The U.S. House of Representatives held a Special Order yesterday in honor of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) as it celebrates its 50th anniversary. During the event on the House floor following Thursday’s legislative proceedings, Members of Congress highlighted critical advancements in cancer care over the last 50 years and the impact of ASCO’s work on driving progress and innovation.

“We are deeply honored to be recognized by the House of Representatives in this fashion,” said ASCO President Clifford A. Hudis, MD, FACP. “ASCO was established 50 years ago with a commitment to make high-quality, evidenced-based care available to all patients with cancer. The great strides that have occurred since our founding are the direct result of our nation’s longstanding investment in cancer clinical research. Today, ASCO looks forward to even faster progress and innovation in cancer care and we thank our lawmakers for ensuring that the fight against cancer remains a national priority.”

During the House Special Order session, U.S. Representatives Leonard Lance [R-NJ], Brian Higgins [D-NY], Chuck Fleischmann [R-TN], and Sheila Jackson Lee [D-TX] highlighted how ASCO has driven cancer care progress and worked to addressed key challenges in oncology over the past five decades. “When ASCO was founded cancer was widely regarded as an untreatable disease with fewer than one half of patients alive five years after diagnosis,” said Rep. Lance. “Because of the work of passionate advocates and tireless champions, and of the expertise of talented medical professionals, including those at the American Society of Clinical Oncology, today the survival rate is higher than two thirds.”
Rep. Jackson Lee spoke to ASCO’s leadership role in improving quality in cancer care and research. “They had their first real meeting with 51 physicians in November of 1964, and I'm glad that they organized because as we watch the progression of research and care in the treatment of cancer, we owe a great deal to them,” said Rep. Jackson Lee.

Other Members participating in the Special Order stressed the crucial role that federal funding has played in driving cancer research and the development of new treatments for oncology patients. Rep. Higgins said that “to sustain cancer research is to produce promising new therapies, but to also encourage young researchers to stay in the field and that's our obligation as Democrats and Republicans of this [governing] body in recognizing that we must fully fund the National Institutes of Health and the National Cancer Institute.”

Rep. Fleishmann called on Congress to show bipartisan support for funding that would continue to spur progress in cancer care and drive future advancements, “where we could actually show a great resolve, not as Republicans, not as Democrats, but as Americans, to beat this hideous disease,” said Rep. Fleishmann.

Watch the Special Order to honor ASCO’s 50th Anniversary and its role over the past five decades in advancing cancer care on CSPAN.

About ASCO:

Founded in 1964, the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) is the world’s leading professional organization representing physicians who care for people with cancer. With nearly 40,000 members, ASCO is committed to improving cancer care through scientific meetings, educational programs and peer-reviewed journals. ASCO is supported by its affiliate organization, the Conquer Cancer Foundation, which funds ground-breaking research and programs that make a tangible difference in the lives of people with cancer. For ASCO information and resources, visit www.asco.org. Patient-oriented cancer information is available at www.cancer.net.