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By Congressman Charles F. Bass (NH-02)
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October brings vibrant fall colors, the fall harvest, pumpkin festivals across the state, and crisper days and nights. And it also brings an influx of pink as the official month designated as Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

Chances are most of us know someone who has been affected by this horrible disease. For me, it was my mother. She passed away 40 years ago after a long fight with breast cancer while I was in college.

Back then, we didn't know much about the disease, and while we've made many strides in learning more about it and treating it since 1972, breast cancer is still the second-leading cause of death among women and tens of thousands of women in the United States will die from it this year alone.

That's why I was determined to do what I could in Congress to improve research on this disease and bring us closer to a cure. After countless meetings with experts, advocacy groups, and constituents, including Nancy Ryan of the New Hampshire Breast Cancer Coalition, I teamed up with Rep. Karen Bass (D-CA) to introduce the Accelerating the End of Breast Cancer Act (H.R. 3067) last year.

We introduced this bill for two reasons: 1.) to help identify scientific advances to prevent breast cancer, and 2.) to streamline research to avoid duplication of research efforts.

Our legislation will accomplish this by creating a temporary, 10-person commission comprised of members from the public and private sectors in the fields of biomedical research, business, advocacy and other related fields, who will be tasked with identifying breakthrough scientific advances in research that aren't currently being examined.

The commission will not appropriate any federal funding but create a pipeline through which the projects identified as the most promising receive federal and private funds. A primary focus would be on preventing breast cancer from reaching metastasis, which is responsible for 90 percent of breast-cancer deaths.

We've also included safeguards in the bill to ensure transparency and accountability. The commission would be required to submit annual reports to Congress, the Administration, and the public about its findings. If no progress is made in three years, the commission will be terminated and will automatically sunset in 2020.

With more than 230 Republican and Democratic co-sponsors as of this month, I remain hopeful that Congress can move forward on this legislation before the end of the year. I am encouraged by the widespread support and awareness for our legislation, including a mention in this month's edition of the widely-read Prevention magazine.

Whether you are a Republican or Democrat, finding a cure for breast cancer is a goal we can all support, for cancer does not discriminate. I hope you will join me in taking some time this month to remember those who lost their battle with breast cancer and doing what we can to find a cure.

Charles F. Bass represents New Hampshire's Second District in Congress and serves on the House Energy and Commerce Committee. You can reach him at <http://bass.house.gov>.