

It's Time For Congress To Invest In Babies

STROLLING THUNDER 10 YEARS

Hi, I'm baby

Logan

This is my story.

Location:

Southington, Ohio

My Grown Up's Name:

Brianna

“ I had to say to my husband: I don't know if we can afford to take him to the hospital. That should never be a sentence a parent has to say.



Federal policies play a critical role in the health and well-being of both babies and their caregivers, including through Medicaid, early intervention, mental health, and pediatric investments. By investing in the health and well-being of children and their families now, we can set them up for lifelong success, and the future success of our country.

Our story begins...

Logan is 18 months old, and he is my miracle. After six miscarriages, he is here, and he is the happiest baby anyone who meets him has ever seen. He hides blocks behind the bookshelf. He kisses my blue-painted toes. He says "two" when I say "one." He is everything.

So it hurts to my core to have to look at my husband, Hunter, and say: I don't know if we can afford to take him to the hospital when he gets sick enough to need it. Our reality is that we earn too much to qualify for Medicaid, but not enough to feel safe.

Last October, when Logan had breathing trouble, his pediatrician sent us to the ER. The insurance company denied the claim, calling it medically unnecessary. I spent a month fighting appeals, going back and forth with the hospital over billing codes. We eventually won, but our deductible is \$5,000, so we still owed the full amount. We're still on a payment plan.

Last month, we had a 30-day gap in insurance coverage when my husband switched jobs. Logan got sick, and I stayed up all night watching him sleep because I was too afraid to take my eyes off him.

My husband works. I manage the household and stretch every dollar—buying a \$20 pork loin that feeds us for two weeks, growing our own vegetables. And we still cashed out our retirement to pay medical debt.

No family should have to live like this.

IT'S TIME To Make Policy Change

Families like mine are doing everything we can to keep our babies healthy, but it's not always easy to find affordable care or get the support we need. When appointments are delayed or services aren't available, for me or my baby, it affects children for the rest of their lives. That's why I'm asking Congress to invest in programs that make sure caregivers and babies like mine can access reliable care from the very beginning.

We Want Congress to Support Good Health by:

- Opposing cuts to Medicaid to ensure babies and those who care for them can access the care they need for a strong, healthy start.
- Increasing funding for early intervention through Medicaid and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C to ensure young children stay on track.
- Increasing investment in early childhood health and mental health, including through SAMHSA's Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Grant Program and Project LAUNCH, HRSA's Early Childhood Development Expert program and HRSA's Transforming Pediatrics for Early Childhood.

About Think Babies™ and Strolling Thunder™

ZERO TO THREE created Think Babies™ as a call to action for policymakers to prioritize good health, strong families, and positive early learning experiences, particularly during the crucial early years of brain development. Strolling Thunder™ is an annual event for families to share their stories with their elected officials in person. Learn more at www.ThinkBabies.org/StrollingThunder.