

Submitter: Katy Gaastra
On Behalf Of: So EveryBODY Can Move
Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB699

Dear Members of the Committee,

My name is Katy Gaastra and I'm writing on behalf of many orthotic users here in Oregon, and as the Founder of a nonprofit organization called Cerebral Palsy Strong. I'd like to briefly share my story and why I support SB 699.

I have cerebral palsy or CP, which is a brain injury that occurs during birth that affects muscle tone, balance, and coordination. My disability mostly shows up in the way that I walk and I have muscle weakness on my left side. In my early 20s, I experienced stress fractures in both of my feet that led to surgery and a lot of bone pain because my recovery didn't go as expected. After my surgeries, I couldn't really 'bounce back' — I began to slow down and miss out on all kinds of experiences.

This was extremely hard for me as someone who loves to stay active and lead a busy social life. I questioned my ability to participate in everything and even had to withdraw from a summer internship due to pain from being on my feet.

Fortunately, not too long after my injuries, I found out about this orthotic device called a dynamic knee-ankle-foot-orthosis, or KAFO. When I realized this device could provide pain-relief and so much more, I was elated. But that excitement was cut short when I learned it would not be covered by my insurance.

In response, I launched a GoFundMe campaign that raised thousands of dollars to cover the cost of my device, which now, almost a decade later, has given me a more certain future — one where I can pursue an impactful career and lead a growing nonprofit organization to serve my community.

While I was successful in gaining access, it made me realize that we shouldn't have to rely on charity from our friends to pay for medically necessary equipment. This is what we pay our health insurance companies for. And this is why So Every BODY Can Move exists, so that people like me don't have to know what it's like to feel less deserving of life-changing health care.

Please support SB699. Thank you—

Sincerely, Katy