

Ohio Senate
Committee on Health, Human Services and Medicaid
House Bill 214, 3rd hearing
Wednesday, October 11, 2017

Testimony of Barry Rosenberg
Cincinnati, Ohio

In reading about SB 164, I was very upset to see that legislators in Ohio are using people with Down syndrome to chip away at the abortion issue.

I have a 3 year-old son with Down syndrome and we knew early on about our son's condition. We had a choice and we decided to keep our son. This was a very tough decision for my wife and me, but I am glad we had such a choice. This enabled us to truly embrace what was coming our way versus feeling that this was being forced upon us by some unknown legislators.

Today, I feel rather blessed that my son has Down syndrome. He has truly been a blessing to our family. I only hope that I can teach him as much as he has already taught me in just 3 years. We should all spend time with people who have Down syndrome, they have a lot to teach the world if we would only take the time to listen.

If our legislators truly care about the people with Down syndrome, then I would love to see them take this opportunity to create a more inclusive community for people with such development issues, not use people like my son to politicize an issue.

Children with Down syndrome are sometimes born with severe heart conditions, hearing problems, eye sight concerns and many other medical issues that need financial assistance. My child attends an early childhood development school, which cost over \$12,000 per year. Over 50% of the students within my son's school need some type of financial aid. It has now been proven that by working with children with DS from 18 months to 6 years old that they can mainstream into a more traditional learning environment and become productive members of the community.

If you really care about the Down syndrome community let's go beyond just the recently passed ABLE act and truly provide financial aid for early childhood development and supplemental insurance to cover all of the un-usual medical needs that arise with having an extra chromosome. Whatever you do – please stop using my son to politicize your own agenda.