

29 January 2025

On behalf of: So Every Body Can Move

Position: In Support/Favor

Dear Senate Health Care Committee members,

My name is Lillian, I am a 22 year old above knee amputee. I lost my leg in December of 2023 in a series of post-operative medical complications. I am writing to you today in support of Senate Bill 699, and I urge you to consider the opportunities that having access to athletic prosthetics will bring to individuals with amputations and limb differences.

SB 699 will not only open countless doors for access to these prosthetics: it will promote health and wellness by enabling individuals with disabilities to exercise, lessen the financial strain on disabled people and their families, and lower expenses on the insurance companies by providing adequate equipment to those that need it. Athletic prosthetics should not be refused by insurance - there are tens of thousands of individuals in the state of Oregon alone who stand to be positively impacted by this life-changing bill. SB 699 will not only improve the physical health of individuals with limb loss/deficiencies, it will improve their mental health too. Exercise also allows for extensive community building, which lessens the prevalent feeling of isolation by being able to participate in activities. With the proper prosthetics, we can participate in these activities without fear, knowing our equipment allows for a full range of abilities.

I was born and raised in Montana and spent many summers growing alongside nature. I played volleyball for four years, roller derby for ten, and did some form of dance/aerial acrobatics from age nine on. I have always looked for ways to challenge myself and my body. I was young, strong, and healthy when I lost my leg. Today, I am asking you to imagine waking up and being told that everything you have ever worked for, every goal you have ever set for yourself, has just been thrown out the window; imagine being a young athlete who worked hard to improve your health, fitness, and skillset – and then having to start at square one. Relearning how to walk, how to bathe, how to exist in this new body. Imagine my shock when speaking to my case manager about a secondary athletic prosthetic and being told I will be responsible for the full cost of the device as, in her words, my insurance does not believe running to be a “necessary function of life.” It is devastating to hear that exercise – a pathway to better overall physical and mental health – and access to a level of functionality beyond walking around my home and the grocery store is no longer something I can achieve. It takes an already life-altering situation and makes it so much heavier. This is why I am in full support of SB 699, not only for myself as a young amputee, but for the thousands of others that are confronted with this reality as well.

I want to thank you for taking the time to hear our words and understand the life changing impact SB 699 would have on my, and countless others' lives.

Sincerely,

Lillian Fix-Brierton