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Hi my name is Randy Richardson, I live in Sparks, I'm an American Cancer Society volunteer Ambassador for the state of Nevada and cancer survivor. In March of 1999, after waiting 10 years between colonoscopies due too lack of insurance coverage, I had a colonoscopy performed by Dr. Clark Harrison. I can remember the horror that I felt when he told me that I had cancer and due to it's advanced stage my entire colon had to be removed. I was sent to a surgeon Dr. Harold Kennedy to have my colon removed and a J pouch built out of my small intestines. I was to have a ileostomy for 8 weeks while the J pouch healed inside of me, than the procedure was to remove the ileostomy and connect my small intestine to my internal J pouch.

I awoke from surgery to here the worst possible news. I had Gallbladder cancer that had spread to my liver, colon, and lymphnodes. I was stage 4 Gallbladder cancer, 100% terminal, I was given only 6 months to live. All I could think about was my children, I was a single dad with an 8 year old son and a 2 year old daughter. During surgery I had my Gallbladder, a large section of my liver, several lymphnodes and all but 6 inches of my colon removed. They did not perform the J pouch surgery due to my prognosis. I then went through a very aggressive chemotherapy and radiation treatment. I wore a chemo pump with a pick line feeding me chemo 24 hours a day 7 days a week for 8 weeks, with daily radiation treatments.

I decided that no matter what the books say, I was going to try to live as long as I could in hope that a cure for cancer would be found while I fought to stay alive. When my chemo pump turned on I would envision the chemicals killing the cancer, during radiation I would envision the game pac-man eating up my cancer. During treatment I toke my chemo pump in one hand, toke my daughter in my right arm and waded out into the lake with her, not knowing if I would have another summer with my children.

I can remember my dad telling me "A parent isn't suppose to bury his children, you will beat this". I was very lucky to have the best doctors, treatment, and family support. I even had my mom trying to burn down churches she was lighting so many candles.

In September of 1999 approximately 6 months after my first diagnosis, I received the most incredible call. I was making dinner for my kids and it was my oncologist Dr. Craig Conrath. He said I have great news, your last test results came back, "We can't find any sign of cancer". I hung up the phone knelt to the floor crying, thanking God. My son who knew about his dads cancer ran to me worried asking whats' the matter dad..... I hugged him and said "Your dads cancer free so you save those front row seats for me (my son wants to be a pro baseball player)". Then barely able to speak I turned to my daughter and said "Your daddy is going to walk you down that isle". In September of 2001 I had the remainder of my colon removed and my J pouch surgery performed. One of the nurses in surgery came skipping down the hallway with tears in her eyes letting my family know that the doctor can't find any sign of cancer and I would be out of surgery soon.

ASSEMBLY, COMMERCE & LABOR
DATE: 4/25/03 ROOM: 4100 EXHIBIT D
SUBMITTED BY: RANDY RICHARDSON

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It is now 4 years one month since my first diagnosis and I happily can say "I'm still cancer free".

So why am I here before you in support of the colorectal cancer screening bill. Cancer tried to take the life of my friends friend, my brother and sisters sibling, my parents child and my childrens father. I'm lucky to be here, others aren't and won't be so lucky. As a cancer survivor I know how important early detection is. In the sate of Nevada one out of every three Nevadans will be diagnosed with cancer and approximately half of them will die. You can change those numbers, by passing the colorectal cancer screening bill. You can save lives, possible even your own.