

Testimony for HB0935

Good day, Chair Atterberry, Vice Chair Wilkins, and members of the Ways and Means Committee. My name is Mario Roberts, and I am here to testify in strong support of HB0935.

On Halloween Day in 1985, during a high school football game at Dunbar High in Washington, D.C., I suffered a devastating injury—a broken neck and severed spinal cord—that left me a quadriplegic, paralyzed from my chest down to this day, nearly 40 years later. The hit wasn't extraordinary by football standards, but it shattered my C6 vertebrae. I briefly lost consciousness and couldn't breathe.

There was no rule back then requiring an ambulance at high school football games. And there wasn't one there for me. But luck was on my side—a fire station was just 30 seconds away. A student sprinted over, pleading for help. By the time they reached me, my body was turning blue from lack of oxygen. I was lucky—again—because an ambulance just happened to be at that fire station and rushed over.

After my accident, D.C. changed its rules. They mandated ambulances at every high school football game, ensuring future athletes wouldn't have to rely on luck the way I did.

HB0935 gives Maryland students that same protection—turning luck into policy and ensuring no child's life depends on chance. Please, pass this bill.

Thank you.