

February 9, 2026

The Honorable Joseline A. Peña Melnyk

Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee

241 House Office Building

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Support for HB 445, Coverage for Orthoses and Prostheses, So Every Body Can Move Act

Dear Chair Peña Melnyk,

Maryland Latinos Unidos (MLU) is honored to express our strong support for House Bill 445, Coverage for Orthoses and Prostheses, known as the So Every Body Can Move Act, which is before the House Health and Government Operations Committee. This bill requires health insurance coverage for medically necessary orthotic and prosthetic devices, addressing long standing gaps that limit mobility and independence for many Marylanders.

Access to orthotic and prosthetic care is essential for recovery, employment, and daily functioning. The Amputee Coalition reports that individuals without access to appropriate devices experience higher rates of unemployment, secondary health complications, and reduced quality of life. Low income patients and communities of color are more likely to face coverage denials or high out of pocket costs that make devices unattainable. Source <https://www.amputee-coalition.org>.

HB 445 aligns insurance coverage with medical necessity rather than arbitrary caps or exclusions. This policy change recognizes that mobility is foundational to health equity and workforce participation. For working families, particularly those employed in physically demanding jobs, access to appropriate devices can mean the difference between continued employment and long term economic instability.

Implications for Latino and immigrant Marylanders

For Latino and immigrant families, HB 445 expands freedom by ensuring that mobility and independence are not determined by income or insurance type. Improved coverage reduces health disparities, supports workforce participation, and promotes dignity for individuals with disabilities. MLU can support implementation by partnering with health advocates to educate families about coverage rights and to identify barriers that persist in practice so they can be addressed.

MLU urges the Health and Government Operations Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 445.

Sincerely,

Carlos Orbe, Jr.

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