



**Sample Email - The text of the sample email is available for you to copy. Please include a paragraph with personal information. Examples have been provided for reference.**

Dear Senator/Representative \_\_\_\_\_,

As the parent of a child with Down syndrome I was pleased to learn about H.B. 499 Funds for Down Syndrome Programs. This simple piece of legislation proposes to allocate funds exclusively to support programs to foster the independence of individuals with Down syndrome. Funds for Down syndrome specific programs are particularly important to me because of the lack of opportunities available to individuals with Down syndrome. When my child was born I envisioned a bright future. Unfortunately, that future does not often include gainful employment, independent living, or a strong social network, just to name a few of our challenges.

*My son, John (2 years old), is involved in early intervention services that build on his strengths to teach new skills such as self-feeding and remediate areas of weakness like climbing the stairs. He has no trouble keeping up with his older brother and I already see his competitive nature. But I am concerned for his future when I see firsthand how parents must fight to receive quality services for their child with Down syndrome. Where does that leave John? Will I be fighting for him to have a decent paying job or transportation to get there? Will he be forced to live with me as an adult instead of in the community with his peers? These are some of the thoughts that keep me up at night.*

*My son, John (16 years old), can drive a small tractor, operate power tools, loves to work with his hands, and could be a valuable member of the skilled workforce. Unfortunately, individuals with Down syndrome are leaving high school unprepared for life in the community and face an unwelcoming and unprepared workplace. From the lack of speech and occupational therapy available in public school, to limited innovative and desirable housing options, it is a challenge to plan and prepare for a life where John is a contributing member of society.*

*My son, John (30 years old), spends most of his time going from one volunteer opportunity to another. He often gets to do one of his favorite hobbies, playing the piano, which he does when he can volunteer at the local nursing home. Unfortunately, he can only volunteer when I can arrange transportation for him. The rest of the time, he is home by himself. John has told me many times that he would like to go to work just like mom and dad does. However, there is not a job out there for him that gives him that sense of independence he sees when my husband or I leave for work every day. This is not the life I prepared him for.*

The path to success for individuals with Down syndrome is tied to research and support - research that leads to programs that improve outcomes for individuals with Down syndrome. However, there is a great disparity in funding for Down syndrome. Despite being the most common genetic disorder, Down syndrome is the least funded major genetic condition by the National Institutes of Health. Support for individuals with Down syndrome is mostly funded through Medicaid, which is extremely vulnerable right now. Please help correct this situation by supporting funds for Down syndrome specific programs that will lead to greater independence and an improved quality of life.

In addition, please consider joining the Legislative Intellectual and Developmental Disability Caucus. The bicameral, bipartisan I/DD Caucus is meant to be a resource to assist you in crafting policy that directly impacts my family.

Kind regards,  
First and last name  
County where you reside