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Honorable Members of the Senate Families and Children Committee,

My name is Danny Slaton. Some of you know me as a legislative agent with Top Shelf Lobby. But I am also Vice President of the Board of Trustees for Down Syndrome of Louisville, a wonderful advocacy and service provider in Louisville. We serve the community of individuals with Down syndrome and their families and friends in Jefferson and surrounding counties. I also serve as Secretary on the State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children, a panel that advises the Kentucky Department of Education on unmet needs for students with disabilities.

I have a 7-year-old daughter with Down Syndrome, and I'm happy to say she is very healthy at the moment, and a thriving first-grader. But many of our children and adults with Down Syndrome have complicated heart issues, lung issues, kidney issues, and any other myriad issues that plague the rest of us as well.

In your email and packets this morning you'll find an abbreviated story of Madison Dugas's life. I won't repeat that story—except to say that she was very lucky to have a great transplant cardiologist, and she was only on the transplant list for a few months before getting her new heart. Of course, a transplant like that doesn't fix everything, and taking the medicine to avoid her body rejecting the new heart has many complications of their own, including wrecking her little kidneys.

The discrimination individuals with disabilities face in health care can be subtle, or even quiet. The vast majority of health care providers understand that a disability diagnosis does not on its own necessarily limit the length or quality of life of an individual. But there are still some prejudices out there, prejudices that organizations like Down Syndrome of Louisville are working hard through advocacy and education with health care providers to eliminate.

But we need the Kentucky General Assembly's help in making these forms of discrimination and prejudice a thing of the past. We believe HB 238 is an important step towards a brighter future for individuals with disabilities. We are deeply appreciative of the bill sponsor, Rep. Williams, for going to the mat for people with disabilities. Please vote aye on HB 238.

Thank you.

Danny Slaton