

Submitter: Ian Meyer  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB699

My name is Ian. I lost my leg below the knee at 18 following complications from an accident the day before my high school graduation. The possibilities of life were just blossoming when I was thrown this traumatizing and unexpected obstacle. Of course, bouncing back was an uphill battle, but before anything could become of rediscovering my path in life and looking towards some sort of actualization, I merely had to figure out how to stand on two legs again. I was lucky to have good healthcare from my family's plan, which was crucial to giving me the access to my first prosthetic and allowing me to move beyond the cyclical depression and confusion that limb loss and the recovery process had on me. Since then, I've graduated college and am a full undergrad's worth of years into working as a Wildland Firefighter for the United States Forest Service. The prosthetic devices that began as a way to give me agency and normalcy after living on crutches and a wheelchair are now what I use to protect lives and property. Even so, I rely on significant out of pocket costs and even grant writing to keep my prosthetic leg up to date. Being physically fit is crucial on a personal and professional level, and I had to sell myself through a grant-writing program to receive a running leg to do what my coworkers do without a second thought. I'm testifying because access to prosthetics is the difference between existing and living for many. The costs are prohibitive for many to secure the tools to live a normal life, let alone find physical fulfillment. Prosthetics are not palliative care - they can allow someone to achieve more than they ever thought possible, even with two limbs. People experience limb loss at all junctures of life, and amputees are not charity cases who deserve the bare minimum access. We deserve the support to live life to the heights we want to pursue. Prosthetic access can be not just life-saving but life-changing in ways the user never thought possible. I appreciate my movement and human potential daily and this wouldn't be possible without the devices I have at my disposal. For this, I believe access should be a human right.