



Disability
Rights
Oregon

TO: House Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
FROM: Disability Rights Oregon
DATE: March 25, 2025
RE: **SB 550 (Support); Oppose –2 amendment**

Chair Sosa, Vice-Chair Chaichi, Vice-Chair Osborne, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ben Gurewitz, and I am the Deputy Director of Public Policy at Disability Rights Oregon. SB 550 would expand Oregon’s current right-to-repair law to require manufacturers to provide essential resources—including parts, tools, embedded software, and documentation—to both wheelchair users and independent repair providers.

Disability Rights Oregon strongly opposes the –2 amendment. It establishes an arbitrary standard that allows manufacturers to decide when and what parts, tools, and information are made available to users. We believe these amendments are a deliberate attempt to undermine the timely repair of mobility and complex rehabilitation devices—the very issue this bill seeks to address.

Oregonians living with physical and medical disabilities, seniors, and children with developmental disabilities rely on manual and powered wheelchairs and other mobility devices. Even minor repairs can take weeks or months to complete. Currently, wheelchair users and independent repair shops are prohibited from accessing the necessary parts, embedded software, tools, and documentation needed to perform diagnostics, maintenance, or repairs. Some chairs require a software passcode or a physical key to initiate repairs. Consumers often spend weeks in a virtual queue waiting to have their wheelchairs fixed. As a result, wheelchair users are forced to rely solely on authorized repair shops. These delays can leave individuals confined to bed for weeks, unable to go to work, the store, or participate in social activities.

Medicare regulations only allow complex wheelchairs to be replaced every five years, and most commercial health plans do not cover preventative maintenance. According to a study published in the *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*, more than one in four wheelchair repairs result in consumers being stranded at home for some period of time.

DRO has worked with many clients who have gone weeks without being able to repair their wheelchairs. SB 550 will significantly improve the quality of life for many disabled Oregonians. We thank Senator Sollman, Senator Gelser Blouin, and Representative Marsh for bringing forward this important bill, and we urge the legislature to pass SB 550.

About Disability Rights Oregon

Since 1977 Disability Rights Oregon has been the State’s Protection and Advocacy System.¹ We are authorized by Congress to protect, advocate, and enforce the rights of people with disabilities under the U.S. Constitution and Federal and State laws, investigate abuse and neglect of people with disabilities, and “pursue administrative, legal,

¹ See ORS 192.517.

and other appropriate remedies".² We are also mandated to "educate policymakers" on matters related to people with disabilities.³

If you have any questions regarding DRO's position on this legislation, please call Ben Gurewitz at 971-806-7908 or email him at bgurewitz@droregon.org.

² See 42 U.S.C. § 15041 et seq; 42 U.S.C. § 10801 et seq.

³ See 42 U.S. Code § 15043(a)(2)(L).