



**Advocating for Kids with Complex
Medical Needs & Disabilities**

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March 23, 2021

House Committee on Energy and Commerce Hearing:

Building on the ACA: Legislation to Expand Health Coverage and Lower Costs

Testimony, Laura LeBrun Hatcher



Biography

Laura LeBrun Hatcher is mom to Simon, age 14. Simon has a great sense of humor and loves to play the drums. He also has complex medical needs and physical and cognitive disabilities. Like most parents, Laura has advocated for Simon since he was born. More recently, Laura has advocated with Simon (and his dad Brian, and sister Olivia) as a founding family of the Little Lobbyists.

The Little Lobbyists came together in June of 2017 in response to Congress' efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act and cut Medicaid funding. At the time, many parents of medically complex children experienced frustration and fear when they were unable to reach their Senators to discuss the impact their vote would have on their families. In response, a small group of families living near Washington D.C. visited the Senate in person, with

their children with complex medical needs and disabilities, bearing the stories and photos of constituents like themselves from all across the country whose voices were not being heard.

The Little Lobbyists believed that meeting our children and sharing our stories could have the power to change hearts and minds and create needed support for the health care, education, and inclusion of children with complex medical needs and disabilities. We collected hundreds of stories and shared them with legislators, partner organizations, and media. We were right.

Since Little Lobbyists began, membership has grown exponentially, but we continue to be 100% family-led and volunteer-powered. We partner with many health care and disability rights organizations, and work to educate and support one another as we promote health care and civil rights for people with complex medical needs and disabilities.

Laura is a member of the leadership team of Little Lobbyists, and is primarily responsible for design and communication. She regularly meets with legislators and families to facilitate communication and discuss the impact of legislation. Laura has been interviewed by multiple media outlets, has spoken at rallies and press conferences, sat on panels, and led various workshops to expand her advocacy and empower more families like hers.

When not advocating with Little Lobbyists, Laura works as a design educator at Towson University and an award-winning creative consultant through her design firm, Hatcher Design Office, LLC, where she specializes in creating beautiful, human-centered design solutions for non-profit organizations.