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Sponsor Testimony on Senate Bill 164
House Health Committee
December 6th, 2017

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Antonio, members of the Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 164. This legislation would prohibit an abortion from being performed if the reason for terminating the pregnancy is because of a pre-natal diagnosis of Down syndrome.

Some expecting parents may consider aborting a pregnancy if the child has or may have Down syndrome or other diagnosed abnormalities. Currently around 90% of unborn babies in the U.S. that receive a pre-natal diagnosis of Down syndrome are abortedⁱ. Women who receive such a diagnosis for their child are often pressured to have an abortion by both family and medical professionals. However, a significant number of false-positives in pre-natal diagnoses have been reported.ⁱⁱ There is also no way either prior to birth or early in life to determine how severe a Down syndrome child's developmental disability will beⁱⁱⁱ. Additionally, women who abort due to a prenatal diagnosis are more at risk for post-traumatic stress and depression than women who continue with their pregnancy^{iv}.

More importantly, babies born with Down syndrome will likely go on to lead active, rewarding lives. I personally know several people with Down syndrome who are living full and happy lives. The life expectancy for people living with Down syndrome has increased to over 60 years in many cases^v. The life of a child with Down syndrome is not worth any less than the life another child. This legislation will protect the lives of unborn children with disabilities and value them as equal members of society.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning. I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

ⁱ Harmon, Amy. "Prenatal Test Puts Down Syndrome in Hard Focus." *The New York Times*. May 08, 2007. Accessed June 07, 2017.

ⁱⁱ N.J. Wald, F.R.C.P., D.S.C., H.C. Watt, M.S.C., and A.K. Hackshaw, M.S.C. "Integrated Screening for Down's Syndrome Based on Tests Performed During the First and Second Trimesters." *The New England Journal of Medicine* 341, no. 7 (August 12, 1999).

ⁱⁱⁱ Dixon, DP. "Informed consent or institutionalized eugenics? How the medical profession encourages abortion of fetuses with Down Syndrome." *Issues In Law & Medicine* 24, no. 1 (Summer2008 2008): 3-59.

^{iv} Sullivan, Nora, and Eoghan de Faoite. "Psychological Impact of Abortion due to Fetal Anomaly: A Review of Published Research." *Issues In Law & Medicine* 32, no. 1 (Spring2017 2017): 19-30.

^v Baird, PatriciaA., and AdeleD. Sadovnick. "LIFE EXPECTANCY IN DOWN SYNDROME ADULTS." *The Lancet* 332, no. 8624 (1988): 1354-1356.