

I am writing with respect to HB0846, the so-called "Down Syndrome Dignity Act." As the mother of a magnificent 10 year old who has Down syndrome and a passionate advocate for individuals with Down syndrome, I stand in strong opposition to this bill which attempts to use my child and other people who have Down syndrome as pawns in a larger fight against bodily autonomy and reproductive rights.

If as a state we want to uphold and protect the dignity of people with Down syndrome (and I certainly do!), we should expand the supports in health care, education, housing, employment, and civil rights that could ensure that all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities have every opportunity to be fully included and thrive in their communities. Individuals with Down syndrome come to Annapolis every year shoulder to shoulder with other disability advocates to protect and expand the meager funding assigned to direct support professionals, to protect and expand public education funding, to promote accessibility to public spaces and all aspects of civil society, and to protect health care for all people with disabilities. Please listen to these self advocates and the larger disability community when they tell you exactly how they want to claim their dignity, and reject this political attempt to use them as pawns in a game that is about denying women their reproductive rights and bodily autonomy.

Sincerely,

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