

AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY

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HOUSE SPEAKER HONORS DOCTOR WHO SAVED LAWMAKERS BABY, HOUSE CUTS FUNDING TO RESEARCH THAT MADE TREATMENT POSSIBLE

ROCKVILLE, MD – On the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives, Speaker of the House Rep. John Boehner, R-Ohio honored Dr. Jessica Bienstock, the Residency Program Director for the Department of Gynecology and Obstetrics at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, for her treatment which saved the life of the then unborn daughter of Congresswoman Jaime Herrera Beutler, R-Washington. Herrera Beutler's daughter was diagnosed with Potter Syndrome, a medical condition in which a baby in the womb does not properly develop kidneys leading to kidney failure and, most often, death. Dr. Bienstock performed an experimental treatment which allowed Herrera Beutler's baby to be born and thrive. An emotional Speaker Boehner said, "If she is a happy, healthy miracle, Dr. Bienstock is the miracle worker who helped give the gift of hope and life to this family."

Research into Potter Syndrome specifically, and congenital kidney disease broadly is largely funded by the National Institutes of Health. In 2013, the NIH funded 196 grants for research into congenital kidney disease at a level of \$84.4 million. These grants funded research conducted in 32 states and the District of Columbia. 2013, thanks to sequestration, was a year in which investments in this research fell by nearly 13%. In 2012, 208 grants were funded at a level of \$96.9 million, or \$12.5 million more than 2013. The drop is thanks to U.S. House-supported austerity measures, like discretionary spending caps and sequestration that cut investments in scientific research.

"When medical crises occur, we are often immeasurably grateful for the health professionals and scientific researchers who spend their lives caring for and discovering treatments for our loved ones," said ASBMB Public Affairs Director Benjamin Corb. "Too often, however, health and research funding ends up being damaged when both parties fail to identify long-term solutions to our nation's fiscal woes. The truth is, cutting spending for NIH research has a minimal impact on the nation's debt and deficit, but is slowly destroying America's biomedical research enterprise. Hopefully those same members of Congress who rose to applaud Dr. Bienstock will rise to support research funding so that Americans across the country can rejoice in their own medical miracles."

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