

**SENATE EDUCATION, HEATH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**  
**Senate Bill 0763**  
**State Board of Physicians-Genetic Counselors-Licensing**  
**February 26, 2020**  
**Recommendation: Favorable report**  
**Lynne Farrow**

The Farrow Family  
Baltimore, Maryland 21212

Hello. My name is Lynne Farrow and I am here on behalf of my son, Will. I was a patient at Johns Hopkins and completed my 20 weeks routine ultrasound. The test had shown two indicators for possible Down syndrome. I was offered a blood test by my genetic counselor, Cathy Lawson, to determine my journey and health of my baby. I will never forget that day. It had been 10 days since the blood work and I knew the results should be in. My husband was at school and I was home with my two boys, Owen (7) and Brooks (5). I am also a nurse and thought about my practice. I see and care for patients every day, and it started me thinking. Am I just another number to her? I was carrying a basket of laundry and the phone rang. It was Cathy at 7:15 PM. We found out that Will had Down syndrome on November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013. My world was shattered. I can remember sobbing uncontrollably and my boys saying, "Mommy, what's wrong? If we did something bad, we are sorry. Please don't cry". I knew that I had to pull it together for my boys. The first 24 hours were a blur. I can remember calling my parents, not sleeping or eating and just crying. I remember getting a phone call the next day from my genetic counselor. She asked me how I was doing and told



me that I had 48 hours to decide if I was going to continue with my pregnancy. Cathy and I had previous discussions about my support system and feelings about this pregnancy. I told Cathy that I am going to continue with my pregnancy, it's my baby. She told me that I could cry for the next 5 months until the baby gets here, but then I had to get it together. She empowered me at that moment to educate myself to be the best damn mom that I can for my son. And that is why I am standing here with you today.

Will is truly a blessing and a fabulous addition to our family. He has taught us about life, unconditional love, and what really matters in this world.



I cannot have imagined getting this type of information from someone who does not have correct medical knowledge or background training in counseling. I was very fortunate to have access to Hopkins and their amazing services. I hope you will consider licensing genetic counselors so that all Maryland families can benefit from their services. In 2020, all families should be entitled to the same care and resources for their loved ones. All babies deserve this. Thank you for your time. I appreciate your support this cause.



Sincerely,

Lynne Farrow

Will's mother and biggest cheerleader