

# HB 0675 - SUPPORT

February 21, 2020

Ways and Means Committee  
House Office Building, Room 131  
6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Honorable Committee Members:

This preschool class photo was taken in the spring of 2016.



About one year after it was taken, my son Gavin would be diagnosed with epilepsy. Two years after his diagnosis, his epilepsy would stop responding to medication. He would have countless hospitalizations, miss many days of school and endure brain surgery. He would have to take 4 AED's and follow a medically prescribed diet to make it through the day. A seizure alert dog would be added to his treatment plan.

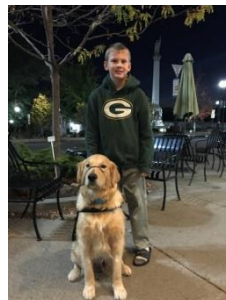
Another child in this class, Katie, would go on to have a single seizure in the summer of 2019. Coincidentally, Katie's mom brought our family a meal in the days following Gavin's brain surgery. As a friend who lent support and a sympathetic ear, she was aware of the various ways seizures can present and how to respond. It was this awareness that allowed her to act with knowledge during her own daughter's seizure.

With statistics like 1 in 26 people being diagnosed with epilepsy during their life and 1 in 10 people experiencing a seizure, chances are you know a Gavin or a Katie too.

As a parent of a child who has epilepsy, all components of this bill are very important to me for obvious reasons. There are times when Gavin will get down and feel like he is the only one affected by seizures. I tell him that anyone who has a brain could possibly have a seizure. He looks at me and is like *come on mom; that is EVERYONE in the world!* And I tell him...*yes, that is exactly right!* So while Brynleigh's Act will certainly help to ensure that my child is safe at school, it will also ensure that everyone else at school is safe as well if/when they were to experience a seizure. The day that preschool class picture was taken no one would have predicted that epilepsy and a seizure would become a part of Gavin and Katie's story. Giving our school communities the tools to act from a place of awareness, knowledge and preparation when handling seizures is truly a benefit for all!

Respectfully,

*Gavin's mom, Lauren DiBietto*



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