

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

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House Bill 445
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Dear Chairman Bagnall and Members of the House Health Committee,

My name is Amanda Kern. I am a clinical social worker and coordinator of the Trauma Survivors Network at R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center. I am writing in strong support of ***HB 445, the So Every Body Can Move Act***.

Shock Trauma's Trauma Survivors Network is a community of survivors of traumatic injuries from motor vehicle crashes, motorcycle accidents, violent incidents, pedestrian injuries, and more. We serve over 300 survivors, many of whom rely on prosthetic or orthotic devices to return to work, care for their families, and participate in the activities that make life meaningful. I'm proud to work with these resilient and strong individuals.

As coordinator of the Trauma Survivors Network, I facilitate support groups and other activities where I've learned that while life after trauma is never the same, it can still be full of joy, love, and laughter. But when survivors first join us, many feel isolated - even when surrounded by supportive family and friends. Often, the hobbies and activities that once brought them joy feel out of reach. For some, it's because they now require an orthosis or prosthesis.

We already know that orthoses and prostheses change lives, but I wish I could share the utter joy in the room when a survivor with a leg amputation shares that they were finally able to swim in the ocean on their annual Jamaica trip - just like before - thanks to their waterproof prosthetic. Or when a patient with orthopedic injuries can hike again for the first time thanks to finding the right orthosis that allows them to move with minimal pain. Insurance companies often deny these devices as not "medically necessary." But as I see every day, they're not luxuries - they're essential for quality of life after injury.

One survivor I work with regularly says about traumatic injury, "Life isn't over, it's just different." This bill would ensure that for all Marylanders, while life may be different now, it's truly not over. I thank you for your time and consideration and ask you to give HB 445 a favorable report.