

Submitter: Paula Free
On Behalf Of: 699
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB699

On behalf of: So Every Body can Move
January 26, 2025
Position: Support/Favorable

Dear Senate Health Care Committee members,
Representative, John Lively

My name is Paula Free, founder/ED of Power On With Limb Loss and have been an amputee for almost 15 years. I am here today as a very active 71 year old and a representative for So Everybody Can Move! For this reason I wish to express my support for Senate Bill 699, which would mandate insurance coverage for orthotic and prosthetic care necessary for physical activity for folks living with limb loss or limb differences. Senate Bill 699 is currently pending in the Oregon Senate Health Care Committee and we urge you to move in favor of this bill.

Imagine being unable to participate in physical activities, explore Oregon's great outdoors, participate in gym class / play on a team sport, or engage in everyday life the way you used to, simply because your insurance refuses to cover the prosthetic or orthotic devices necessary for those actions. This is the harsh reality for nearly 50,000 Oregonians with limb loss or limb difference. A single prosthetic or orthotic device doesn't restore full mobility or function; yet, insurance often deems additional devices as "not medically necessary," leaving individuals without the tools they need to live active, healthy lives. Families and children are forced to pay high out-of-pocket costs - ranging from \$5,000-\$20,000 - rely on charity, or go without access. For those unable to access this medically necessary prosthetic and orthotic care, they can be put at risk of harm or injury when using improper devices, or alternatively, may develop sedentary lifestyles which can lead to long term health complications, isolation, and the development of more costly medical care.

For this reason I believe that current practices discriminate against Oregonians with disabilities and limits their capacity to live full and healthy lives. Meanwhile, covering devices for physical activity has a minimal impact on insurance premiums (a fiscal study estimated it would cost \$0.17 PMPM) while providing long term social and fiscal benefits by improving health access and equity for Oregonians with disabilities.

This bill will help people with limb differences move better and not damage other parts of our bodies as we age. I need to continue to move or I won't be able to move! I still work, run and play, I am at my best when I am active. As I age, being active

helps with my physical, mental and emotional well being, and keeps me out of the hospital!

SB 699 is not just about prosthetics & orthotics —it's about ensuring people with disabilities can thrive, not just survive. It's about promoting physical and mental health, reducing long-term healthcare costs, and breaking down barriers to a full and active life. I urge you to vote in favor of this bill so that everyone, regardless of their physical challenges, can access the medical care they need to live healthy, fulfilling lives. Together, we can ensure that everybody has the opportunity to move freely.

Sincerely, and with Gratitude

Paula Free Founder/ Ed of Power On With Limb Loss