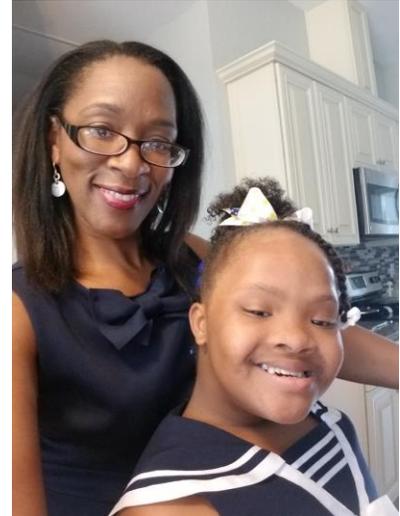


Dear (Representative),

My name is La Taasha Byrd and I am a mom blogger and educator from Orlando, FL. As such, I advocate for those in the special needs community to give a voice to those who are generally unheard. I regularly speak at conferences and hold workshops for the special needs community at local, state, and national levels.

My daughter is Cairo Byrd and she is 10 years old. She is a hard worker and free spirit. She also happens to have Down syndrome. This does not, however, define her attitude or work ethic. She is a shining example of how inclusion works and that we are more alike than different.



It is important that we bring attention to the issues that affect our families and help to effect change that will move our loved ones forward toward equality, especially in areas where populations are grossly marginalized. A win for one is a win for us all. Together we make a great team and break down barriers of inclusion one step at a time.

Here are a few issues we would like you to consider:

(Insert bullet points here)

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact us if you need any further information or assistance.

La Taasha and Cairo Byrd

Do what you can, while you can, with what you have...

Address/City/State/Zip

Phone

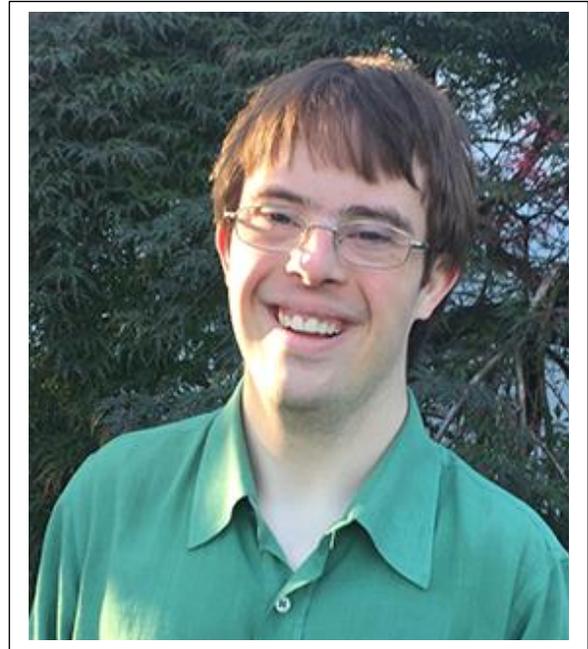
Countdown To K - Chronicles of a Super-Charged Mom-Schooler

<http://countdowntok.com/booking/>

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Countdown To K, Inc. 2020

Hi, my name is Daniel Chaplin. I am 29 years old and live in Birmingham, Alabama, where I work 30 hours a week as a mailman and clerical assistant at a law firm. I graduated from Oak Mountain High school in 2010 with a regular diploma, and I took classes at Samford University and Jeff State Community College from 2010-2012. From 2014-2017, I served on the National Down Syndrome Congress – Self Advocates Board of Directors. In 2019, I was elected as a regular member of the NDSC Board.



In addition to loving my job, I love half-marathon racing and ballroom dancing. I have done 26 half marathons and am a member of the 50 States Half Marathon Club. My goal is to do a half marathon in every state! I have been a ballroom dancer now for 7 years and compete at the Silver level. I teach ballroom dance workshops at the NDSC Convention – which is lots of fun!

My last passion is advocating for people with Down syndrome. People with Down syndrome need good inclusive education, opportunities to work and be involved in our communities and more scientific research on what helps us learn and be healthy. Will you support increased NIH funding for Trisomy 21 research? I will continue to work hard to show that people with Down syndrome make the world a better place. I hope you will too!

Daniel Chaplin
Address
City, State Zip

Phone
Email



Dear Representative/Senator Name,

My name is Jessica Smart. I am 31 years old and live in Olive Branch, MS. I work two days a week as a paid self-advocate at our local Down Syndrome Association of Memphis & the Mid-South (DSAM). I am the Communications Assistant. I answer the phones, make mobile deposits, help with the reading program and many other tasks.

I advocate in the community by speaking at teacher trainings, represent DSAM on radio & TV interviews, speak at Civitan meetings, just to name a few. I worked with a group of local and state representatives from Mississippi to rewrite the language for the ABLE Act bill, and I was with Mississippi Governor Bryant as he signed the bill. I have served on the Board of Directors for DSAM, National Down Syndrome Congress, and I am presently on the board for the ARC of NW Mississippi.

I would like to ask you to please co-sponsor the **Transformation to Competitive Employment Act (S.260.HR 873)**. This bill is a positive step toward phasing our Section 14 © subminimum wage over a six-year period. It also provides the funding, supports, and training necessary to change the infrastructure of outdated business models. This is a responsible approach to ending the discriminatory payment of subminimum wage while helping businesses transform to competitive integrated employment settings. Competitive Integrated Employment is when people with disabilities work in mainstream jobs alongside, and are paid comparable wages to, co-workers without disabilities.

In order for me to work and live independently, it is important that I be paid comparable wages to co-workers without disabilities. I take pride in doing a good job and being a responsible employee and think I deserve to earn comparable wages.

Thank you,

Jessica Smart

Address

City, State Zip

Phone

Email



Julie Gerhart-Rothholz

Arc Board Member, Employee Business Resource Group Lead, PDSAC Social Media Director

Home Address: STREET ADDRESS, PA 19438; (h) HOME PHONE (m) MOBILE PHONE; EMAIL: jmgerhart@prodigy.net

MEETING DATE:

ASK: *Please stand with people with disabilities and their families and cosponsor the bipartisan Transformation to Competitive Employment Act (S.260/H.R.873). This legislation would address barriers to employment and expand opportunities for competitive integrated employment for people with disabilities while phasing out subminimum wage certificates under Section 14c of the Fair Labor Standards Act during a six-year period.*

Julie Gerhart-Rothholz is a pharmacist; board member for The Arc Alliance and The Arc of Pennsylvania; social media director for the Pennsylvania Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition (PDSAC); contributor for The Mighty, former global lead for the Merck capABILITIES Network, and Home & School Association Vice President. Her most important role is mom to 9-year old, rising fourth grader Evan, who has Down syndrome. She is passionate about inclusion for students with disabilities and about protecting the rights of those with disabilities.

Julie has engaged in hill days with her US Representatives and Senators has visited her state representative and senator. She has connected her school district with state and US senators and representatives and brought congressional staff to the school district.

Julie spoke at Senator Casey's Press Conference about the impact of Medicaid on schools.

<https://www.casey.senate.gov/newsroom/media/view/cuts-to-medicaid-under-trumpcare-and-the-devastating-effect-on-children-and-schools> . She also participated in US Representative Brian Fitzpatrick's working group on Mental Health, Behavioral Health, and Intellectual Disability. Her family was the subject of a Fitzpatrick speech on the floor of the US House of Representatives, where he recognized the PDSAC (founded by Julie, her husband Mitch, and a small group of motivated parents and self advocates). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=58X07zR5feg>

In her spare time, Julie enjoys family game night, watching Evan play soccer, volunteering at Evan's school, and running an auction and raffle to raise funds for the Trisomy 21 Center at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

Dear Representative Davids,

I hope to see you again soon. I will be working some shifts at the Olive Garden during my Christmas break. Maybe you can come eat there.

I am in my second year in the Missouri State University Bear POWER program. I am studying acting and hospitality. I have an internship in the Service-Learning Office. We help provide healthy foods to food trucks for disadvantaged neighborhoods. I hope I get to be an intern at the Springfield Little Theatre next semester. I was elected as a Student Senator for the Student Government Association. I attend the Life.Church and The Vine, an on-campus student ministry.



I live in a suite with three girls. I love it. My mentor Grace is an ADPi. They are trying to make it so I can be in a sorority. I really want to be an ADPi.

I worked as a hostess at the Olive Garden in the summer. I save some of my money in my ABE Account. I saved some of the money to spend at college. Maybe you can come and see me at the Olive Garden sometime.

Thank you for sponsoring the Transformation to Competitive Employment Act (H.R. 873). It will help people like me get a job working with their friends.

Would you please sponsor the ABE Age Adjustment Act (H.R. 1814) so more of my friends can open an account? It would move the age of onset of disability for 26 to 46 for opening ABE Accounts. I am proud I have an ABE Account.

I am living my dream. Thank you for supporting people with Down syndrome and other disabilities. I have Down syndrome, but I am not Down syndrome. I am Rachel, and I really love my life.

Thank you.

Your friend,
Rachel Mast
Phone
Email:
Twitter:
IG:

<p>Home:</p> <p>College:</p>
--

Steve Sabia
Address
City, State Zip
Phone
Email

June, 5, 2019

My name is Steve H. Sabia. Currently, I am volunteering at Holy Cross Hospital twenty hours a week. They have added my job to the budget starting July 1. Medicaid funds were used to pay for the job developer who helped me get this job. Also, Medicaid pays for a job coach to train me on my tasks and make sure I keep this job.

I also use Medicaid funding to pay for personal support staff who help me live with my friend Eli Lewis in our own apartment in Rockville, Maryland. I can do a lot on my own but I need some help with cooking dinner, going grocery shopping and keeping the apartment clean and safe.

Changes in Medicaid funding will prevent people like me from living good lives. Without my Medicaid waiver services, I may not be able to get a paid job, keep a job and or become more independent in my apartment. I may not even be able to stay in the apartment at all without these services. Congress can make a big impact on people with disabilities by keeping Medicaid community services funded the way they are now. Please help me. be an active member of the community and a hard-working, tax-paying citizen.

I also think going to college is important for success. I went to a program at Montgomery Community College but we don't have a 4-year program I could attend in Maryland. The Higher Education Act is being amended soon. Please keep and improve the programs for students with intellectual disabilities.

Thank you,
Steve H. Sabia

