

# SB 0225/HB 0370- Support

January 20, 2021

Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee  
Ways and Means Committee  
Annapolis, MD 21401



Dear Honorable Committee Members:

I write to you with great appreciation for your consideration of this proposed legislation. The preschool class photo to the right was taken in the spring of 2016. My sweet Gavin was 4 years old at the time. He was learning, growing, playing; a typical healthy little boy.

About one year later, Gavin would be diagnosed with epilepsy after experiencing two unprovoked seizures. Two years after his diagnosis, his epilepsy would become drug resistant. 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 lifetime and 1 in 10 people experiencing a seizure, chances are you know a Gavin or a Katie too.

There are times when Gavin will get down and feel like he is the only one affected by seizures. I remind him that epilepsy is very common and anyone with a brain could possibly have a seizure. He looks at me (most times with an eye roll) and is like *come on mom; that is EVERYONE in the entire 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 they were ever 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 preparedness when handling seizures will truly be a benefit for all!

Respectfully,

*Gavin's mom, Lauren DiBietto*

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