

## Laura Beck Remarks

Mother of Anderson Beck and wife of Aaron Beck

On December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020, my husband, Aaron, and I welcomed our sweet little peanut, Anderson, into this world. Aaron had been by my side in the labor and delivery unit since we had been admitted two days prior on the 21<sup>st</sup> with plans to be induced. Anderson did not come easily. We did not even get to see him be born because I had to be put to sleep in the operating room during our c-section and Aaron was escorted out. It was actually Aaron who got to have the first skin-to-skin contact with our baby boy as I lay in the recovery room, waking up from the anesthesia. I couldn't wait to be back in our room, as a family – being able to hold what my husband and I created together.

Anderson was no doubt a mama's boy but he adored his Papa in the most magical and beautiful way I have ever seen two people grow with one another. Their bond was so special, and I couldn't help but be in awe at how effortlessly my husband fell into fatherhood. Being parents had turned out to be both of our greatest accomplishments and we were constantly doting on our son. All of our dreams were coming true.

On June 28<sup>th</sup>, I lost my son, Anderson, due to a hot car death after my husband inadvertently forgot to drop him off at childcare before he traveled to work that morning. Shortly after realizing what happened, Aaron took his own life due to the overwhelming feeling of guilt, despair, and heartbreak.

In eight days it will be two years since I lost my family. In eight days, all of our family and friends will have relived the horror. Honestly, I relive this gut-wrenching nightmare every single day. June 28th changed me forever, and that is why I am here today.

On June 28<sup>th</sup>, I begged and pleaded for my life to end as well. There have been more days than not thus far that I do not wish for the same thing. There has been one major resource other than my therapist and my support system that has kept me going for nearly two years. Author Gary Roe shared a statement from another fellow grieving parent in his book: *Shattered: Surviving the Loss of a Child*. And I go back to this quote every single time that I feel like throwing in the towel. "Your child would want you to live. Live! Survive! If you don't, that's one less voice to speak their name and tell their story."

I question who I am now, feeling like I also died that day. There is so much about me now that is gone. But one thing that has not dissipated from my soul is my ability to protect my family. I will always be Aaron's wife. I will always be Anderson's mama. I am their voice, and I will speak their names until my last breath. I will always be here living in their memory and fighting in their honor, telling their stories – our story.

It is in their honor that I have found a new and significant purpose – making sure no other family suffers this same preventable loss. Technology exists and is readily available to stop hot car deaths. I will work for the rest of my life to ensure this doesn't happen to anyone else.

Secretary Pete Buttigieg, I have a message very specifically for you – YOU have the power to make the hot car final rule move.

YOU are a loving father, just like Aaron, who would die if anything happened to your babies.

YOU can prevent this unbearable heartache for dozens of families every year.

If you felt the pain I live with every day for even a split second, you, too would feel the urgency of this life-saving regulation.

I am begging and pleading with you to please move the hot car final rule forward as your #1 priority. Innocent babies, like my son, cannot protect themselves. They are depending on YOU.