

Madam Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the committee,

My name is Matthew, and my story begins with a fracture to my L4 vertebra that caused life-changing damage to my body.

I woke up in the hospital unable to move my left leg or foot. I couldn't wiggle my toes. I was in constant pain, and I was terrified. After two weeks, I stood for the first time. Nurses surrounded me, holding me up while I shook uncontrollably. I lasted about fifteen seconds before collapsing back onto the bed, drenched in sweat. The bottoms of my feet felt like rubber. I remember thinking, *this is my life now*.

After a month in the hospital, I could take about fifteen steps with a walker and a lot of assistance. When I was discharged, I was physically and emotionally broken. I tried to walk without proper support, overcompensating, causing pain to travel down my other leg. Every day felt like a reminder of what I had lost.

Then I was finally fitted with a custom AFO.

That brace changed everything. For the first time, I could walk with stability. I could lift my foot. I could move forward without fear of falling. Eventually, I worked my way up to walking nearly a mile. Not without pain — but with dignity.

The challenge wasn't whether the brace worked — it was whether I could access it. Insurance coverage rules, delays, and limitations slowed my recovery at the exact moment my body needed support. **SB276 / HB445, the So Everybody Can Move Act**, exists to make sure medically necessary orthotic care is covered when it's needed, not after damage is done. Healing doesn't wait for paperwork, and when access is restricted, people lose progress, independence, and the ability to return to work.

Custom orthotics aren't optional or "extra." They are medical necessities. They determine whether someone can work, stand, walk, and live independently.

I'm here today because access to proper orthotic care gave me my life back. I'm asking you to make sure others don't have to fight as hard as I did just to stand up again.

Thank you for your time.