

**REPORT OF THE
CHIEF LEGISLATIVE ANALYST**

DATE: March 4, 2020

TO: Honorable Members of the Rules, Elections, and Intergovernmental Relations Committee

FROM: Sharon M. Tso  Council File No: 20-0002-S23
Chief Legislative Analyst Assignment No: 20-02-0203

SUBJECT: Resolution (Koretz – Ryu – Harris-Dawson) relative to sponsorship of and/or support for legislation or budgetary action to provide funding for research into treatments and cures for ALS

CLA RECOMMENDATION: Adopt the attached Resolution (Koretz – Ryu – Harris-Dawson) to include in the City’s 2019-2020 State and Federal Legislative Programs SPONSORSHIP of and/or SUPPORT for legislation or budgetary action to appropriate additional funding for research into treatments and cures for ALS.

SUMMARY

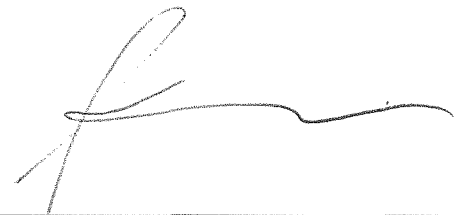
On February 12, 2020 a Resolution (Koretz – Ryu – Harris-Dawson) was introduced in support of State or Federal Legislation that would supply more funding for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) research, treatments, and cures. The Resolution states that ALS is a motor neuron disease that selectively affects motor neurons, the cells that control voluntary muscles of the body. The disorder causes muscle weakness, atrophy, and muscle spasms throughout the body due to the degeneration of the upper motor and lower motor neurons. Individuals affected by the disorder may ultimately lose the ability to initiate and control all voluntary movement.

The Resolution states that there is no exact cause for ALS. Symptoms and progression of this disease vary from person to person. ALS leaves the affected person unable to walk, use their hands or arms. ALS is the most common motor neuron disease in adults and although there may be ways to manage certain symptoms to improve the quality of life, there is no cure. The Resolution, therefore, seeks an official position of the City of Los Angeles to support State or Federal legislation that would appropriate additional funding for research into treatments and cures for ALS.

BACKGROUND

The ALS Association describes ALS as a progressive neurodegenerative disease that affects nerve cells in the brain and the spinal cord. The disease was discovered by a French neurologist in 1869, but did not receive international attention until 1939. The body has motor neurons that extend from the brain to the spinal cord. A healthy neuron promotes muscle contraction, when a neuron dies the brain loses ability to control its muscles. ALS initiates muscle weakness eventually leading to the loss of muscle control affecting the ability to speak, eat, move and breathe. It can affect anyone between the ages of 40 to 70 and the chances of a military veteran being diagnosed with the disease are double.

There are two known types of ALS sporadic and familial. In the U.S. over 90 percent of the cases are sporadic. Familial ALS is a form of the disease which is inherited and is responsible for 5 to 10 percent of the U.S. cases. There are only four FDA approved drugs to treat ALS symptoms, more funding is needed in order to find a cure.



Kimberly Tejada
Analyst

SMT:kat

Attachments: Resolution (Koretz – Ryu – Harris-Dawson)

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles with respect to legislation, rules, regulations or policies proposed or pending before a local, state or federal governmental body or agency must first have been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council with the concurrence of the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) is a motor neuron disease which is a group of neurological disorders that selectively affect motor neurons, the cells that control voluntary muscles of the body; and

WHEREAS, the disorder causes muscle weakness, atrophy, and muscle spasms throughout the body due to the degeneration of the upper motor and lower motor neurons. Individuals affected by the disorder may ultimately lose the ability to initiate and control all voluntary movement; and

WHEREAS, although the initial symptoms and rate of progression vary from person to person, the disease eventually spreads to unaffected regions and the affected regions become more affected, with most people eventually unable to walk or use their hands and arms, to speak and swallow food and their own saliva, and lose the ability to cough and to breathe on their own; and

WHEREAS, though the exact cause of ALS is unknown, genetic factors and environmental factors are thought to be of roughly equal importance to all forms of the disease, including classical ALS, progressive bulbar palsy, progressive muscular atrophy, and primary lateral sclerosis; and

WHEREAS, there is no cure for ALS. Management focuses on treating symptoms and providing supportive care, with the goal of improving quality of life and prolonging survival; and

WHEREAS, ALS is the most common motor neuron disease in adults and the third most common neurodegenerative disease after Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease, with people of all races and ethnic backgrounds affected by ALS; and

WHEREAS, in addition to baseball great Lou Gehrig, among the notable individuals who have been stricken with the disease are the late scientist and author Stephen Hawking, late political figures Jacob Javits and Henry Wallace, late Southern California animal activist Mark Dodge, and recently-retired Assistant City Attorney Dov Lesel; and

WHEREAS, in August 2014, a challenge commonly known as the "ALS Ice Bucket Challenge" went viral on-line and raised \$220 million, leading to an infusion of more than \$400 million in National Institutes of Health research funding and a substantial expansion of the network of research clinics working on treatment and cures for ALS; and

WHEREAS, a dramatic increase in funding for ALS research will further the efforts to address its devastating impacts.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THAT, with the concurrence of the Mayor, by the adoption of this Resolution, the City of Los Angeles hereby includes in its 2019-2020 State and Federal Legislative Programs sponsorship of and/or support for legislation or budgetary action to appropriate additional funding for research into treatments and cures for ALS.

CO-PRESENTED BY: _____
PAUL KORETZ, Councilmember, Fifth District

CO-PRESENTED BY: _____
DAVID RYU, Councilmember, Fourth District

SECONDED BY: _____

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