

# Speech Transcript

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It feels almost impossible to articulate what today means for us. We are overwhelmed with so many different emotions but mostly an overriding sense of gratitude. First and foremost, we want to thank Governor Ducey, Christina Corieri, Senator Brophy McGee, and Representative Weninger. Thank you for your empathy, kindness, leadership and tireless work and advocacy on behalf of Jake's Law. We can never thank you enough.

We also want to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who made today possible: the Arizona Coalition for Insurance Parity; Mental Health America of AZ, MIKID, the Council of Human Service Providers; the Arizona Psychiatric Society; everyone who took time out of their days to testify on behalf of Jake's law – including Angela, Jenny, Christie, Liz, Jess, Lisa, Sheila, Christina, and Randy; thank you to the amazing people like Alyssa who were part of a grassroots public awareness campaign supporting Jake's Law; and thank you to everyone who called and emailed their legislators. A special deep, immeasurable thank you to our dear friend Carly who volunteered her own time to help us pass Jake's Law. Finally thank you to all 90 legislators who voted unanimously for Jake's Law including Senator Bowie and Representatives Epstein and Barto who were among the first lawmakers to sit down and listen to us. Thank you for all of your support! I can't believe how far we have come!

Collectively, you have all helped us honor our son, all those years we have lost, and everyone we can save with Jake's Law. We are surrounded by some amazing people that fought hard to get this done. People brought together for a common good... no politics just people doing the right thing for those in need of help.

We held Jake's memorial at a WWII hangar at Falcon field. Over 200 friends and family attended and we thought if only Jake could see how much he meant to so many. I am having a sense of déjà vu right now as we witness the Governor sign this bill into law. I'm awed by the impact Jake continues to have. Because of our pain and the inexhaustible persistence of his grieving mom countless lives will be saved. Nothing can bring him back but knowing the young man that

stood up to bullies and embraced the kids who were excluded lives on through this legislation, brings some peace to our tragedy.

We have been fighting for this for so long. After Jake passed away, we knew we didn't want any other family to go through this pain. We knew we had to do something so we created the JEM Foundation to honor him and our first priority was what is now Jake's Law. Jake is more than his mental illness and he is more than his death. In a lot of ways this is Jake's legacy, forever immortalized and enshrined in Arizona law. He was full of compassion, empathy, and love, he always looked out for others. I know that this is what Jake would have wanted us to do. We can't bring Jake back but we can make sure this doesn't happen to other families. Thank you for allowing us to honor Jake.