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Chairman Goldwater, Members of the committee, for the record my name is Gil Robison.

April 5th, 1993, the day I will always think of as black Monday, is the day I was diagnosed with colon cancer. As I was lying on the table my doctor asked me how old I was, when I told him I was 39 he just shook his head. At that point I knew something was wrong. When I asked him what was going on he told me I had a tumor. I asked him what that meant and he told me it looked like cancer. Not believing I could have cancer it really didn't hit me yet. When I asked him if he was sure, he nodded and said he was 98% sure. At that moment it was like getting a death sentence. My whole world closed in around me, and all I could think of was my daughter and the possibility of her growing up without a daddy. I don't think I heard another word that my doctor said after that. He wanted to schedule me for surgery the very next day as the cancer had progressed to stage three. I told him I needed some time to get my things in order. As I walked out of the hospital I was unaware of anyone around me, it was like I had tunnel vision. I phoned my wife to tell her the news and when she answered the phone I just choked up and couldn't talk. On the drive home, so much was going through my head I could barely think. The thought of leaving my daughter and the financial burden I would put on my family, as I had no insurance was almost too much to bear, I almost felt guilty.

The symptoms had been there for almost two years. Nobody in my family had ever had cancer so the thought of cancer had never entered my mind, since then my mom, aunt, uncle and three of my dogs have died of cancer, not to mention some very close friends. And some say it's a good thing to be a trendsetter. If I had been a bit more educated on the symptoms of cancer I might have been able to catch it sooner. Dr. Yamamoto had wanted me to have a colonoscopy for some time, however the cost was prohibitive and I didn't have it done until it was too late. Even now I try to put it off as long as possible as my insurance will not cover it. Yes I have finally been able to get health insurance that is reasonably affordable.

During surgery they removed approximately six inches of my colon, which I guess would make me a semi colon. They also removed 13 lymph nodes, nine of which were cancerous. The prognosis wasn't very good. My oncologists had given me a 30% chance to survive for five years. Not very optimistic. Well it's been almost ten years and I am still here, maybe it is a good thing to be a trendsetter. After that I was scheduled for radiation five days a week for five weeks and then I would undergo chemotherapy for twelve months.

Not having insurance, all of my doctors gave me some pretty fair discounts even though my medical bills topped 150K. I just finished paying them off!

The fear of the cancer coming back is something that will never go away, however I am here and I am living proof that there are survivors, and one of the greatest things I can do is to give back what was given to me and be there to support others who have gone or are going through what I have gone through. The importance of having support like I had from my daughter when I was going through all of this and the support I get from my wife, family and friends now, not to mention the cancer support group I help facilitate is some of the best medicine money can't buy!

So as a colon cancer survivor, and volunteer for the American Cancer Society, I ask that you vote to support Senate Bill 183. Early detection can and will save lives, what a great gift. Thank you!

ASSEMBLY COMMERCE & LABOR

DATE: 4/25/93 ROOM: 4100 EXHIBIT E

SUBMITTED BY: GIL ROBISON