

Good afternoon Chair Patterson, Vice Chair Hayden, and members of the committee:

I am Noelle Medina, a Board Eligible Prosthetist Orthotist working in Portland Oregon and I am testifying in favor of SB699. I specialize in designing and fitting artificial limbs (known as prostheses) and custom braces (known as orthoses) for my patients with physical disabilities.

I began my education at Willamette University where I developed my dedication to helping people regain their mobility and independence. Fast forward 8 years, through my masters degree, 18 months of residency, and board exams; I work as a clinician at Eastside Orthotics and Prosthetics. Now, I am faced with the painful truth that what got me into this field is not the reality. I have to tell my patients “No” on a daily basis. “No, I can’t help you run again.” “No, insurance won’t cover the device your physician and I have determined you need.”

As a healthcare professional with the duty to maximize my patient’s mobility, this puts me in the difficult position to turn patients away. My patients should not have to go outside of the healthcare system, beg for charity, or put their traumatic healthcare journeys on display to get access to what other individuals receive in our medical system. A 16 year old who tears their ACL playing basketball can immediately get surgery to play sports again, yet the same 16 year old who loses their limb to bone cancer is denied the prosthesis they need to play again. This isn’t right.

Despite the hype of bionics in the news, prosthetics and orthotics don’t make people superhuman. Our patients fall down and get hurt and *no one prosthesis or orthosis alone fully restores the mobility they have lost*. A running prosthesis, for example, is simply what is medically necessary to jog because the biomechanics between running and walking are different. Without access to the appropriate device, an individual’s joints absorb damaging levels of stress causing intense pain, long term health consequences, and premature breakdown of the device.

I urge you to vote in favor of SB699 to ensure that no one is denied the opportunity to move, thrive, and participate fully in life.