



**ORAL STATEMENT OF JOHN CRONIN
BEFORE THE HELSINKI COMMISSION
September 24, 2018**

Good afternoon. My name is John Cronin, and I am the co-founder and Chief Happiness Officer of John's Crazy Socks. I come here to stand up for people with Down syndrome and all people with differing abilities.

I have Down syndrome and Down syndrome never holds me back. I am 22-years old and work hard every day to show the world that people with Down syndrome are ready, willing and able to work. Give us a chance and we can be successful.

You may have heard about John's Crazy Socks. We have a mission to spread happiness. We have a good story, but we are a good business too. We offer 2,300 different socks. We have shipped our socks to every state and 80 different countries. This year we will ship over 170,000 orders and earn over \$6 million. I may be cute, but I run a serious business.

I started this business with my dad, Mark. It was my idea and I came up with the name. My Dad believed in me and gave me a chance. I love my Dad. I work hard every day. I love my business.

Let me tell you why I started John's Crazy Socks. In the fall of 2016, I began my last year of school. I needed to decide what I would do when school ended. I had received a good education at Huntington High School. I was healthy and ready to

go. I looked around but saw few choices and opportunities. I knew I could do more. I wanted a good job just like my brothers Patrick and Jamie.

I decided to create my own job. I told my dad that I wanted to go into business with him. I came up with the idea to sell crazy socks because I had always worn and loved colorful and fun socks. We opened John's Crazy Socks in December 2016. We were entrepreneurs and we took a chance. Now, everyone wears my socks, even movie stars, Prime Ministers and Presidents.

We have created 35 jobs and 18 of my colleagues have a differing ability. We make videos that have been seen over 4 million times. We have raised over \$150,000 for our charity partners. We are making John's Crazy Socks a success and we owe it to our colleagues.

I can lead my own business because I had great teachers. I want to shout out to Dr. Erica Murphy-Jessen and Patricia Klee, my speech teacher. I can lead my own business because I played Special Olympics sports. I can lead my own business because my Dad gave me a chance.

I want you to know what people like me can do. Give us a chance and watch what we can do.