

My name is Erica Smith, and I am writing in unwavering support of “Mason’s Law” on behalf of my entire family in upstate New York. Mason’s Aunt Allison is married to my cousin Audra, and over the years our families have grown together, blending so naturally that it feels impossible to remember a time when we were not one. Mason was not just a child we knew—he was a child we loved.

If you were to travel to Bethany Beach during the third week of June, you would undoubtedly encounter the Eggleston family. For more than 30 years, Mike and Debbie Eggleston—along with Mamaw—have perfected what is lovingly known as “Beach Week.” It is not simply a vacation; it is a sacred tradition. Their three daughters, Kristina, Erica, and Allison, their spouses, and six energetic boys all gather together. Everyone plans their year around this one week. You do not miss Beach Week. Ever.

Mason fell right in the middle of those six grandchildren. He was one of the boys—running from the sand to the water, clutching his boogie board, laughing on the boardwalk, and sitting down to PB&J lunches with salty hair and sandy hands. The older boys always looked out for the younger ones, and the younger ones followed the older boys with absolute trust and admiration. There was safety in that togetherness, comfort in that routine, and joy that only childhood can bring.

This year, however, something is devastatingly different. Someone will be missing. There will be an empty beach chair where Mason should be. One less boogie board leaning in the sand. Fewer sandwiches packed for lunch. One less cousin laughing on the boardwalk. And countless broken hearts trying to hold together a tradition that was never meant to include loss—especially not the loss of a child.

I had the privilege of joining this family for Beach Week a few years ago, and what struck me most was how deeply connected they all were. The love was visible in every interaction—in the way the boys played, in the way the adults watched over them, and in the way, everyone showed up for one another. It was a reminder of what family is supposed to be.

That is why I urge you, with everything in me, to pass Mason’s Law.

No family should have to experience this kind of loss. No child should ever miss out on growing up, on traditions, on summers at the beach, because of negligence—because of something that could have been prevented. Children should not be allowed to drown in storm drains while their older brother, neighborhood friends, and mother do everything in their power to hold on and save them.

Mason deserved to grow up. He deserved to grow older alongside his cousins, to keep coming back to Bethany Beach year after year. Passing Mason’s Law will not bring him back, but it can protect other children and spare other families from unimaginable heartbreak.

Please honor Mason’s life by ensuring that no other child is lost in this way.

With love, Erica Smith

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