juvenile diabetes—even me, or your kids or grandkids.

Yesterday, researchers told me that with enough funding, a cure for juvenile diabetes is possible. Won't you please help Tessa and all children with juvenile diabetes? Please do everything that you can to help find a cure.

Now, I'd like to ask my friend Tessa to conclude this testimony with a few of her words.

**Tessa Wick**

As someone who has diabetes, I believe that "the only way to survive is by being part of the cure." I want a cure so badly! My friends with and without diabetes want a cure, too! And I know that right now, somewhere there's a little kid – a normal kid, just like I used to be – who's sitting in some classroom and their parents are about to rush in and take them to some hospital where they will get the news that they have diabetes. And that kid is going to need a cure too.

Thank you.

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