

## REMEMBERING GREG HERNANDEZ

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the memory of a dedicated public servant, SGT Greg Hernandez of the Tulare County Sheriff's Department. Sergeant Hernandez's life was tragically cut short on February 6, 2009, as a result of injuries from a vehicle accident that occurred while he was on duty.

Sergeant Hernandez dutifully served the citizens and communities for 24 years as a valued member of the Tulare County Sheriff's Department. Sergeant Hernandez demonstrated a passion for law enforcement and commitment to helping others, qualities that earned him the respect of his colleagues at the Tulare County Sheriff's Department. Sergeant Hernandez shall always be remembered for his devotion to serving the public and his friendly nature.

Sergeant Hernandez is survived by his mother Rosa Hernandez of Farmersville and his daughter Kristina Marie Hernandez of Porterville. When he was not spending time with his family and friends, Sergeant Hernandez was a devoted sportsman who enjoyed fishing, softball, and golf.

Sergeant Hernandez served the county of Tulare with honor and distinction, and fulfilled his oath as an officer of the law. His selfless contributions and dedication to law enforcement are greatly appreciated and will serve as an example of his legacy.

We shall always be grateful for Sergeant Hernandez's service and the sacrifices he made while serving and protecting the people of Tulare County. •

## TRIBUTE TO SUSAN AXELROD

• Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I wish to acknowledge and honor the work of Citizens United for Research in Epilepsy, CURE, and its founder, Susan Axelrod. I have known Susan personally for many years and can attest to her tireless work on behalf of her daughter, Lauren, and of other children and families affected by epilepsy. Epilepsy often begins in childhood and even in its mildest forms can modify brain development, with lifelong effects on cognition ranging from learning disabilities to severe developmental disabilities. In 1998, a small group of families whose children were suffering from epilepsy joined in recognizing the need for an increased commitment to research. Together, they formed the nonprofit, volunteer-based CURE. Led by Susan, they have become tireless advocates for epilepsy awareness and have grown into one of the foremost organizations in funding cutting-edge epilepsy research. To date, CURE has raised over \$9 million in its crusade toward eliminating seizures, reducing the side effects of currently available treatments, and ultimately toward finding a cure for epilepsy. I commend CURE for its unrelenting commitment to this worthy cause but underscore the fact that they

cannot work alone. Epilepsy affects over 3 million patients nationwide, and the need for adequate funding for research on a Federal level is imperative if a cure is to be found. At a time when the Nation is confronted with serious health challenges like epilepsy, we must not diminish our commitment to medical research.

Please join me in honoring Susan Axelrod and CURE for their years of vision, leadership, and commitment.

I would ask to have the following Parade Magazine article highlighting the work of Citizens United for Research in Epilepsy printed in the RECORD. The material follows:

[From Parade Magazine, Feb. 15, 2009]

I MUST SAVE MY CHILD  
(By Melissa Fay Greene)

When Susan Axelrod tells the story of her daughter, she begins like most parents of children with epilepsy: The baby was adorable, healthy, perfect. Lauren arrived in June 1981, a treasured first-born. Susan Landau had married David Axelrod in 1979, and they lived in Chicago, where Susan pursued an MBA at the University of Chicago and David worked as a political reporter for the Chicago Tribune. (He later would become chief strategist for Barack Obama's Presidential campaign and now is a senior White House adviser.) They were busy and happy. Susan attended classes while her mother babysat. Then, when Lauren was 7 months old, their lives changed overnight.

"She had a cold," Susan tells me as we huddle in the warmth of a coffee shop in Washington, D.C., on a day of sleet and rain. Susan is 55, fine-boned, lovely, and fit. She has light-blue eyes, a runner's tan, and a casual fall of silver and ash-blond hair. When her voice trembles or tears threaten, she lifts her chin and pushes on. "The baby was so congested, it was impossible for her to sleep. Our pediatrician said to give her one-quarter of an adult dose of a cold medication, and it knocked her out immediately. I didn't hear from Lauren the rest of the night. In the morning, I found her gray and limp in her crib. I thought she was dead.

"In shock, I picked her up, and she went into a seizure—arms extended, eyes rolling back in her head. I realized she'd most likely been having seizures all night long. I phoned my mother and cried, 'This is normal, right? Babies do this?' She said, 'No, they don't.'"

The Axelrods raced Lauren to the hospital. They stayed for a month, entering a parallel universe of sleeplessness and despair under fluorescent lights. No medicine relieved the baby. She interacted with her parents one moment, bright-eyed and friendly, only to be grabbed away from them the next, shaken by inner storms, starting and stiffening, hands clenched and eyes rolling. Unable to stop Lauren's seizures, doctors sent the family home.

The Axelrods didn't know anything about epilepsy. They didn't know that seizures were the body's manifestation of abnormal electrical activity in the brain or that the excessive neuronal activity could cause brain damage. They didn't know that two-thirds of those diagnosed with epilepsy had seizures defined as "idiopathic," of unexplained origin, as would be the case with Lauren. They didn't know that a person could, on rare occasions, die from a seizure. They didn't know that, for about half of sufferers, no drugs could halt the seizures or that, if they did, the side effects were often brutal. This mysterious disorder attacked 50 million people worldwide yet attracted little public attention or research funding. No one

spoke to the Axelrods of the remotest chance of a cure.

At home, life shakily returned to a new normal, interrupted by Lauren's convulsions and hospitalizations. Exhausted, Susan fought on toward her MBA; David became a political consultant. Money was tight and medical bills stacked up, but the Axelrods had hope. Wouldn't the doctors find the right drugs or procedures? "We thought maybe it was a passing thing," David says. "We didn't realize that this would define her whole life, that she would have thousands of these afterward, that they would eat away at her brain."

"I had a class one night, I was late, there was an important test," Susan recalls. "I'd been sitting by Lauren at the hospital. When she fell asleep, I left to run to class. I got as far as the double doors into the parking lot when it hit me: 'What are you doing?'" She returned to her baby's bedside. From then on, though she would continue to build her family (the Axelrods also have two sons) and support her husband's career, Susan's chief role in life would be to keep Lauren alive and functioning.

The little girl was at risk of falling, of drowning in the bathtub, of dying of a seizure. Despite dozens of drug trials, special diets, and experimental therapies, Lauren suffered as many as 25 seizures a day. In between each, she would cry, "Mommy, make it stop!"

While some of Lauren's cognitive skills were nearly on target, she lagged in abstract thinking and interpersonal skills. Her childhood was nearly friendless. The drugs Lauren took made her by turns hyperactive, listless, irritable, dazed, even physically aggressive. "We hardly knew who she was," Susan says. When she acted out in public, the family felt the judgment of onlookers. "Sometimes," Susan says, "I wished I could put a sign on her back that said: 'Epilepsy. Heavily Medicated.'"

At 17, Lauren underwent what her mother describes as "a horrific surgical procedure." Holes were drilled in her skull, electrodes implanted, and seizures provoked in an attempt to isolate their location in the brain. It was a failure. "We brought home a 17-year-old girl who had been shaved and scalped, drilled, put on steroids, and given two black eyes," Susan says quietly. "We put her through hell without result. I wept for 24 hours."

The failure of surgery proved another turning point for Susan. "Finally, I thought, 'Well, I can cry forever, or I can try to make a change.'"

Susan began to meet other parents living through similar hells. They agreed that no federal agency or private foundation was acting with the sense of urgency they felt, leaving 3 million American families to suffer in near-silence. In 1998, Susan and a few other mothers founded a nonprofit organization to increase public awareness of the realities of epilepsy and to raise money for research. They named it after the one thing no one offered them: CURE—Citizens United for Research in Epilepsy.

"Epilepsy is not benign and far too often is not treatable," Susan says. "We wanted the public to be aware of the death and destruction. We wanted the brightest minds to engage with the search for a cure."

Then-First Lady Hillary Clinton signed on to help; so did other politicians and celebrities. Later, veterans back from Iraq with seizures caused by traumatic brain injuries demanded answers, too. In its first decade, CURE raised \$9 million, funded about 75 research projects, and inspired a change in the scientific dialogue about epilepsy.

"CURE evolved from a small group of concerned parents into a major force in our research and clinical communities," says Dr.