

To the Members of the House Committee:

My name is Pedro Gonzalez, and I respectfully submit this testimony in support of House Bill 0445.

In May of 2023, I was involved in a near-fatal motorcycle accident. I was treated at Shock Trauma in Baltimore, where I spent approximately five weeks during the summer of 2023 under the care of an extraordinary team of doctors, nurses, and specialists. Their commitment and expertise saved my life and set me on the path toward recovery.

Following my initial recovery, I was encouraged to pursue limb salvage for one year, based on guidance from my medical team and members of the Trauma Survivors Network. Unfortunately, despite every effort, complications and infection ultimately made amputation unavoidable. I became an amputee in June of 2024.

Before my accident, I lived an active life. I was an avid cyclist and a passionate snowboarder—activities that were not just hobbies, but essential to my physical health, mental well-being, and sense of identity. Through my insurance, I was able to obtain a prosthetic limb that allows me to walk and includes specialized modes that enable me to ride a bicycle again. For that, I am deeply grateful.

However, snowboarding requires a highly specialized prosthetic limb—one designed specifically for adaptive sports. After extensive research and consultation with fellow trauma survivors, prosthetic professionals, and manufacturers, I have learned that the cost of such a prosthetic is prohibitively expensive and entirely out of reach for me financially.

House Bill 0445 recognizes an essential truth: prosthetics are not only about basic mobility—they are about quality of life. The ability to participate in meaningful activities, return to lifelong passions, and fully re-engage with the world matters. This legislation would help ensure that amputees are not limited to mere survival, but are given the opportunity to truly live again.

With the passage of this bill, I would have the possibility of returning to snowboarding and reclaiming a vital part of the life I worked so hard to rebuild. I respectfully ask the Committee to consider the profound impact this

legislation could have—not just for me, but for countless Marylanders facing similar challenges.

Thank you

Pedro Gonzalez