

July 17th, 2020 is a day I'll never forget. My husband Max and I had been married a little over a year at that time, and were thrilled that we would become parents in November. We had begun our nursery setup, read books about the new adventure we were about to embark on, and even chosen a name. Ava Petit. Life was idyllic.

On July 17th our world was turned upside down. I alerted my physician that something felt off and that I was possibly having contractions. As a first time mom I was told it was likely nothing, and that I would be fine. To call if it continued. Shortly after, my water broke and we rushed to Anne Arundel Medical Center. Once we had arrived, we were given the worst news any parent would receive, that our daughter Ava had a 0% chance of making it through childbirth since we were only 20 weeks along.

At that point, the nightmare of losing our first child began. We were admitted to the hospital and awaited the worst day of our lives. Caring nurses came by to counsel us on the next steps. We were bombarded with information and decisions that had to be made rapidly. What would we like to do with our daughter Ava's remains? Could we afford to have a funeral? Would we want to? Would we like to attend a grieving parents support group?

My husband and I were fortunate enough to be able to cremate our daughter and scatter her ashes under the most beautiful white poplar tree in our yard. We had a simple plaque created, to honor our daughter and let her know that we loved her and that she was real.

500 Maryland families a year live this same nightmare every year. Many of whom have to make difficult decisions due to finances that we did not have to make. Imagine having to decide that you cannot afford to take care of your child's remains due to the unexpected expense? Or, that you could not afford crucial grief counseling due to the high price. I implore you all to pass bill 408 so that no parent is faced with the decision of what they can and cannot afford when they are faced with the most heartbreaking moment of their lives.

*You can help grieving Maryland families pick up the pieces after losing a child.*

*Please support Senate Bill 408.*

Lauren and Max Petit