When he was 27, Paul D’Addario was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa (RP), a disease that causes steady decline in peripheral vision and eventually complete blindness. Now at age 59, Paul has been legally blind for 10 years. His condition has limited him both personally and professionally, forcing him to retire early from his career as a database manager when his condition became severe enough that he could no longer effectively accommodate his vision loss.

In the 1980’s, as his vision loss progressed, Paul began looking into ways to participate in clinical research. In 2007, he had an experimental chip implanted into his eye in the hopes of restoring some of his sight. This device – developed with funding from the National Eye Institute of the National Institutes for Health – has improved vision in some RP patients. For Paul, the device has enabled him to see contrast, which has greatly increased his independence including allowing him to safely cross streets and even sort black and white socks. Paul continues to be active in the research and advocacy community, working with the Foundation Fighting Blindness, Inc. He has met with elected officials to advocate for increased funding for vision and blindness research.

**Why Research Matters**

“Without research, there is no hope.”

The Honorable Paul G. Rogers
(Member of Congress, 1955-1979)

**THE FACTS:**
20.6 million adult Americans live with significant visual impairment. Clinical trials have led to several new treatments, including eye implants like Paul’s, to halt and even reverse vision loss. We’ve made progress. But the funding to sustain it is eroding.

**THE SOLUTION:**
Congress- harness your compassion, gather your will, and boost funding for the National Institutes of Health. NIH funds medical research, and medical research matters.

*Do it for Paul.*

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